

## An Anthropological Vision on the Impact of Globalization on Indian Rural Women: A Critical Reality

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### Abstract

The term globalization has been associated with key areas of change, which have led to a marked transformation of the world order. Globalization in India is generally taken to mean integrating the economy of the country with the world. This, in turn, implies opening up the economy to foreign direct investment by providing facilities to foreign companies to invest in different fields of economic activity in India. The main policy initiated towards globalization by the Government of India can be discussed under many headings. Globalization can be a major force for prosperity only if it is backed by adequate national policies and conducive social and economic environment. The present paper is totally based on secondary data. This paper will give an overview of what

the forces of globalization have in store for the women of India. The various impacts of globalization on the society as well on women in India were also highlighted in the paper. The data thus collected shows the status of globalization in India, the significant role played by the new economic policy in promoting the Indian Economy, Does globalization cause poverty, Why are so many people opposed to globalization and Can globalization be controlled. A large group of working women of India is in the rural and unorganized sectors. Socially the majority of Indian women is still tradition bound and is in a disadvantageous position. Since globalization 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. With this background, this paper mainly focuses on the Anthropological vision and critical reality on the impact of globalization on Indian rural women from various angles.

**Keywords:** Globalization; Indian women; Indian economy; Anthropological vision

### Introduction

Globalization has been associated with key areas of change in Culture, language, traditions, market, politics, and economics. Globalization means different to different people. For some people, it is the movement of language, ideas, people and products around the world. Others see it as the dominance of multinational corporations and the destruction of cultural identities. It has different effects on the different peoples and communities of developed and developing countries, cities, suburbs, men and women.

If we go through the historically, Toyo, 2000 [1] said that, the process of globalization had started in a small way in the nineteenth century when capital moved from Europe to open up new areas in America and Australia, mostly in the building of rail road systems and agriculture that would be central to the expansion of capitalism. Ohuabunwa [2] argues, even though, the pre- eminence of globalization as championed by America was interrupted by the cold war era, with the effective end of the latter in 1990, the west no longer need to compromise as before, its ideology of globalization culture on the account of communism.

The term globalization has been associated with key areas of change, which have led to a marked transformation of the world order. At political level, the process of deregulation and liberalization has led to an apparent diminution of state and a general assumption that all states everywhere must become democratic and secure good governance over their people. At the level of economy, globalization has been associated with the trend towards increasing economic liberalization. This has reflected in free trade and more deregulated labour good and financial markets. As per Bacchus [3], North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), transnational corporations are using the profit motive to guide their

factories toward developing nations in search of “cheap” female labor. Corporations prefer female labor over male labor because women are considered to be “docile” workers, who are willing to obey production demands at any price. In developing nations, certain types of work, such as garment assembly, is considered to be an extension of female household roles. Therefore, cultural influences in developing nations also impacts employment stratification. Bringing a high demand of employment opportunities for women in developing nations creates an instantaneous change within the social structure of these societies. Although the demand for female employment brings about an array of opportunities and a sense of independence, the glass ceiling continues to exist with the “feminization of poverty”[4]. Researchers in the fields of Anthropology, Sociology and Economics have collected empirical data that shows the consequences of globalization on the lives of women and their families in developing nations. Given these circumstances and the empirical evidence collected in the various studies, does globalization have an overall positive or negative impact on the lives of women?

The roles of women in India have been changing and they are now emerging from the past traditions into a new era of freedom and rights. The basic aim of this article to review the changing role of women due

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to globalization in Indian society. This concern is not merely academic but is central to the process of emerging development in India. There is a need to critically evaluate the impact of globalization on women in India and also to know the positive and negative impacts of it on the position of women in India at present.

This paper tries to give an Anthropological overview of what is in store for women in India in this process of globalization and what type of information needs are likely to evolve due to this major change in the new socio-economic scenario. The ruthless game of globalization can only go on at the cost of the flesh and blood of ordinary people: the vulnerable are offered on its altar. People (women and men) do not hesitate to use members of their own kind, so long as faces remain invisible, in support of their own interests. For a patriarchal, capitalist, consumerist, globalize society, the lives of women and children become expendable.

**Methodology:** The present paper is totally based on secondary data. The data was drawn from various sources which have been duly acknowledged. Information on globalization and various issues related to globalization was obtained by consulting the websites concerned. The reports of the Government of India were also referred for obtaining the necessary data.

**Result and Discussion:** The data was analysed and presented in the following pages. An anthropological vision on the impacts of globalization on the society as well on women in India was highlighted in the paper. The data thus collected shows the status of Globalization in India, the significant role played by the new economic policy in promoting the Indian Economy, Does globalization cause poverty, Why are so many people opposed to globalization and Can globalization be controlled.

## Globalization in India

Globalization is a fact of life, which has come to stay. It is expected to be a major force for prosperity. The essentials of the New Economic Policy which gave impetus to the progress of Indian economy includes Privatization, Globalization, Modernization and Improving productivity and growth rate. Globalization in India is generally taken to mean 'integrating' the economy of the country with the world economy. This, in turn, implies opening up the economy to foreign direct investment by providing facilities to foreign companies to invest in different fields of economic activity in India; quantitative restrictions over a period of six years beginning 1997. Moreover, as a part of the agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), the Government of India issued a Presidential Ordinance of January 8, 1999 granting Exclusive Marketing Rights (EMRs) in the field of pharmaceutical and agricultural chemical products pending the adoption of product patent in 2005 [5]. As a further step towards globalization and opening up, India notified the Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) maintained by it [5].

## Globalization and Women in India

It's true that we are in the midst of a great revolution in the history of women. We see the evidence everywhere; the voice of women is increasingly heard in Parliament, courts and in the streets. While women in the West had to fight for over a century to get some of their basic rights, like the right to vote, the Constitution of India gave women equal rights with men from the beginning. Unfortunately, women in this country are mostly unaware of their rights because of illiteracy and the oppressive tradition. The status of women in any civilization

shows the stage of evolution at which the civilization has arrived. India is a society where the male is greatly revered. Women, get very little standing in this country. Since women do not take nutritious diet, it causes malnutrition, especially among pregnant or nursing women. The literacy rate among women is low compared to men. Very few girls attend to school or actually attend primary school [6].

As a result of globalization also there is no much change in the status of women in India, especially women in unorganized sector. They have been affected by unemployment, long working hours, migration, family breakdown, child labour, etc. As much as some women have come to enjoy the growth and foreign capital investment, more women have found no place to earn a living other than in the informal sector [7,8].

Globalization, no doubt, has offered tremendous opportunities. What has been the impact of globalization upon women? This issue has attracted immense attention of scholars and academics the world over, with some emphasizing the beneficial aspects of globalization and insisting that women have generally benefited from improvements in the world economy [9], while others stress upon its overall negative impact [10] which includes, but is not limited to a denial of entitlements as well as a violation of women's human rights. Central to a realization of the human rights of women is an understanding that women do not experience discrimination and other forms of human rights violations solely on the grounds of gender, but discrimination arises from the inter-sectionalist of race, caste, class, etc.

Globalization 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 the safety nets. On the other hand, there were 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.

Many critics fear that globalization, in the sense of integration of a country into world society, will exacerbate gender inequality. It may harm women-especially in the South--in several ways: 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.

The adverse impact of globalization upon women's livelihood, employment, education, health, etc has been highlighted by numerous national and international reports (BCR Report, 1987) [11]. Majority of these reports point out the increase in violence against women; deterioration of the health system; increase in female headed households as men lose jobs or are pushed out of their traditional income-generating roles; shrinking of resources available to women; increasing women's total labour hours, etc. "Growth can, and has become for many, jobless, voiceless, rootless and futureless," poignantly states the UNDP Human Development Report of 1996 [11,12].

Bhattacharya and Rahman, [13,14], reported while globalization and trade expansion resulted in an increase in women's work participation in trade-related activities in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka similar trends in employment were not evidenced in Pakistan. Though

faster annual growth in female employment in the tertiary sector was experienced in the urban areas, evidence based on some micro studies in an eastern state of India showed that women did move from unpaid family labour to wage work in Handloom and zari work, and some found employment opportunities in modernized mills (rayon) [15]. While some of the increase in labour force participation witnessed in parts of Asia may be due to greater recognition and quantification of women's work by enumerators, it is also viewed that there has been a genuine process of increasing participation by women in most of these countries [16].

Some case studies based primarily on Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and export oriented manufacturing units show that women are better off in EPZs than in domestic industries, especially when their total remuneration is taken into account [14,17]. Studies suggest that young single women were preferred while others show that the pay and working conditions are poor [18]. These areas need to be examined in detail for delineating the issues and arriving at possible solutions in view of their long-term implications for growth.

Fontana [6] suggests that trade liberalisation affects gender inequalities at all three levels that is, macro, meso and micro. According to this study 'gender gaps in market participation might narrow if the sectors that expand are more female-intensive than the sectors that contract (macro); public provision of social services that favour women (such as health and education) might be undermined, if loss of government revenue from reduced tariffs leads to cuts in such services (meso); female control over household spending is reduced or extended, depending on whether trade liberalisation destroys or creates sources of independent income for women (micro)'. DTI [14] has also analysed the impact of trade on women through three mechanisms – as producers and consumers of goods, and consumers of public services (Table 1).

Undoubtedly, globalization with its accompanying Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) cannot be viewed as a gender neutral process, for the accompanying spread of market ideologies and consumerism have led to increasing feminisation of poverty, casualisation of labour, increase in violence against women as well as their commodification among other things. Globalization has recast gender relations and altered the status and life condition of women. More women work outside the home in the wage labour force. While this has undermined traditional patriarchy, it has burdened women with a double load of work, exposed them to harshly exploitative conditions in the paid work place, and scarcely improved their material well-being. Women have suffered disproportionately from globalization, while seeing few of its benefits; their interests get lost somewhere in the jungle of

globalization, this is particularly true of India. For instance, SAP has led to the dismantling of the Public Distribution System in India, which has adversely impacted expenditure on food, which constitutes more than half of the total monthly expenditure of the average Indian family. It bears repeating here that lack of food not only increases the economic burden of women who have to go out to find resources necessary to purchase food, but they are the ones who eating last in family, get the least [5].

A look at the Table below reveals that expenditure on food in India continues to constitute at least 59.41% of the total expenditure in rural areas in 1999-2000, although it has declined from 63.18% in 1993-94. The corresponding proportion in urban areas is lower at a little under 50% of total expenditure. Higher the expenditure on food, higher the burden upon women. Women's problems are compounded by scarcity of water in general and safe drinking water in particular. Numerous studies reveal that women spend at least 2 hours per day in fetching and carrying water for the household from distant places, sometimes miles away. 'Miss Universe' may want coke and Miss World cry out for Pepsi, but an overwhelming majority of Indian women only cry out for safe drinking water.

In a country where a large proportion of the population lives below the poverty line, emphasis on Coke, Pepsi and bottled water seems more like saying "if they don't have bread, let them eat cake." To the multinational corporations this seems to make for a favourable climate for investment, a market worth Rs 48 crores (About 10 million USD), in bottled water. M.S. Swaminathan once said in lighter vein, "If men had to fetch and carry water, the water problem would have been solved long ago". How true, he was. Scarcity of safe drinking water has its corollary in the outbreak of numerous water borne diseases. India, studies reveal, loses 73 million workdays due to water related sickness every year [23]. This apart, globalization has immediate ramifications on women's health. Firstly, there is a growing trend of privatization of public health services and the introduction of user-fee services for treatment and medicine despite the fact that a major part of India lacks even primary healthcare services, with suitable and clean facilities, and with adequate medical supplies. The removal of price controls on pharmaceuticals and the opening of domestic markets to multinational corporations under globalization have added to healthcare burdens. Spiraling costs of even everyday medicines are a growing barrier to healthcare. The increased cost of medical care is the second most common cause of rural indebtedness. The prohibitive cost of health care results in women placing their health needs at the bottom of the scale in household priorities, seeking medical care too late or not at all. The upshot of the entire process is increase in maternal mortality, incidence

Issues	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects
Employment	Increase in quantity of jobs available. New alternatives to existing employment. Greater quality in terms of income and work conditions with development of new industries. Opening of new markets for goods and crafts, in particular traditional crafts.	Poor quality of opportunities. Insecurity of employments. Increase in part-time work, home based work, day-labouring and piece- based remuneration. Loss of traditional sector of activities and of business because of foreign competition.
Public Service Availability	More efficient and more adapted services in response to women's specific demands.	Decrease in service availability in some areas because not deemed profitable. Increase in the cost of services and medicines.
Price effects	Growing availability of cheaper foodstuff and goods.	As local production is displaced, gradually rising price of goods and greater sensitivity to fluctuating exchange rates
Wage gap	Unclear whether trade liberalization can have any effect on the wage gap	Competitive pressure may drive wages down as firms seek to minimize costs

Source: Jha and Ahmad, 2006 [19]

**Table 1:** Outlines different ways, in which Different issues might have Potential Effects impact women.

	1983		1993-94		1999-2000	
	Food	Non-Food	Food	Non-Food	Food	Non-Food
Rural	65.56	34.44	63.18	36.82	59.41	40.59
Urban	58.69	41.31	54.65	45.35	48.06	51.94

Source: National Human Development Report, 2001 Planning Commission, Govt. of India, March 2002 [20-22]

**Table 2:** Composition of Per Capita. Consumption Expenditure in India (in per cent).

of communicable diseases including Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B and AIDS, anaemia among women and curbing of life within the womb (female foeticide) [24]. The assertions of the votaries of globalization notwithstanding, the employment growth rate in India has declined in the nineties as compared to the eighties. The two tables below reveal a decline in the growth rate of employment as well as an increase in the incidence of unemployment.

Table 3 reveals the employment growth rate to have been 2.1% between 1983 and 1993-94, which declined to 1.6% between, 1993-94 and 1999-2000, a decline of 0.5%. The corresponding decline in the case of females is much higher at 0.8%, from 1.7% to 0.9%. It is significant to note that the rate of growth of employment for women declined at a faster rate in urban areas as compared to rural areas.

Corresponding with this decline in the growth rate, the incidence of unemployment too has increased. Table 4 shows the incidence of unemployment (combined) for all persons increased by 0.3% between 1983 and 1999-2000. The corresponding increase for males was from 2.3% to 2.5%, but for females, it was higher at 0.5%, increasing from 1.3% in 1983 to 1.8% in 1999- 2000. Significantly, the incidence of unemployment is higher in urban areas than in rural areas. It is noteworthy that the incidence of female unemployment in urban areas increased between 1983 and 1993-94 and declined thereafter. As against this, the incidence of male unemployment declined between 1983 and 1993-94 and increased thereafter. In rural areas, however, the incidence of unemployment of both males and females increased over this entire time period.

A parallel development may be witnessed in the increase in the percentage of women as marginal workers, particularly in the rural areas. Undoubtedly, the Census of India, 2001 reveals an increase in the workforce participation rates for women from 22.3% in 1991 to

25.7% in 2001. But, these statistics hide the fact that the percentage of women main workers<sup>23</sup> has come down from 16.0% to 14.7% in this period, while that of marginal workers <sup>24</sup> has increased by almost 5% from 6.2% to 11.0%. An area wise analysis reveals this trend to be more prevalent in the rural areas than in the urban areas. In the urban areas, as would be seen from Table 5 below, there is an increase in women main workers accompanied by a corresponding increase in the percentage of women marginal workers.

The marginalization of women in economic activities has the added impact of pushing an increasing number of women into the informal or casual sector, which is characterized by low productivity, minimal incomes, and a lack of economic and social security, and lack of enforcement of labour laws. For instance use of new technology in agricultural production has shifted women into operations which are unrecorded and unlisted as economic activity, being counted in home based production, leading to a greater invisibility of women's work. Not only are an increasing number of women pushed into the informal sector, but even in this sector they are to be found at the lower end of the scale with very few in entrepreneurial positions. Most women are involved in various kinds of low-income activity, in casual or seasonal work, often of an unskilled and physically demanding nature, with low productivity, long hours and little opportunity for upward mobility. The actual extent of their work in this sector becomes extremely difficult to gauge because many of them help in carrying out activities of the production process which are not counted as work at all, like bringing the clay and water for pottery, or pre-processing the yarn for textile production.

Here it would be pertinent to point out that while the Census of India reports an increase in the female workforce participation rates in general as well as area wise, the Human Development Report of South Asia, 2001 reveals a substantial decline in work participation rates for rural women in India. Evidently, male workforce participation rates

	1983 to 1993-94			1993-94 to 1999-2000		
	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
Combined	2.2	1.7	2.1	1.9	0.9	1.6
Rural	2.0	1.5	1.8	1.6	0.8	1.3
Urban	2.8	3.2	2.9	2.6	1.5	2.4

Source: National Human Development Report, 2001 Planning Commission, Govt. of India, March 2002 [20-22]

**Table 3:** Growth in Employment in India (in percent).

Total/ Rural/ Urban	Persons/ Males/ Females	Percentage to Total Population								
		Workers								
		Total Workers			Main Workers			Marginal Workers		
		1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
Total	Persons	36.7	37.5	39.3	33.5	34.1	30.5	3.2	3.3	8.7
	Males	52.6	51.6	51.9	51.6	51.0	45.3	1.0	0.6	6.6
	Females	19.7	22.3	25.7	14.1	16.0	14.7	5.6	6.2	11.0
Rural	Persons	38.8	40.0	42.0	34.8	35.8	31.0	4.0	4.3	10.9
	Males	53.8	52.6	52.4	52.6	51.8	44.5	1.2	0.7	7.9
	Females	23.1	26.8	31.0	16.1	18.7	16.8	7.0	8.0	14.2
Urban	Persons	30.0	30.2	32.2	29.2	29.5	29.3	0.8	0.7	2.9
	Males	49.1	48.9	50.8	48.5	48.6	47.5	0.5	0.4	3.4
	Females	8.3	9.2	11.8	7.3	8.1	9.1	1.0	1.0	2.4

Source: Census of India, 2001, Series 4, Punjab, Provisional Population Totals, Paper 3 of 2001[20-22]

**Table 5:** Work Participation Rates in India.



have shown minor fluctuations over this period. The female workforce participation rates, on the other hand, reveals a declining trend with higher work participation rates in the 1970's to the mid-eighties and a considerable decline thereafter. Not only have rural women's work participation rates declined, but the unpaid work burden of women in agricultural sector has actually increased.<sup>25</sup> Shift in control of forestland, export driven production, consequent fluctuations in world market prices, free trade in agricultural goods, lifting restrictions on imports, encouraging switching over from production of food grains from domestic consumption to commercial crops for export such as fruits, vegetables and flowers, cuts in public expenditure on agriculture such as on irrigation, infrastructure development, and research, cuts in subsidies, particularly on fertilizers and power, permitting sale or leasing of land to commercial houses, marketing of seeds treated with terminator technology, retrenchment due to increased mechanization and the consequent use of female labour to cut costs and increase profits have all negatively impacted the agriculture based population in India and led to an increase in the unpaid work burden of women and girls. Consequently, there has been increase in migration of the work force; feminization of the rural work force; women have lost access to the local markets for their products and are dislocated from traditional forms of livelihood. One interesting corollary of globalization and its consequent commodification of women may be seen in the immense increase in the number of fashion shows, sponsored by conglomerates.

The impact of globalization, then, is not limited to the economic

Year	Male	Female	Year	Male	Female
1972-73	54.5	31.8	1993-94	55.3	32.8
1977-78	55.2	33.1	1994-95	56	31.7
1987-88	53.9	32.3	1995-96	55.1	29.5
1989-90	54.8	31.9	1997	55	29.1
1990-91	55.3	29.2	1998	53.9	26.3

Source: Various Numbers of Sarvekshana (a Journal of the National Sample Survey Organisation), as cited in Human Development in South Asia, 2001 [20-22]

**Table 6:** Work Participation Rates for Rural Men and Women in India (in per cent).

States	Female Labour Force (%) (1999-2000)	Rural Female Labour Force (%) (1999-2000)	Growth in Female Employment (%) (1993-94 to 1999-2000)	Female Unemployment Rates (%) (1999-2000)		Women in Public sector (%) (2000)	Women Organized Private Sector (%) (2000)	Number of Females persons migrated per 1000 persons (1999-2000)	
				Rural	Urban			Rural	Urban
Andhra Prad	54.2	48.0	0.3	0.7	4.2	15.02	33.34	358	394
Assam	24.0	16.1	2.3	4.9	22.3	14.73	49.86	137	175
Bihar	26.3	17.4	3.0	0.6	9.4	6.61	6.80	295	340
Gujarat	44.6	41.3	2.2	0.3	2.6	14.60	9.09	518	478
Haryana	27.4	20.2	-3.1	0.5	4.6	15.07	11.65	557	592
Karnataka	45.4	38.1	0.8	0.3	4.7	22.87	40.96	431	396
Kerala	35.3	27.3	1.4	19.7	26.4	30.00	48.98	452	435
Madhya Prad	50.7	38.3	1.5	0.2	1.6	13.01	11.45	522	421
Maharashtra	46.3	43.7	-0.2	1.1	7.8	15.82	14.45	399	445
Orissa	40.6	30.2	1.0	1.6	6.7	11.87	12.24	399	423
Punjab	33.9	28.2	6.1	6.2	3.5	16.98	13.18	520	535
Rajasthan	50.2	38.9	0.5	0.2	3.7	13.28	15.98	524	481
Tamil Nadu	47.6	43.4	-0.3	1.2	5.8	25.35	35.60	405	391
Uttar Pradesh	29.1	20.1	1.4	0.6	4.6	9.09	10.41	501	477
West Bengal	22.2	16.5	-0.8	3.8	11.1	7.86	16.71	402	470

Source: NPC, Gender Development Report 2005[5]

**Table 7:** Labour Force Participation of Women in Indian States.

field, but extends over the entire life cycle of women. It has accentuated the existing disparities and discriminations against women. It is, indeed, paradoxical that on the one hand, all out efforts are being made for women's empowerment, while on the other; women are being disempowered through globalization. Noteworthy is the fact that the South Asian region is fast emerging as one of the most deprived regions of the world, with the largest number of people living in absolute poverty, of which 60% are women. As Jeanne Vickers [25] very pithily observes, "When we speak of

the 'poorest of the poor', we are almost always speaking about women. Poor men in the developing world have even poorer wives and children. And there is no doubt that recession, the debt crisis and structural adjustment policies have placed the heaviest burden on poor women, who earn less, own less and control less." That global poverty is increasingly assuming centre- stage and its resolution a major issue of concern at both national and international levels, is revealed by the fact that the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly included among other things halving poverty and hunger by the year 2015; promoting gender equality and empowering women as well as developing a global partnership for development.

## The Feminization of Labour

It is difficult to arrive at general statements about the specific effects of Globalization on women, since these are mediated by the level of development, forms of integration into the world economy and pre-existing socio- economic inequalities in a particular country. Nevertheless, and despite country- specific variations, the phenomenon of 'feminisation of the labour force' is emerging as a common theme in discussions of the ways in which global economic changes and market-led growth have impacted on women.

The term 'feminization of labour' is used in two ways. Firstly, it is used to refer to the rapid and substantial increase in the proportions of women in paid work over the last two decades. At the global level, about 70% in the 20-54 age groups are members of the paid workforce. In developing countries as a group, the figure is lower at 60% [26].

These figures do not capture women's participation in rural and urban informal sectors in developing countries which is usually less visible and therefore undercounted. However, this low wage informal sector continues to be an important employer of poor women in developing and transition countries [9]. The term 'feminization of labour' is also used to describe the flexibilization of labour for women and men, a fallout of the changing nature of employment where irregular conditions once thought to be the hallmark of women's 'secondary' employment have become widespread for both sexes. Informal activities, sub-contracting, part-time work and home-based work have proliferated while rates of unionization have declined [27].

The deregulation of labour markets, fragmentation of production processes, de-industrialization and emergence of new areas of export specialisation have all generated an increased demand for low-paid, flexible female labour. Some researchers have emphasized the poor wages and working conditions, the precariousness of the work and the fact that mainly younger women without children are given these opportunities [28,29].

National Sample Survey data on Employment and Unemployment in India during 1999–2000 estimated female workforce at about 124 million. This constituted about 31% of total workforce in India: More than 88% of female workforce was found to be engaged in rural areas. The female workforce participation rates were as low as 29.5 % in rural areas and 12.4 per cent in urban locations. As per NPC, Gender Development Report [5] Employment of women in the public sector increased substantially during 1981–91 period. However, the subsequent decade (1991–2000) revealed that the proportion of women employed in private sector was more than that in the public sector. Yet women constitute only a low 17.6 per cent of the total employment in the organized sector (public and private sectors taken together). Employment of women is the highest (36 per cent of total 43 female employments) in the traditional low wage activities such as Agriculture, forestry and fishing. The occupational distribution indicates that the gender segregation of tasks and the underlying constraints of low levels of education and skill formation among the female workers confine them to low paid, unskilled jobs compared to their male counterparts.

### **Favourable Effects of New Economic Policy on Women**

Globalization has opened by broader communication lines and brought more companies as well as different worldwide organizations into India. This provides opportunities for not only working women, but also women who are becoming a larger part of the work force. With new jobs for women, there are opportunities for higher pay, which raises self-confidence and brings about empowerment among women. This in turn provides equality between men and women, something that Indian women have been struggling with their entire lives. Globalization has the power to uproot the traditional views towards women, so they can take an equal stance in society [30].

Globalization brings all women together to act. The modern development of technology offers the possibilities for women to communicate more directly through net working both within and across countries. Computer aided data bases and e-mail are increasingly being used by women's groups. Particularly in India, the productive capacity of women should be increased through access to capital, resources, credit, land, technology, information, technical assistance and training so as to raise their income and improve nutrition, education and health care and status within the household. The release of women's potential is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty so that women can share

fully in the benefits of development and in the products of their own labour.

### **Unfavorable Effects of the New Economic Policy on Women**

Globalization has had negative implication for Indian women. Their plight is similar to those of women in other developing regions such as Africa and Asia. According to Vandana Shiva, an Indian ecofeminist and scholar, globalization along with the support of organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have created slave wages. These wages are not necessarily the result of unjust societies, but of the fact that global track devalues the worth of people's lives and work. Though globalization has brought jobs to rural India, the work available to women is almost always poorly paid, mentally and physically unhealthy, decreasing or insecure [31].

Women are suffering two fold. As they move into work force, their domestic responsibilities are

not alleviated. Women work two full time jobs. The mixture of corporate capitalism and western culture models is dissolving family and community social controls as witnessed by higher rates

of family violence, rape, divorce and family breakdown [32].

- The traditional role of women in agriculture, livestock and animal husbandry, khadi and village industries including handicrafts, handlooms fisheries, etc. is being undermined because mechanization and automation is becoming prevalent in the market based economy which will adversely affect the village-based traditional economy.

- Privatization and reduction of public services will reduce regular employment opportunities for women.

- Globalization has increased the number of low paid, part-time and exploitative jobs.

- Occupational sex segregation will be a stark reality in the open economy. This will tend

to result in worse working conditions, lower pay and inferior career opportunities.

- Curtailment of state provisions in child care, community care and social security, will increase the dual burden of employment and family responsibilities for women in general.

- With male migration on the increase from the rural to urban sectors, the women have to bear the triple burden of caring, farming and paid employment in the rural sector.

- In the neo liberal work practices, contract work, unsocial hours sectors, the women have

to bear the triple burden of caring, farming and paid employment in the rural sector.

- With the disappearing social and financial safety nets and government subsidy, the poverty alleviation programmes, universal education and woman oriented health programmes will be adversely affected.

- Trade liberalization will allow MNCS to enter into food processing and other feminised industries which will lead to reduction in low skilled women labour.

- Privatisation of education and training will increase the cost of getting educated. When family budgets are readjusted, the female children will be the main casualty because most of the resources will be spent to educate the male children.
- Migration of women especially for economic reasons often gives rise to exploitation and trafficking in women at the local, regional and global levels.
- Open market economy leads to price rise in food and other basic necessities. Women who have to directly deal with family subsistence have to cope with such changes.

Basically, Liberalization and Globalization of the Economy will marginalize majority of women

in India due to reduction of employment opportunities, reduction of wages, casualisation of jobs and women workers, execution from the modernized production process due to lack of education and training.

### Steps to Cope with the Changing Scenario

It is seen that the situation facing the majority of Indian women is far from positive. However, efforts are underway to circumvent many of these problems through governmental and the non- governmental programmes. Both the government and NGOs seem to be aware of the fact that the globalization process requires proper focus on rural development, education, health and child care and proper gainful employment for the underprivileged at the initial stages.

The price rise associated with desubsidisation, marketisation and liberal export – import policy, have an adverse impact on consumption by the poor in general and that of women in particular. The rising food prices and the reduced or stagnant food subsidies adversely affect the nutritional intake and the nutritional status of the poor women. Similarly, the declining real expenditure on medical and health services adversely affect the status of women as well as children.

Since poverty alleviation programmes are the main responsibilities of the Government, there are direct and sector wise schemes. Some of the important schemes are:

- Public Distribution System for Food Security
- Work Security through various Schemes
- Health Schemes and Services
- Child Care Schemes
- Credit Schemes
- Insurance Schemes

There are also sector wise schemes such as Small Farmers Development Agency and other Schemes of the Department of Agriculture, Schemes of the Dairy Development Boards in the dairy sector, schemes of Forest Corporation in the forestry sector etc. The main goal of the Department of Women and Child Development is to empower women and to bring them within the purview of the mainstream development process. Also, the capacities and capabilities of women addressing their own development have been the main focus of important NGOs and Women's Organizations. Innovative approaches for poverty alleviation such as savings, credit, and asset creation for poor women have evolved in India as well as in other developing countries. These experiments have been able to organize poor women to –

- Strengthen their capacity to survive
- Meet their social needs
- Enter into income generating activities
- Increase their savings
- Utilize the savings along with available credit
- Improve their socio-economic conditions and that of their families
- Sustain the process.

NGOs such as Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in Ahmadabad, Working Women's Forum (WWF) in Chennai, Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), New Delhi, etc, have done commendable work in these directions. The Government Departments have also given the necessary boost to such experiments through the support for expansion in many ways.

### Why are so many people opposed to globalization?

Once popular among business and corporate leaders, the term has been appropriated more

recently by many groups on the political left. They are opposed to globalization for several reasons:

- It is used as an ideology by the powerful to deceive the people about illusory benefits of a dehumanizing system; in other words, globalization is really a myth that needs to be exposed, a form of false consciousness that prevents people from seeing their true interests.
- Insofar as it stands for a real process, it perpetuates the inequity and exploitation inherent
- in capitalism; globalization polarizes the globe and therefore creates an even more unjust world.
- It is not subject to democratic control and therefore cannot serve the interests of the people at large; new forms of democratic governance and economic regulation will be needed to overcome this problem.
- Due to the scale of change, it intensifies long-standing problems, such as the deterioration of the environment.

Globalization has thus become a tool in the symbolic politics of oppositional movements, a rallying cry in their assault on diverse global ills. In part, this represents the revival of an old-left agenda after the end of the Cold War and the demise of communism as a viable ideological option. In part, it demonstrates the opportunities for mobilizing around new issues (e.g., human rights) presented by the concepts and networks created in globalization. Among “progressive” forces, it is fair to say, an anti-globalization consensus has been crystallizing that is also reflected in ties among activist organizations.

Apart from this progressive opposition, there is also a more conservative kind. Various religious groups, notably Islamic activists, oppose globalization because to them it represents a civilization threat: the imposition of alien values, homogenization of the globe on secular terms. Their opposition, supported by some nonreligious groups, often takes the form of a particularistic defense of communal tradition. Both “right” and “left” opponents of globalization tend to regard the United States as a hegemonic power that influences globalization to its own advantage, harming the economic, cultural, and environmental interests of the rest of the world.

### Does globalization diminish cultural diversity?

There are many reasons to think that globalization might undermine cultural diversity: multinational corporations promote a certain kind of consumerist culture, in which standard commodities, promoted by global marketing campaigns exploiting basic material desires, create similar lifestyles--"Coca-Colonization" backed by the power of certain states, Western ideals are falsely established as universal, overriding local traditions--"cultural imperialism" modern institutions have an inherently rationalizing thrust, making all human practices more efficient, controllable, and predictable, as exemplified by the spread of fast food--"Mc Donaldization" the United States exerts hegemonic influence in promoting its values and habits through popular culture and the news media--"Americanization".

But there are also good reasons to think that globalization will foster diversity: interaction across boundaries leads to the mixing of cultures in particular places and practice—pluralization cultural flows occur differently in different spheres and may originate in many places— differentiation integration and the spread of ideas and images provoke reactions and resistance— contestation global norms or practices are interpreted differently according to local tradition; the universal must take particular forms—globalization diversity has itself become a global value, promoted through international organizations and movements, not to mention nation-states— institutionalization.

To some extent, the issue of diversity is now the subject of global cultural politics, and therefore unlikely to be settled by argument and evidence. Scholars can offer some cautions: whether diversity diminishes depends on what yardstick you use (e.g., linguistic diversity may be more threatened than culinary diversity) homogenization and heterogenization may actually operate in tandem or even reinforce each other.

### Possibilities and Opportunities

On the positive side, globalization has contributed to bring about welcome changes in the lives of women who have been able to avail of the opportunities, which have opened up in the various sectors of development. These are –

1. Enhanced opportunities for women in sectors as a result of marketization, privatization and larger foreign investment
2. The scope for productivity and wage increase is greater with new technology
3. A large number of opportunities in the export oriented industries such as computer software, modern food processing, handicrafts where India enjoys comparative advantage are now available to women
4. The rapid growth expected from the new economic policy is expected to generate large employment opportunities for both men and women. Besides, the policy will provide greater opportunities for migration and vertical mobility
5. The introduction of modern household gadgets is expected to reduce the drudgery of women associated with the domestic work.
6. The new economic climate under which decentralization, individualized based working is likely to increase may reduce the burden on the women. Women can perform some of the jobs at home without sacrificing the other tasks such as home managers, child bearers, and care takers.

7. Prospects of higher and quality education have become feasible for those women who can afford them, economically and socially.
8. Employment in technological and other advanced sectors, which have global bearing, has opened up for suitably qualified women.
9. With changing attitude towards women, especially in the urban areas, women enjoy more egalitarian set of gender relationship,
10. Augmentation of women's movements through exposures at the international level will help bring about major changes in the economic, social and political lives of women.
11. Reduction in gender inequalities will have positive effect on women's empowerment in the socio-economic context.
12. Attitudinal changes towards women's role in the family due to good education, benefits of family planning and health care, child care, good job opportunities etc., will surely help in the development of more confident and healthy women
13. Positive approach to economic and cultural migration will facilitate women to be exposed to better prospects at the international level [33].

### Can globalization be controlled?

The issue of controlling or regulating globalization concerns elite officials of states and intergovernmental organizations as well as opponents of neoliberalism in pursuit of global justice. They often share a sense that the current thrust of globalization may be irreversible and out of anyone's control. They have several good reasons to think so: one of globalization's driving forces, technological innovation, is inherently unpredictable globalization results from the interplay of many parties (economic and political), none of which exerts dominant influence old regulatory agencies devised by states cannot control processes that exceed their territorial authority apart from minimal rules of competition itself, the world lacks a single set of rules that serves to regulate transnational behavior. This concern has given rise to a now-fashionable interest in "global governance," or the design of institutions that authoritatively manage and regulate actions, processes, and problems of global scope or effect. While some believe such governance is desirable but lacking, others think it is in fact emerging in the work of various international organizations and groups active in civil society. Though advocates of global governance portray it as enhancing democracy, defenders of traditional democratic values and state interests have questioned such claims.

### Conclusion

Globalization has "reduced the ability of women in developing nations to find paid work that offers security and dignity" [1]. Although women's roles in the Labor force have changed from traditional agricultural and domestic roles, to manufacturing and assembly production, the overall effect of globalization (based on the literature used in this analysis) has proven to be negative. There are empirical claims of women gaining more autonomy over their own wages and a feeling of independence from traditional gender roles in society- especially in marriage and childrearing. Women are also becoming the breadwinners in most households because of the lack of male responsibility in the household. Young daughters are financially supporting their parents and fellow siblings, while mothers (married or single) are seeking informal work to provide for their children.

Economic theorizing frequently follows in the steps of political reality. Accordingly a large number of economists engaged in the task



of formulating an intellectual rationale for globalization. The national scenario at present is not as much encouraging as it was a few years ago. India has to continue to tread the globalization path cautiously. The New Economic Policy reforms have had positive as well as negative impact on Women in general and rural women in particular. Due to illiteracy and unawareness, rural women have been subjected to exploitations.

The changing trends as a result of structural adjustment policies have affected them in both ways. However, in view of the new globalization and New Economic Policies, a rapid growth rate is expected in export-oriented industries and there will be an opportunity to generate large scale employment for both men and women, as a result of marketisation, privatization and larger foreign investment.

In spite of, this in general, the impact of globalization on women and work varies from sector to sector. In most cases globalization expands opportunities for women in work place, but it does not remove barriers to advancement, ameliorate the predominance of low paying menial jobs held by women. Further, long working hours, relatively lower wages, the mass of influx of women into paid work, and insecure working conditions in the globalized economies have led to family breakdown. This reminds the early periods of the industrial revolution and is one of the most important social effects of the new type of economy.

In summary, globalization plays a definite role in increasing opportunities for women in the work place. It does not however solve the problems of the movement of women beyond low paying and menial jobs. In addition, it may exaggerate the effect of recession which has traditionally hurt women more than men. For a better world, all governments at central and state level, international institutions and non-governmental organizations, should cooperate with each other for actions in order to improve the lot of the women.

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