

IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

**Neeta Panchal - Asst. Professor, Dept. of Law, Madhava University, Pindwara, Rajasthan.
Email – neetapanchal623@gmail.com**

Abstract: Globalization is empowering the women across the globe. It is helping the women to involve in different spheres like political, social, economic, sports and cultural. Women empowerment stand for expansion of assets and capabilities of women to participial in, influence control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. Policies framed by the different countries helping the women to know about their rights and enhancing their skills at the competitive edge. This is an empirical study of 60 women between the age group of 25 and 35 years. It is interview based and questions were asked on their personal background, job opportunities and cultural and social change. This liberalization and globalization phase in India has brought many changes in the lives of Indian women. It has empowered them with education and financial security through job participation. Women are able to exercise their rights at home and parents are more participative and open to the idea of their daughters going away from home for higher studies be it in a town different to the home town in India or in other countries beyond the Indian border. Similarly parents are no longer conservative and women exercise their choice in working and taking jobs in different towns or abroad. Mobility and migration has definitely been an impact of globalization. They have also got high paying jobs like their male counterparts. There has also been a change in the way the women dress themselves. The pattern of change in dress has moved from the 'saree' to the 'salwar kameez' to indo-western and western clothes finding acceptability in the Indian society and at the working environment. Another impact of globalization has been the right to exercise a choice for a partner in marriage. This has had the effect of mixed marriages beyond the cast system and interregional and intercontinental acceptability of weddings. There have been certain negative effects of globalization. Women have become less patient with their family and spouse often leading to divorce or break in marriage having a bad emotional effect on both the spouses and their children. Women have less time at home as they have to be more competitive at work

Key Words: Globalization, Empowerment, Women education, Economic growth, Legal provisions.

INTRODUCTION:

Globalization is paving a way for the women to know about their rights and to make them empower so that they can become self- dependant, the Indian state in view of its commitment to various international conventions specially “ Mexico plan of action (1975)”, “the Nairobi forward looking strategies(1985)”, “the Beijing declaration” as well as “the platform for action(1995)” and the outcome document adopted by the UNGA session on gender equality and development and peace for the 21st century, titled “further actions and institutions to implement the Beijing declaration and the platform for action have been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow-up, key among them is the ratification of the “CONVENTION ON ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN(CEDAW)” in 1993. Government of India, other countries and many international organizations have drafted many good policies to aware the women about

their rights .In the past we have witnessed that women were au fait about their rights, now a days we can see that due to globalization women are working in different fields of the world whether its sports, corporate, film industry and many others.

Government of INDIA has framed a policy called national policy for the empowerment of women (2001), this policy is bringing an awareness among the women ,most of the women do not

know that constitution not only grant equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women, within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programmers have aimed at women’s advancement in different spheres .From the fifth five year plan (1974-78) onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women’s issues from welfare to development. The national commission for women was set up by an act of parliament in 1990 to safeguards the rights and legal entitlements of women, the 73rd and 74th amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of panchayats and municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women, key among them is the ratification of the CONVENTION ON ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW) in 1993.

DEFINITION OF GLOBALIZATION:

Although academics and economists differ on the definition of globalization, globalization can generally be defined as the integration of world economies by removing barriers to trade and encouraging the free flow of foreign investment, private portfolio capital and labor across national boundaries. The main principles upon which the entire theory of globalization is based are as follows:

- Sustained economic growth, as measured by gross national product, is the path to human progress;
- Free markets i.e., markets that are free from government intervention, generally result in the most efficient and socially optimal allocation of resources;
- Economic globalization, is achieved by removing barriers to the free flow of goods and money anywhere in the world, which in turn fosters competition, creates jobs, increases economic efficiencies, lowers consumer prices, increases consumer’s choice and is generally beneficial to everyone by increasing overall economic growth;
- Privatization, which transfers functions and assets from government to the private sector, improves efficiency.

Despite this optimistic outlook towards globalization, globalization has a dark side and has the power to create highly undesirable adverse effects. In particular, globalization has the potential to lead to exploitation of the female workforce and even to jeopardize their safety. It is in this context that the following examination of the concept of globalization and its impact on the working women is necessary.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

There is inequality and vulnerability of women in all sphere of life. They need to be empowered in all walks of life. Without the active participation of women establishment of a new social order may not be a successful one because women constitute half of the population. Women should realize that they have constitutional rights to quality health care, economic security, and access to education and political power. Mahatma Gandhi firmly states that the status of women would not change merely by bringing legislations; it must be supported by change in the women's social circumstances and situations and also man's sexist attitude to women. Fertility rates, age at marriage, health and nutrition. are very low. Participation of women in political process at the grass root level enhances their social status and it helps to solve the local problems, particularly drinking water, health, education, child development, social security for aged, disabled and in grass root level planning.

EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN IN INDIA:

The positive effect of globalization is that it has opened up broader communication lines and attracted more companies as well as different organizations into India. This provides opportunities for not only working men, but also women, who are becoming a larger part of the workforce. With new jobs for women, there are opportunities for higher pay, which raises self-confidence and brings about independence. This, in turn, can promote equality between the sexes, something that Indian women have been struggling with their entire lives. Globalization has the power to uproot the traditional treatment towards women to afford them an equal stance in society.

STATUS OF WOMEN BEFORE INDEPENDENCE:

Women's participation in India's, freedom struggle began over a century before country became independent at the time when conservative traditions and social customs had derived them their rightful place in the society. Among earlier women fighters to raise banner of revolt were Lakshmi Bai, Rani Jhansi, Rani of Ramgarh , Rani of Taci and Begum Hazart of Lucknow.

Women education before independence

“If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowerment means mother India empowerment”.

India is poised to emerge as one of the most developed nations by 2020, more literate, knowledgeable and economically at the forefront. No doubt, women will play a vital role in

contributing to the country's development. Women power is crucial to the economic growth of any country. In India this is yet to meet the requirements despite reforms. Little has been achieved in the area of women empowerment, but for this to happen, this sector must experience a chain of reforms. Though India could well become one of the largest economies in the world, it is being hindered due to a lack of women's participation.

NEED OF WOMEN EDUCATION: Women empowerment can only be achieved through the provision of adequate and functional education to the women folk. This is crucial because no matter how rich or vast a nation is, without an effective, efficient, adequate and functional education for all its citizens (men and women) education which is relevant to its immediate needs, goals and objectives, such a nation would find it difficult to stand on its own. The brand of education being advocated is that type of education in which is embedded the spirit of self realization and all that are needed for the country's overall development like mass literacy, economic empowerment etc.

CONTRIBUTION TO WOMEN'S INDEPENDENCE: Sumathi w/o Samantham aged 38 lives in Maruwai Panchayat of Kurinjipadi Block in Cuddalore District in Tamil Nadu. She has worked 33 days under NREGA in 2007-2008 and has used the money she earned for her regular household expenses. She says that she used to be dependent on her husband for any expense but now she feels empowered and independent, as she is also an earning member of the family. By putting cash incomes into their hands, NREGA is beginning to create a greater degree of economic independence among women. As mentioned, this was one of NREGA's main aims: with the increased participation of women in household income-generation a positive contribution to gender relations can be made. The 5 survey data (both qualitative and quantitative) suggest that women workers are more confident about their roles as contributors to family expenditure and their work decisions, and that they are also becoming more assertive about their space in the public sphere. Mogra w/o Meghnath, aged 34, lives in Dodiya village of Dhamansara Panchayat, Rajnandgaon Block in District Rajnandgaon in Chhattisgarh. She has a BPL card and her household owns a little land. They used to live in a kaccha house. She came to know about the NREGA works in her village through a public announcement. She decided to work under NREGA. Last year she and her husband worked under NREGA for 100 days and earned a good amount of money at the rate of Rs. 60/- per day. Their small land holding fulfils their basic food necessities. They decided to spend the money earned on NREGA works to build a pacca house. More than half of the respondents felt that the NREGA has brought a significant change in their villages as well as in their own lives. This is because employment is being provided within their village, generating community assets and enhancing their spending capacity. In each of the four survey districts, most of the women felt that the Act is "important" or "very important" for them. In Rajnandgaon and Cuddalore, the proportion who felt that NREGA is "very important" was as high as 70 % and 61 %, respectively

STATUS OF WOMEN AFTER INDEPENDENCE: There is a distinction between pre-independence and post-Independence women's movements in India. The pre-independence movements were essentially about social reforms and initiated by men. In comparison, the post-independence movement demanded gender equality, questioned gender-based division of labor and highlighted the oppressive nature of the existing patriarchal structure. In the euphoria of post-independence, it was believed that women's status would dramatically improve along with other marginalized groups because they were now the masters of their destiny.

MAJOR PROBLEM OF WOMEN IN INDIA SOCIETY:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It is very important to know the historical background, if we are to make a study of status of women in India. It is not easy to find answers for questions like when did women start losing their status or who was responsible for this situation. The position that women occupied in the medieval and later the colonial period is of most importance. Women were never put on high pedestal in the Shastras.

POVERTY AND HUNGER

Poverty affects the woman most in as much as the female members in the family are denied education, healthcare, nutritious food, and good sanitation because of poverty. Poverty directly affects the future of women. Girl children are discriminated in the matter of feeding compared to boys. Studies have shown that girls in rural areas take a mean of 1355K.Cals/day in the 13-15 years age group and 1291 K.Cals/day in the 16-18 years age group, which is much below the recommended levels. The disproportionate impact of poverty on girls is not an accident but the result of systematic discrimination.

WIDOW REMARRIAGE: The position of women which consists nearly half of population of the country is not so good and the position of widow is even worse. In order to save the plight of women who suffered an account of the death of their husbands the Brahma Samaj launched a campaign advocating widow remarriage. Despite Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's campaign that led to the legislation of widow remarriage (1856) in India, Hindu society had many reservations on this issue.

Widows were considered inauspicious and were not permitted to attend festive occasions, despite many of them being young girls whose marriage had not even been consummated. It was very common for the mother-in-law to taunt her as being responsible for her son's death. The death of the husband was only the beginning of a young woman's problems. She was either expected to commit sati or return to her parents. If she stayed with her husband's family, she had to do all the menial

work, was ill treated and not allowed to eat properly. Her head was shaved, her glass bangles broken and she was confined to white clothes; never being allowed to look attractive since she was considered a sexual threat to society. She could only eat vegetarian food. Widow re-marriage was not permitted among Hindus, except in certain tribal communities.

CHILD MARRIAGE: The problem of child marriage in India is a complex one because of religious traditions, social practices, economic factors and blind beliefs. Since there are no references available of child marriage in ancient India, it is difficult to trace the practices origins. Incidents of child marriage are restricted to few communities in northern states where child marriage more prevalent than in south. It is the advent of different forms of culture which came in from the northern borders which may have influenced various communities to resort to early marriages.

PURDAH PARTHA: Man and woman are the two wheels of the social cart. Both of them must be equally strong. But in our society women are illiterate. They are kept in 'purdah'. They are denied their due rights. Illiteracy is most wide-spread among women. I will pay special attention towards female education. This will remove many evils from society. Purdah will come to an end. Women will become equal partners with men in the work of the development of the country

SATI PRATHA: Inhuman and cruel traditions like Sati Pratha started where women were burnt alive on the death of husband to get rid of widows as they were treated as liability. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Mahadev Govind Ranaday who convinced Britishers to bring laws for banning Sati Pratha by introducing Civil Marriage Act, 1872,

FEMALE INFANTICIDE: A girl is considered a burden by parents. Since a girl child would be going to her husband's place upon marriage, the parents did not want to waste their resources on her upbringing. Again the demand for large dowry and the huge wedding expenses caused a lot of hardship to the parents. So, the parents preferred a male child as they would be able to bring in large dowry. These considerations led to the practice of killing the girl child once she was born.

CONSTITUTIONAL SAFE GUARDS FOR WOMEN IN INDIA: The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, Plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among

them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993.

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; 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.

2. LEGAL PROVISIONS: To uphold the Constitutional mandate, the State has enacted various legislative measures intended to ensure equal rights, to counter social discrimination and various forms of violence and atrocities and to provide support services especially to working women. Although women may be victims of any of the crimes such as 'Murder', 'Robbery', 'Cheating' etc. the crimes, which are directed specifically against women, are characterized as 'Crime against Women'. These are broadly classified under two categories.

(1) The Crimes Identified Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)

(i) Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)

(ii) Kidnapping & Abduction for different purposes (Sec. 363-373)

(iii) Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Sec. 302/304-B IPC)

(iv) Torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC)

(v) Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)

(vi) Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)

(vii) Importation of girls (up to 21 years of age)

(2) The Crimes identified under the Special Laws (SLL)

Although all laws are not gender specific, the provisions of law affecting women significantly have been reviewed periodically and amendments carried out to keep pace with the emerging requirements. Some acts which have special provisions to safeguard women and their interests are:

(i) The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948

(ii) The Plantation Labour Act, 1951

(iii) The Family Courts Act, 1954

(iv) The Special Marriage Act, 1954

(v) The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955

(vi) The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 with amendment in 2005

(vii) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956

- (viii) The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995)
- (ix) Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- (x) The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
- (xi) The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1976
- (xii) The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
- (xiii) The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
- (xiv) The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983
- (xv) The Factories (Amendment) Act, 1986
- (xvi) Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- (xvii) Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- (xviii) The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

CHANGING STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA: The eventual mark of a long-standing iniquitous status of women in society is the declining sex ratio. Adverse sex ratios occur when there is prolonged neglect and (even) infanticide/foeticide of one sex. Rajasthan, like other states in north-western India belongs to that category of states where adverse sex ratio is an issue. Sex ratio was 910 in 1991 (female for thousand male), and 921 in 2001. The juvenile (age 0--6 years) sex ratio—which is a better indicator than the overall sex ratio, since women who survive the earlier years tend to outlive men in the later years—was 909 in 2001; there was almost a one per cent deterioration over the last count in 1991. Sex ratios are worse in western and northern regions compared to southern and south-eastern regions. However, there is thus, some equalisation of sex ratios across districts: those that had more balanced sex ratios are changing for the worse, and the converse for other districts. An overall deterioration in the juvenile sex ratio, however, is evidence to the fact that improvement in worst performing districts does not off- set deterioration in the better performing ones.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA:

Much of the country's governance has been left to the hands of elected representatives and the official machinery. It has been increasingly recognized that such a centralized approach has not produced desired results, especially in terms of the inclusion of marginalized sectors within governance processes. Notable Constitutional, legislative and policy reforms within the last decade, including the 73rd and 74th amendments and the continued administrative decentralization through programs like NRHM, have demonstrated the Government of India's commitment to increasing the political participation of marginalized groups, especially poor women.

SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION: In spite of the various measures taken up by the government after Independence and even during British rule the Women haven't been fully empowered. We may be proud of women in India occupying highest offices of President, Prime Minister, Lok Sabha Speaker, Leader of the Opposition or women like Ms. Chandra Kochar occupying highest positions in the Corporate Sector but the fact remains that we still witness dowry deaths, domestic violence and exploitation of women. The female foeticide is not an uncommon phenomenon. The male female ratio though improved over last few years is still far from satisfactory. It is 940 women per 1000 men for India in some states it is as much lower as 877. These are the states where female foeticide is maximum. The female literacy rate is also lower than the male literacy rate.

The ground reality is deprivation, degradation and exploitation of women specially women from rural areas and those belonging to deprived sectors of the society..

The Empowerment of women has become one of the most important Concerns of 21st century not only at national level but also at the international level. Efforts by the Govt. are on to ensure Gender equality but Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and Women have full opportunities of Self decision making and participating in the Social, Political and Economic life of the Country with a sense of equality

Gender equality and women's empowerment are human rights that lie at the heart of development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Despite the progress that has been made, six out of ten of world's poorest people are still women and girls, less than 16 % of the world's parliamentarians are women, two thirds of all children shut outside the school gates are girls and, both in times of armed conflict and behind closed doors at home, women are still systematically subjected to violence. Women empowerment connotes —Economic Empowerment which implies a better quality of material life through sustainable livelihoods owned and managed by women, "social empowerment" which means a more equitable social status for women in society, "Legal Empowerment" that suggests the provision of an effective legal structure which is supportive of women's empowerment and "Political Empowerment" means a political system favouring the participation in, and control by women of the political decision making process and in governance.

References:

1. R. H. Waghmode and J. L. Kalyan. “Women empowerment in india: a study”. Reviews of Literature. Feb 2014/1/7.
2. T. O. Sridevi. “Empowerment of Women: A Systematic Analysis”. India Development Foundation; IDF Discussion Paper. June 2005.
3. P. Pratyusna. “Does Political Representation Ensure Empowerment? Scheduled Tribes in Decentralised Local Governments of India”. Journal of south asian development April 2013 / 8/1/ 27-60.
4. S. Gita and M. Avanti. “No Empowerment without Rights, No Rights without Politics: Gender-Equality, MDGs and the post 2015 Development Agenda”. Working Paper Series; The Power of Numbers: A Critical Review of MDG Targets for Human Development and Human Rights (the “Project”); May 2013.
5. Dr. J. Dhiraj, J. Bhagyashree, “Does microfinance empower rural women? -a empirical study in udaipur district, rajasthan”. Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce; April 2012/III/2(1)/76
6. Ms. Beena, Dr. M. Madhu. “Role of ict education for women empowerment”. Int. J. Eco. Res.; 2012/3/3/164 – 172
7. K. Raabe, M. Sekher, R. Birner. “The Effects of Political Reservations for Women on Local Governance and Rural Service Provision” IFPRI–wide Discussion Paper series. <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ifpridp00878.pdf>; 2009
8. B. Narayan, “Women’s Movement-Women Empower and Women’s Rights in Assam Research Schola”. Singhania University, Rajasthan; IJCAES special issue on Basic, Applied & Social Sciences, , July 2012/2
9. D. Meena “Empowering women through alternative media”. International conference on interplay of economics Politics and society for inclusive growth.
10. Nath, V 2001, Empowerment and governance through information and communication technologies: women’s perspective, Retrieved on November 2, 2004. <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/knownet/articles/womenandICT.htm> (DA: 11/02/04)