Globalization and Its Economic & Education Impact on Women in India

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Abstract

This paper examines globalization and its impact on higher education for the women in India and also discusses the major challenges, possibilities and opportunities that the globalization brought to higher education. Socially the majority of Indian women is still tradition bound and is in a disadvantageous position. A large group of working women of India is in the rural and unorganized sectors. 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.

For this purpose it is necessary to identify opportunities and threats to education sector and analyze them in a deep manner. The major objective is to make the segment of higher education in India more competitive globally.

Key Words: Globalization, Impact on women, Education and Globalization, Economic Impact on Globalization

Introduction

To understand the impacts of Globalization on women first we have to understand the term Globalization. Globalization has become a buzzword today. In everywhere of life the word has been used and abused in most part of the world. It has become a household phenomena now. In the last few years, Globalization has touched almost all spheres of life in most parts of the world. Globalization refers to the increasing global interconnectedness, resulting in a new world order characterized by greater movements, linkages, persistent interactions and exchanges. There is an urgent need today for thinking through a new system of national education, commensurate with a globalized world.

In a global society people sail and sink together. Broadly speaking Globalization is an Indian concept which has been imported from the developed countries of the world considering that the world is one family and the whole world is one village. Education system of any nation is greatly influenced by the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of the society. Tremendous changes are brought in all these aspects due to “Globalization”. Globalization is the result of human innovation technological progress. It refers to movements of the people and knowledge across the
international borders. The term has turned into common usage since 1980s, reflecting technological advances that have made it easier. In general sense 'Globalization' can mean closer contact between different parts of the world, with increasing possibilities of personal exchange, mutual understanding and friendship between “world citizens” and creation of global civilization.

Globalization is defined and interpreted differently by different authors. According to Robert.J.Schreiter,

Globalization “is about the increasingly interconnected character of the political, economic , and social life of the peoples on this planet.”

Some other claim that Globalization is not merely a process of economic integration, but actual universalization and com modification of knowledge, technology and communication, culture, health care, heritage, genetic codes and natural resources such as land, forests, air and water.

But Globalization is a double edged process as far as women are concerned. On one hand, majority of women find themselves stripped off the benefit of social security, government subsidy, protection of labor rights and 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.

Economic Impact on women in India

Globalization has had an adverse impact on all aspects, which have already been pushed by centuries of oppression. Women from all categories have been badly affected by globalization economically. In rural areas the realm of the economy, the decreasing job opportunities and the massive retrenchments are pushing women back to their homes, thereby seriously affecting their ability of social interaction, resulting in the strengthening of feudal attitudes. Four-fifths of all women workers toil in the fields, agricultural laborers or or poor peasants. The trends of retrenchments in the cities and industrial recession has meant that there are even ways for women to leave the village. Women, who are anyhow treated as second-class citizen in the existing semi-feudal environment, have in this period of globalization, been marginalized even further. In addition the increasing economic hardship, adds to the enormous burden in looking after the home, where every small saving entails greater labor. The traditional role of women in livestock animal husbandry, Agriculture, Khadi and village industries including handicrafts, hand looms
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. Here social injustice is becoming an accepted reality. The weak, the poor and the inexperienced ones are pushed to the outer rims of the society. Globalization works for the benefits of the rich while the poor become commodities since they are used as cheap labor. It is very clear that the present economic pattern no longer serves the interest of the majority of the people. It rather destroys the lives of many people due to its unjust distribution of wealth, exploitation and deprivation of basic needs. Indeed, it has created a situation of marginalization, exclusion and social disintegration. Particularly in the rural areas their hardships their degradation and their humiliation has increased enormously.

But, in the last few years, in globalized urban Indian women tend toward the relative economic independence which is viewed with a degree of ambivalence by many men. Due to globalization structural change in the economics of the region has also played an important role in altering the status of women. Girls who once stayed at home until marriage are now potential earners as they tale jobs in the multitude of factories producing clothing and consumer items for export. From small towns to big, snug families to urban alienation, young women are going the extra mile to earn their living and carve out new careers. Be it a Flight planner or Squadron leader, or investment Bankers or the country heads of foreign banks or chiefs of marketing and sales at Microsoft India or Infosys or assets managers of large mutual funds or private banking institution, animation to media to fashion designing women seem to have come a long way and travelled the roads less taken hitherto. And even a wide range of service sector jobs for eg., IT, BPOs, Medical transcription, data entry, geographical information systems, office clerical jobs, airlines ticketing, customer care are being handled by women. But it does not mean that all the sectors in which women are working earning and thus becoming strong are wrong but there are lot’s of sectors which are exploiting women for this sake and thus it should be thought deeply and should be stopped.

In spite of all the factors, it is also a fact that, due to economic impact of globalization working overseas in women increased and working overseas is a post modern condition as women extend the parameters of working outside the home to its max. Potential working
outside the country and sending remittances back home to their husband and children.

At the lower economic levels women's share of earnings materially improves the budget of progressive families, at the upper levels they may work only for prestige or for providing for their personal creative satisfaction where women do not work to each, they may take up some voluntary social work.

It is due to Globalization that the economic prosperity and economic development that actually raises the status of women rather than feminist activism or government policy. The improvement in women status was an added bonus an inadvertent that was the fruit of economic progress rather than a result of feminist agenda.

**WTO on Higher Education in India**

The proposed WTO initiatives are expected to bring pressure on the universities worldwide into sharp focus. It is believed that academia would be significantly altered if higher education worldwide were subject to the structures of the WTO. The viewpoint of University serving as a broad public goods would be altered, and in turn would be subjected to the commercial pressures of the marketplace guided by the international treaties and legal requirements. Subjecting academia to the rigors of a WTO-enforced marketplace may destroy the very objectives of the higher education system in general and universities in particular, which were established with great hopes of contributing towards achieving the goals of national development and identity. The implications are many fold and hardly understood. “It is especially alarming, but not surprising to learn, that the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Office of Service Industries is behind the effort to commercialize higher education in the United States and worldwide.”

As far as the quality, access, relevance and equity of higher education is concerned little is yet known about the consequences of GATS. Also to the extent of GATS’ influence on the national authority to regulate higher education systems, and unforeseen consequences on public subsidies for higher education. There is
this fear of unknown with regard to impact of WTO and GATS on the Higher Education sector that is haunting the minds of those concerned with higher education in India.

The impact of globalization and WTO & GATS on the Higher Education would be multidimensional, it would be on:

- The higher education policy, programmes and its implementation;
- The very system of higher education;
- the structure, functions and structure-function relations;
- the accreditation and assessment of higher education;
- the role of regulatory bodies;
- the individual institutional policy and programmes; and finally on
- the acts and statutes of universities and state education acts.

If higher education becomes a part of the WTO it necessitates restructuring of the higher education system, not only to cater to the new set of international regulations, but also to cater to the international market place, which means universities are to guarantee market access to educational products and institutions of all kinds. The trade in education is probably the most complex one due to its complex nature and its long-term benefits. Nevertheless, efforts are now under way to develop guidelines and regulations to institute free trade also in higher education. The WTO is expected to facilitate academic institutions and other education providers, without controls to set up branches in other than their own country, export degree programs, award degrees and certificates with minimal restriction, invest in overseas educational institutions, employ instructors for their foreign ventures, set up educational and training programs through distance mode etc.

Glimpses of different models operating in India at present are:

i) Consumption abroad – information dissemination and recruitment of students through:
   - Information centers of various countries set up by embassies
   - Private Agencies

ii) Commercial Presence / Franchisee

iii) Twining programmes

iv) Cross border supply universities
Campus of A country university in B country
• Distance mode of Learning/Virtual University.

Possibilities and opportunities:
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

• Employment in technological and other advanced sectors, which have global bearing, has opened up for suitably qualified women.
• With changing attitude towards women, especially in the urban areas, women enjoy more egalitarian set of gender relationship.
• 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.
• Reduction in gender inequalities will have positive effect on women’s empowerment in the socio-economic context.
• 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.

Globalization has also contributed to the creation of new associations of women and the strengthening of their networks to offer mutual support and resources.

Conclusion

• Globalization has truly benefited women across the country. While the process is irreversible, it is important that the government and all organization working for the cause of women are conscious about this divide between rural and urban women, organized and unorganized sector and ensure that a significant number should not be left out or alienated in the process.
• Globalization has raised hopes of women for a better and elevated status arising out of increased chances to work but, at the same time, it has put them in a highly contradictory situation where they have the label of economically independent paid workers but are not able to enjoy their economic liberty in real sense of the term.
• Privatization and reduction of public services has reduced regular employment opportunities for women, the new concept of employment which is a result of
globalization is 'contractual employment', i.e., especially IT, BPO, Malls, Customer Care, etc., which is refined version of "irregular unstable employment" and has adverse economic implication on women.

Specially globalization has benefited women a lot in many urban areas and also in many aspect but in this era of globalization for gaining simple benefits we should not forget out patriotism, culture and dignity. So we may hope that the coming new era will be an era of globalized women having high degree of cultural values with full economic independence.

References: