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Globalization and Impact on Women A Changing Perspective



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A B S T R A C T

Globalization offered extensive opportunities for truly worldwide development but it is not progressing evenly. Some countries are becoming integrated into the global economy more quickly than others. Countries that have been able to integrate are seeing faster growth and development. However, the globalization affected different countries in different way and also its people. Women are also affected by globalization. Due to globalization, the women got economic, political and social role by getting better employment opportunities. Consequently there is more income and wealth and also production. But on the other side, the globalization affected the women's life adversely, but these cases are rare. The present paper elaborated an overview of the globalization on women community over the world.

KEY WORDS: *Women, Globalization.*

INTRODUCTION:

Gender playing an indispensable factor in economic policy design and implementation and that, the inclusion of gender in the evaluation of policy outcomes and development strategies makes these strategies more encompassing and successful in addressing current economic and health care challenges. One of the major trends associated with globalization has been the increase in women employment in waged work in both formal and informal sectors. The number of women in employment may vary between regions, but in most cases, there is upward trend with rapid increases in some developing countries. Much of the increase in employment arising from globalization has resulted in the

movement of female labour from the household and subsistence (agriculture) sector to paid employment.

In fact, much of the growth in employment in recent years, has involved one or another of these irregular forms of work in both developed and developing countries. The question of the relative effects on women of the global shift in development has been addressed by many analysts. In countries that are not in a crisis situation but instead of moving more smoothly towards a system, based on comparative advantage, this change should lead to an increase in overall well-being. However, whether women are generally helped or harmed by such a globalization move depends on both the nature of

employment created and peoples' preferences.

GLOBALIZATION: Globalization broadly refers to the expansion of global linkages, the organization of social life on a global scale, and the growth of a global consciousness, hence to the consolidation of world society. Such an ecumenical definition captures much of what the term commonly means, but its meaning is disputed. It encompasses several large processes; definitions differ in what they emphasize. Globalization is historically complex; definitions vary in the particular driving force they identify. The meaning of the term is itself a topic in global discussion; it may refer to "real" processes, to ideas that justify them, or to a way of thinking about them. The term is not neutral; definitions express different assessments of global change. Among critics of capitalism and global inequality, globalization now has an especially pejorative ring.

IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN Gender analysis points to the social and cultural formation of the roles of and the relations between men and women, not only women issues. Gender issues can be summarized in simple words, they include a lot of determinants which affect it either negatively or positively, such as cultures, traditions, policies and needs, which differ from one social group to another within the same society, and from one society to another. Economically, through discrimination in favor of male workers, marginalization of women in unpaid or informal labor, exploitation of women in low-wage sweatshop settings, and/or impoverishment through loss of traditional sources of income. Politically, through exclusion from the domestic political process and loss of control to global pressures. Culturally, through loss of identity and autonomy to a hegemonic global culture. In general the impact of the globalization on Women community is summarized as under:

There are three main issues concerning women and globalization. The first concerns the relationship between the particularity of the national culture and the international thought, because of the growing international concern of

women's issues and which dealt with this relationship and the different national identities. It is noted that there is a contradiction between the two extremes. Some consider international thought and culture as a kind of alienation; others look at the cultural identity as a kind of self-inclusion. This contradiction is considered one of the wide gaps that need to be overcome and reconciled. The second issue is how to encourage the moderate and open-minded elucidation of the religious and cultural issues, because for sometime, rigid elucidation based on ancestral thought, especially in the issues concerning the women, prevailed. There is need to find and frame the status and role of women in the society once again in the globalization era considering modern issues and trends.

Modern information and communication technology, especially the Internet, with the reduction of restrictions and regulations in almost work of human activity. In this case the danger lies in the fact that this modern technology will only benefit those who have the knowledge and the skills. The growing trans-continental employment opportunities gave a lot of new opportunities to women in the south. However women who will benefit from these advantages are mostly those who are well educated and who belong to high-income classes, while women who are not well educated or are illiterate are marginalized, usually these are over 35 years old and are working in sectors which suffer from declining demand.

It is worth to note that there are great differentiation and inequality between the countries, which use the Internet; the users of the internet have accessibility to a large amount of knowledge and skills, such as the ability to reach appropriate information in the local language, and making use of this information to build capacity. Male community usually get better opportunity to use the technological tools and have greater financial capabilities and have more time and which enables them to gain the necessary skills faster and much easier. But on the other

hand, women especially in developing countries are neglected and it is not possible for them to access and use the technology. The information and communication technology has helped women to know, and to get information, especially in societies where women suffer from isolation because of traditions and social norms. The Internet as a tool of Information and Communication Technology offers new opportunities to different situations, such as: human crisis and the violation of women's human rights. It acts as an effective mean of communication with people in different parts of the world, such as organizations with limited budgets, which cannot express themselves through the national media, for it enables them to get the information quickly and make them avoid governmental censorship.

The UNIFEM supported and encouraged the electronic campaigns one of the positive outcomes of the international technology for women is the creation of what's called Women's Human Rights Net (WHRnet). This net is an NGO, which links women and women human rights organizations, in addition to helping in education and research in this field. The net also provides the information in English, French and Spanish, in addition to being a site for online exchange of information. In 1998, the Scientific Conference for Communication Development assured that the benefits of the modern technology should be available equally for both men and women, in developing countries. ITU has been working to strengthen the active nets of the different kinds of women organizations working in information and communication.

The increase of industrial exports in developing countries was accompanied by an increase in the demand for female employment, because industrialization under the present international conditions in the developing countries depended on female labour. Therefore, the new female employment opportunities depended on the expansion of industrial export. The participation of women in the industrial sector was much higher than on the national level in the formal sectors,

and in the industrial sector female employment was concentrated in the export sector.

The demand for female employment has increased in the informal sector, through subcontracts with the formal sector. The role and importance of the informal sector in economic activity has increased in the developing countries especially for women, however a high ratio of these women are working without any contracts. Trade offers regular paid contract jobs to women more than any other sector. This increases women's employment opportunities, this is strongly connected to their contribution in family expenses especially of education and health for women and children, which support the creation of new human resources and raises the level of human development. In addition to the impact of the employment of women on the family level, contract jobs increase the social choices of women, to a great extent, as young women had to do a lot of unpaid work for the family. At the personal level, the independent income also increased women choices now, as she can choose to get married or choose to stay unmarried; it also decreases domestic violence, in addition to raising women's morals because she is no longer a burden to her family. At the same time that all women's work all over the world is not valued or undervalued, the paid work in the industrial export sector has increased women's social choices, and life choices, in addition to giving them self confidence. In the agricultural system both in Asia and Latin America, international trade did not have a significant impact because women already worked in family farms without getting paid. The farmer's chance to enter the export sector, leads to conflicts with respect to gender, because the returns are always biased against women.

Companies make the investment decision, the gender dimensions here are indirect, they depend on the distribution of ownership and the rights to make decisions at the highest levels by men and women in the producing company, this distribution can have an impact on the level and the composition of investment, and is known as the

gender distribution among the decision makers in the multinational companies. Gender affects the investment, national or foreign, according to the role which men and women play in decision making. The issues related to direct foreign investment which take into consideration gender aspects should be integrated with employment and human resource development, so the roles of men and women are taken into consideration equally in the production activities which are, directly or indirectly, increased by the direct foreign investment.

The companies work in a competitive environment, which make them have to choose the best employees regardless of their gender. The flexibility in defining the criteria for choosing employees, and for the promotions

According to their special culture.

The companies are characterized by a network hierarchy in the human resource management, which women are more suitable for. Women in different parts of the world have been taking initiatives to promote different, more gender-sensitive approaches to economic policy: improving the economic literacy of women's advocacy groups; securing more participation by women in economic policy process; advocating a gender-sensitive approach to the design of economic recovery programmes; training policy-makers to look at economic issues from a gender perspective; undertaking research on the gender impacts of macroeconomic policy at the local level; finding ways to "engender" macroeconomic analysis; and pressing for changes in global economic governance, especially changes in the World Trade Organization.

UNIFEM produced a briefing kit called "Women in a Global Economy" for policymakers advocating an approach to economic recovery in South-East and East Asia that focuses on removing the barriers to women's productive participation in the market economy, rather than encouraging women to return to their traditional roles in the unpaid domestic sector of the economy. It argues that policies to create new jobs should

be sensitive to different needs of men and women. Attention should be paid to the informal sector, where economic crisis leading to increasing numbers of participants, putting downward pressure on women's wages and working conditions. The overall message is that economic recovery programmes should be designed in ways that directly support women's incomes and do not assume that income will "trickle down" from men to women and children. Exploring the relationship between gender inequality, economic growth and liberalization of trade and investment, four scenarios are possible: win-win (low gender inequality, high economic growth); win-lose (low gender inequality, low economic growth); lose-win (high gender inequality, high economic growth); and lose-lose (high gender inequality, low economic growth). Different outcomes are related to the structure of the economy being considered (e.g., industrialized; semi-industrialized; agricultural; degree of openness to world economy) and to the dimension of gender inequality being considered (e.g., health, education, labour market). World Bank research has revealed mainly win-win outcomes in which low gender inequality and high economic growth go together. This research measures gender inequality primarily in terms of education and health variables and has been used to make a case for reducing gender inequality on efficiency grounds.

The culture of female employment in developing nations is based on "formal labour, housework, and informal-sector production". Only a small proportion of women work in export factories compared to the entire female population. Most work in agriculture, perform housework, or are employed in the informal sector. Females in these nations are limited in society by patriarchal control. These societies claim that female labor is an extension of their household chores. This ideology is "interwoven in the capitalist economy to justify women's subordination on the global assembly line, in the home and informal sector". Without considering

of which sector of employment women are working in, they are given limited access to resources and authority over their work. A welfare system, like the present in the United States, is nonexistent in developing nations, because of the lack of capital devoted to public expenditure.

Of course, globalization provided work to the women in developing countries, but it reduced the social role and status of women and hence the family members and children are adversely affected. The developing Corporations are oblivious to the fact that children in developing nations are the future laborers. According to the literature, females' subordinate status in developing society shows a correlation with their motivation toward factory employment. From a study (Ong 1987), it is apparent that females are kept in a subordinate position in society by the incorporation of assembly production into their young lives. Although a few females passed the Form Three exam and went on to further their education, "for most girls, however, Form Three is the end of their school career". Girls who move on to higher levels of education are also motivated toward factory production but often become dissatisfied with "work conditions and... [look] for better employment opportunities elsewhere" (Ong 1987). From this evidence, it appears that women with more educational opportunities have more options for earning a living than females with a limited educational background. Why are more females than males likely to fail the Form Three exams.

Multi national Corporations target young female workers without thinking about the cultural changes that they create within developing societies. Based on the literature, it appears that these females live a "westernized fantasy" by working in export factories. These Corporations are imposing ethnocentric values (independence -both financial and socially) upon factory workers, without consideration for the implications that result from these social value adjustments. The fact that female workers who leave the factories are forced to look for husbands in order to survive

in society, makes it seem as though the efforts of these women to gain their independence were merely a waste of time. Corporations might be using the independence factor to lure young women into their factories. Nevertheless, females are still subjected to a subordinate status in society once they leave the export factories. How can women reclaim this form of independence without depending on the males in developing nations for support?

Globalization has changed the intra-household responsibilities for males and females, where females are given more responsibility over the survival of the family. Males are no longer the providers- yet they have more opportunities for financial and social advancement in society. Although female responsibilities have increase, SALs implemented by the IMF are gender biased towards males. They fail to include females in managerial and upper-level positions. The limited advanced of women in the formal sector shows a great disregard for their social and economic responsibilities within developing nations. Female labor is not rewarded in relation to the impact they have on society. The U.N. Decade recognized the importance of female labor in developing nations and the fact that economic policies fail to address the needs of females. 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.

As a result of The U.N. Decade, NGOs in throughout the developing world have reached out to women to meet their needs in farming, environmental protection, healthcare, domestic issues, employment conditions, and to reduce the financial strains in their everyday lives. The collective organization of women's groups throughout the world has also generated the attention of the media, which is necessary in educating the general public about the current issues facing women in developing nations. The continued efforts of these groups and the economic realization of the importance women's

work will eventually create greater social awareness about the inequalities facing women in these nations. The economic policies and structural adjustments associated with globalization create the most negative impact on women in the developing countries. The denial of social and economic rights is the most inhuman 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. Enabling the advancement of female opportunities and guaranteeing female workers more rights will increase the quality of life and create a more sustainable living standard for women and their families in the developing world. Without these changes, women will continue to suffer in their subordinate positions within the economic market.

Women and other marginalized communities have suffered disproportionately from free trade agreements. When communities become less stable it is women who must pick up the pieces. Globalization has increased women's unpaid work as social services are privatized. At the same time it has decreased the quality of many of their paid work opportunities. Women are already over-represented in low-paying, labour-intensive sectors where women's nimble figures, flexibility, and ability to work hard are needed. Free trade drives

wages even lower and makes these industries even less stable. When inequalities between countries become greater, the desire for citizens of poor nations to leave their own countries also increases. Millions of people worldwide, many of them women, leave their homes in search of work in other countries and may choose ill-professions like Sex trade.

CONCLUSION: Globalization has many advantages to the developing countries and opportunities to their population. But on the other hand, it has certain disadvantages also. The present paper discussed its impact on women worldwide. It has had a mixed impact on women's rights. On the one hand, it has led to increasing violations of women's economic, political, and cultural rights in large measure due to the withering away of the welfare oriented/development oriented state, the feminization of poverty, the expansion of religious fundamentalisms and new forms of militarism and conflict. It has been noted by many international women's organizations, for example, that the new trade agreements contravene the spirit and often the letter of international conventions on human rights, labour rights, and women's rights. On the other hand, aspects of globalization have provided women with increasing opportunities to work in solidarity at national, regional, and international levels to demand their rights.

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