

GLOBALISATION AND INDIAN WOMEN : AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract:

Swami Vivekanand- “The Best thermometer to the progress of nation is its treatment of women”. *Globalisation can be a major force for prosperity, this paper will give an overview of what the forces of globalisation have in store for the women of India. A large group of working women of India are in the rural and unorganised sectors. Socially the majority of Indian women are still tradition bound and are in a disadvantageous position. Since globalisation is opening up the Indian economy suddenly at a very high speed, without the required economic and social policies to provide the much required safety net, women who have been involved with production in the traditional ways, have to cope with numerous problems and yet try to avail of the opportunities which an open economy promises.*

Keywords: Globalization-Indian women, Welfare, Development, Women Empowerment.

Introduction:

This paper tries to give an overview of what is in store for women in India in this process of globalisation and what type of information needs are likely to evolve due to this major change in the new socio- economic scenario. The new Structural Adjustment Programmes to usher in globalisation in traditional economies like India will reach the expected goal only if the process of globalisation is well backed by properly planned national policies in a conducive social and economic environment. Globalisation is a double edged process as far as women are concerned. On the one hand, majority of women in India and other developing countries find themselves stripped off the benefit of social security, government subsidy protection of labour rights and than safety nets. On the other hand there are possibilities of better education facilities and opportunities at the transnational sense which are very attractive to the privileged few. It is however necessary to understand that effective development requires full integration of women in the development process as agents of change as well as beneficiaries because Indian women can be utilized as development resources in many ways. Present paper discusses about various initiatives taken by Government of India for empowering women. Paper concludes with the note that due recognition must be given to women and society should come forward to ensure equal status for women in all spheres of life.

Objectives:

1. To know the dimensions of women Empowerment.

2. To know the Parameters of women empowerment.
3. To know the Government Policies for women empowerment.

Research Design:

In view of the objectives of the study listed above, exploratory research design has been adopted. Exploratory research is one, which largely interprets the already available information, and it lays particular emphasis on analysis and interpretation of the existing and available information and it makes use of secondary data.

Globalisation:

Globalisation is a fact of life, which has come to stay. It is expected to be a major force for prosperity. Globalization is an ambiguous term. It means different things to different people. It may mean different things to the same person. So what does globalization mean? Globalization including its various dimensions – from political, economic, social, cultural, and technological – is defined in varied ways. This movement is ensured through the 4-Ds: deregulation, denationalization, disinvestment and digitalization.

Women Empowerment:

‘EMPOWERMENT’ MAY be described as a process which helps people to assert their control over the factors which affect their lives. Empowerment of women means developing them as more aware individuals, who are politically active, economically productive and independent and are able to make intelligent discussion in matters that affect them. Women empowerment as a concept was introduced at the International women Conference in 1985 at Nairobi, which defined it as redistribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNDFW) includes the following factors in its definition of women empowerment:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the way in which these relations may be changed.
- Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one’s ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one’s life. Batliwala (1974) defines empowerment as “the process of challenging existing power relation and of gaining greater control over the source of power”. Women’s’ empowerment is seen as the process and the result of the process of:
- Challenging the ideology of male domination and women’s subordinations.
- Enabling women to gain equal access to and control over the resources (material, human and intellectual).

Dimensions of Women Empowerment:

The process of empowerment has five dimensions, viz. Cognitive, psychological, economic, political and physical:

- (1) The cognitive dimension refers to women having an understanding of the conditions and causes of their subordination at the micro and macro levels. It involves making choices that may go against cultural expectations and norms;
- (2) The psychological dimension includes the belief that women can act at personal and societal levels to improve their individual realities and the society in which they live;

(3) The economic component requires that women have access to, and control over, productive resources, thus ensuring some degree of financial autonomy. However she notes that changes in the economic balance of power do not necessarily alter traditional gender roles or norms;

(4) The political element entails that women have the capability to analyse, organise and mobilise for social change; and

(5) There is a physical element of gaining control over one's body and sexuality and the ability to protect oneself against sexual violence to the empowerment process.

The parameters of women empowerment are:

- Raising self-esteem and self-confidence of women.
- Building and strengthening partnership with civil society particularly women's organisations.
- Enforcement of constitutional and legal provisions and safeguarding rights of women.
- Building a positive image of women in the society and recognizing their contributions in social, economic and political sphere.
- Developing ability among women to think critically.
- Fostering decision-making and collective action.
- Enabling women to make informed choices.
- Ensuring women's participation in all walks of life.
- Providing information, knowledge, skills for self-employment.
- Elimination of discrimination against women's participation in the areas of:
 - Access to food
 - Equal wages
 - Property rights
 - Family resources
 - Freedom of movement and travel
 - Access to credit
 - Control over savings, earnings and resources
 - Guardianship and custody of children and their maintenance
- Gender sensitisation training in schools, colleges and other professional institutions for bringing about institutional changes.

Women Empowerment 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. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974- 78) onwards there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development and then from Eighth Five Year Plan emphasis was shifted from development to empowerment. In recent years, the empowerment

of women has been recognised as the central issue in determining the status of women. 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 National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The Government of India declared 2001 as the Year of Women's Empowerment (Swashakti). The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was passed in 2001.

1. Women Empowerment Policy 2001

Goal and Objectives-

1. The goal of this Policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. Specifically, the objectives of this Policy include:
 - (a) Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
 - (b) The *de jure* and *de facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres—political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
 - (c) Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
 - (d) Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office, etc.
 - (e) Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
 - (f) Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
 - (g) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
 - (h) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
 - (i) Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organisations.

2. Initiatives Taken for Empowerment of Vulnerable And Marginalised Groups And Women In Difficult Circumstances

- Schemes of National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation
- Integrated Child Development Scheme
- National Rural Health Mission
- Janani Suraksha Yojana
- Integrated Child Protection Scheme
- Swadhar—A scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances
- Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)
- Antyodaya Anna Yojna (AAY)
- Ujjawala—A Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
- Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)—A Conditional Maternity Benefit Scheme
- Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)—Sabla
- Swayam Siddha
- Scheme for Working Women Hostel
- STEP (Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women)
- Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
- Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

3. Gender Budgeting in India

As the nodal Ministry for women, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has been undertaking several initiatives for the empowerment of women. In this context, Gender Budgeting (GB) has been adopted by the Government as a tool for ensuring that adequate budgetary commitments are made for women. To build capacities of functionaries and stakeholders at all levels, a Gender Budget Scheme was launched in the XI Plan. As part of this Scheme, the Ministry sponsored training programmes and workshops at the Centre and in the States, developed training material, undertook direct interactive sessions with identified Ministries and provided technical support on GB in training courses organised by other organisations.

4. The National mission for Empowerment of Women:

The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) was launched by the Government of India (GoI) on International Women's Day in 2010 with the aim to strengthen overall processes that promote all-round development of women. The Mission aims to provide a single window service for all programmes run by the Government for women under aegis of various Central Ministries. In light with its mandate, the Mission has been named *Mission Poorna Shakti*, implying a vision for holistic empowerment of women.

5. High Level Committee on the Status of Women:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India on February 27, 2012 approved the setting up of a High Level Committee on the status of women to undertake another comprehensive study to understand the status of women as well as to evolve appropriate policy interventions based on a contemporary assessment of women's needs.

6. Millennium Development Goal:

The United Nations Development Programme constituted eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for ensuring equity and peace across the world. Third MDG is directly related to empowerment of women in India. The MDGs are agreed-upon goals to reduce certain indicators of disparity across the world by the year 2015.

7. Ministry for Women and Child Development:

Formulate plans, policies and programmes; enacts/amends legislation, guiding and coordinating the efforts of both governmental and non-governmental organisations working in the field of women and child development.

8. Swayamsidha Programme:

Additionally, the Ministry is also implementing the Swayamsidha programme—an integrated scheme for the empowerment of women at a total cost of Rs.116.30 Crores. Core to this programme will be the establishment of women's self-help groups which will empower women to have increased access to all kinds of resources that they are denied, in addition to increasing their awareness and skills. The programme will benefit about 9,30,000 women with the setting up of 53,000 self-help groups, 26,500 village societies and 650 block societies.

9. National Commission For Women:

It was set up exclusively to help women via the Constitution – by reviewing Legal and Constitutional safeguards for women, recommending remedial legislative measures, by facilitating quick redressal of grievances and by advising the Government of India on all policy matters affecting women. The website allows for online submission of complaints and fast redressed exclusively for women.

10. Government Enactments:

The National Commission for Women has in the last few years introduced several new bills in the parliament from time to time towards eradication of many social evils. Some of the significant enactments are mentioned here.

- The Hindu Widow Re-Marriage Act of 1856
- The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929
- The Hindu Women's Right to Property Act of 1937
- The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955
- The Hindu Succession Act of 1956
- The suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act of 1956-57
- The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961

Conclusion:

It is only through full understanding of the plight of women in the Globalization process can the government, NGOs, decision makers and information managers prepare proper strategies to empower women and bring them into the mainstream developmental process. This is the greatest challenge, which confronts India and its women because globalization will stay but with half the population suffering under its yoke will only make it draconian and not a facilitator of progress.

Woman is an incarnation of 'Shakti'—the Goddess of Power. If she is bestowed with education, India's strength will double. Let the campaign of 'Kanya Kelavni' be spread in every home; let the lamp of educating daughters be lit up in every heart —Narendra Modi

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