

Impact of Globalization on Indian Women

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Abstract

In a developing country like India, where women do not know what freedom means and are leading life that was totally dominated by male folks, globalization has given a voice, the chance to develop and the courage to live their lives on their own terms. Globalization has impacted social, political, economic and cultural status of Indian women.

Subsequent changes have been marked in the role of Indian women and now the time came to analyze those changes. This paper is an attempt to analyze that positive and negative impacts of globalization on Indian women. The study has adopted descriptive research design and informations are gathered from various books, journals and websites.

Keywords: Globalization, Indian Women, Impact, Gender Equality, Technology.

Introduction

Globalization is a multi-dimensional, ongoing and unending process which involves interconnected changes in the economic, cultural, social and political spheres of society. In a country like India, globalization brought countless opportunities for women and has helped in breaking down of rigid social doctrines which inhibits the freedom of women. Presently, the status of women in India has been changing and they are shedding their chains of traditions, thus moving towards more independent and secure lives. However, there is a need at present to evaluate the positive and negative impacts of this process on India women.

Objectives and Research Design

This paper is a modest attempt to critically investigate the impacts of globalization, either positive or negative on Indian Women.

In view of the objectives of the study, descriptive research design has been adopted. It lays particular emphasis on analysis and interpretation of the existing and available information and it makes use of secondary data. Information has been gathered through various books, journals, websites etc.

Globalization

The term 'Globalization' has been widely used in 1960's in the Western World and in India in 1990. Accordingly to Adverd S. Herman, "Globalization is the expansion across international borders of management and process. At the same time, it is a condition of facilities and economic relation which is constantly expanding and it's simultaneously changing."

Globalization is not an event, rather a process which originated with the liberalization and privatization of the economic sectors. It aims for the establishment of a borderless world. It is widely accepted and referred to as the 'the widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual' (Lawal 2006)

Looking closely at the impact of globalization on women in developed countries like India, one would observe both sides of the coin, in that it has both positive and negative impacts.

Women and Globalization

Over the times, women in India are fighting long-standing prejudices. But, since globalization comes in India, Women's status has been dramatically improved along with other marginalized groups, because they were now the masters of their destiny. Traditionally, women stayed at home and take care of domestic needs. They remain disadvantaged in many areas of life including education, employment, health and civil rights. Globalization boosted women's awareness level and set them out of their

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private spaces to earn a living. Along with increase in family income, social and life choices of women have increased, thus making them more empowered.

Globalization is a double edged process as far as women are concerned. It is dynamic and unpredictable, although not entirely disordered. Women double responsibilities, long working hours at work place along with attending household chores, hinder their performance and come in the way of success. Although some women enjoy the freedom of delaying marriages, they soon realize that this form of independence might actually be a burden because finding a husband later in life is not as easy as in their youth. Moreover, women are exploited by paying lower wages than men. This is not a single problem, women are facing. Relocation of women for financial reasons has prompted expanded abuse including lewd behavior, misuse and trafficking. Globalization, thus offers women a lot of opportunities but equally new and unique challenges. On one hand, the process of globalization holds innumerable benefits for women; on the other hand, it proves to be a curse to Indian Women.

Impact of Globalization

Positive Impacts

Globalization has led to the diffusion of the values of liberty, equality and freedom. It has unprecedented and unparalleled impact on the condition of women in India. On positive side, it has led to:

1. Globalization has provided economic interdependence to the Indian women. Women have more jobs, become more active in avenues generally reserved for men, have played a more prominent role in society and not just restricted to the household. Globalization has affected both the quality and the quantity of work available to the majority of women in India.
2. Globalization has posed a major challenge to the institution of patriarchy in India. As women take up job and achieve social mobility, they have also begun to stand for their rights.
3. Marrying within the same caste has become less important and women in many cases reserved the right to marry whoever they choose irrespective of caste.
4. Dilution of social evils like Dowry and loosening of Shackles of caste system due to inter-caste marriages is also a feature of increased globalization.
5. Prospects of higher and quality education have become feasible for those women who can afford them economically and socially.
6. With changing attitude towards women, especially in the urban areas, women enjoy more egalitarian set of gender relationship.
7. New thoughts from the world feminist leaders have created political awareness among Indian women.
8. In a country like India, where most women have to discharge domestic duties globalization allows them to take up flexible jobs and thus channelize the potential of most of the middle class women.
9. Globalization has enabled Indian women to present her work to global audience. Women are

now a part of global work force and capable of working cross border. This creates a sense of empowerment and widening of perspective of society towards women.

10. Higher salary helps in bargaining power of women and development of more confident and healthy women.
11. Traditional responsibility of women like child caring and household chores are shared by men in the globalised society Globalized upper middle class families can afford domestic help to do menial tasks.
12. Women have now challenged the traditional male centric view of the society. Activities like constant mothering, shying away from social contact are no longer expected of Indian women.
13. One of the aims of globalization is to reduce poverty in developed countries. This aim has been achieved to some extent which has inturn, lifted the status of Indian Women.
14. Many non-profitable organizations are working in India for women empowerment. These organizations have given women, the skill they need to advance such as literacy and vocational skills. One such organization naming SEWA has established a women's cooperative bank with 1,25,000 members and with the help of globalization, they have even reached to women in rural areas of India.
15. There was a time when Indian women were restricted to traditional dresses only like Saree, Salwar Kamiz, Churidar etc. but due to influence of globalization, today Indian women used to wear jeans, Kurti, legging and many other western dresses.
16. Globalization helped women to articulate their views and opinions, making important contributions to culture in the field of art, music literature and poetry.
17. The living standard and decision making power of Indian women has increased and she has liberated herself from her past inferior position due to globalization only.

Negative Impacts

Although, globalization has greatly improved the lives of Indian women, the process has shown negative implications too as described below:

1. Globalization has increased the number of low paid, part time and exploitative jobs for women in India.
2. With increasing nuclear families, the older women's life has become pitiable, sometimes spending their later days in old age homes and isolation.
3. Male migration from rural areas to urban centres has put the women under triple burden of home-making, farming and job in rural sector.
4. Marketing of cosmetic products for women focuses on external beauty and neglecting inner beauty in the form of intelligence and wisdom.
5. Women is seen as a commodity and traded in the form of posters, pornographic content, item songs, prostitution etc. These instances degrade the image of women in the society.

6. Poor women are treated as the source of cheap labour and are forced to work uncomplainingly at labourious and hard tasks.
7. Late night working of women in BPO and MNC's in metro cities have security concerns.
8. Women often suffer from lower wages and poor working environment
9. Rapid change in the food habits and dressing styles and ignoring traditional values are the disadvantages of globalization process. In fact, globalization has relaxed moral attitudes too. Drinking and smoking is now accepted for women.
10. Sometimes career become more important for some working women than their familial bonds. This effects the psychology of children who often feel deprived of care.
11. The constant rush towards career also produces an epidemic of loneliness and materialism.
12. The negative impact of globalization also involves commodification of women, trafficking, rapes etc. which are increasing day by day.
13. Excessive indulgence in jobs and economic activities has taken a toll on women's health. Lifestyle diseases have become prevalent. This has created issues related to fertility and mental health. Actions such as suicide have become more regular.
14. Last but not least, women have been burdened with double responsibility of household care as well as outside employment due to globalization.

Conclusion

When we put all the pros and contras together, globalization is in many ways a blessing especially for women who have been struggling since ages. However, globalization has indeed promoted ideas and norms of equality for women that have brought about awareness and acted as a catalyst in their struggle for equitable rights and opportunities. On the other hand, it exacerbates gender inequality in patriarchal society of India. Thus in turn, promoted equality between sexes. Something that India women have been struggling through their entire lives.

Indian women have never been as expressive and independent as she is today. Today's women don't feel that a career would beat the cost of neglecting the family and children. The Indian women are also making their footstep into international world by making themselves as role model in many sectors.

Through globalization many local cultures are disappearing and a new multicultural society comes into existence. We can say that globalization provides Indian women the opportunity to make change. The roles of women in India have been changing and they are now emerging from the past traditions towards a new era of freedom and equality due to globalization.

Although globalization has created many negative impacts, but it's always better to look to the future with optimism and hope. Tomorrow, hopefully, we will be able to minimize or even eradicate the evil forces that give globalization a bad name (Kulkarni A., 2009)

Actually, globalization is paving a way for the Indian Women so that they become self dependent. What is required in today's situation is to make a balance between the positive and negative aspects of globalization. No doubt, in the long run, we would be able to manage and mitigate the negative consequences of globalization regarding women.

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