

WORKING WOMEN FACING SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THE GLOBAL ERA

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Abstract: *Globalization is a double edged process as far as women are concerned. The process of globalization and type of information needed likely to evolve around the major change in the status of women with the socio-economic scenario. On one hand there are possibilities of better education facilities and opportunities at the transnational sense though very attractive for the privileged few. And on the other hand, majority of women in developing countries find themselves stripped off the benefit of social security, government subsidy protection of labor rights and then safety nets. 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 of Indian women who can be utilized as development resources in many ways. This paper discusses the overview of the globalized women and opportunities provided to them. It also discusses the legal and social problems faced by them while working in various circumstances.*

Key words: *Globalization, working women, opportunities, hazards, etc.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The traditional role of women in agriculture, livestock and animal husbandry, Khadi and village industries including handicrafts, handlooms fisheries, etc, has been undermined because of mechanization and automation which is becoming prevalent in the market based economy adversely affect the based traditional economy. Privatisation and reduction of public services reduced regular employment opportunities for women. Globalisation has increased the number of low paid, part-time and exploitative jobs. Occupational sex segregation is stark reality in the open economy. This tends to result in worse working condition, lower pay and inferior career opportunities. Curtailment of state provisions in child care, community status and social security, increases the dual burden of employment and family responsibilities of women today. With male migration on the increase from the city to another city, the women have to bear the triple burden of caring and paid employment. This all has made women work wherever the wage takes them and their safety in return is a biggest social challenge of Indian society.

Globalization is a fact of life, which has come to stay. It is expected to be a major force for prosperity. The process of globalization and type of information needed likely to evolve around the major change in the status of women with the socio- economic scenario. Globalization is a double edged process as far as women are concerned. On one hand there are possibilities of better education facilities and opportunities at the transnational sense though very attractive for the privileged few. On the other hand, majority of women in developing countries find themselves stripped off the benefit of social security, government subsidy protection of labor rights and then safety nets. 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.

2. IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON WORKING WOMEN IN INDIA:

The positive side the 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:

- Potentials of higher and quality education have become feasible for those women who can afford them, economically and socially.
- 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.
- Step up 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.

- Changes in perspective 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.
- Positive approach to economic and cultural migration will facilitate women to be exposed to better prospects at the international level.

This has resulted in broader communication lines and has attracted different organizations in India. It has provided opportunities for not only working men alone but also women, who are becoming a larger part of the work population ratio. With new jobs for women, there are opportunities for higher pay, which raises self-confidence and brings about independence. Further it can promote equality between the genders, for which Indian women have been struggling since a long period. Therefore, globalization uproots the traditional treatment towards women to afford them an equal stance in society.

Despite the positive impact of globalization through increased employment opportunities for women, globalization has a darker, more sinister side. Although more women are now seeking paid employment, a vast majority of them are paid very less or at times not paid at all, especially in unskilled jobs in the informal sector. Lack of job security working women in India are more likely to be subjected to intense exploitation; they are exposed to more and more risks that cause health hazards and are forced to endure greater levels of physical and mental stress. Thus it would appear that globalization has made many international corporations richer by the billions at the expense of women who are suffering enormously due to this expansion of corporate empires. The women with such circumstances faces the below mentioned problems:

3. HEALTH:

In the era of globalization one of the common menaces faced by the working class is the increasing threat to job security, which in turn negatively impacts the health of female workers. Among the workers in the informal sector a large number of them are women, who have no job security. They are often unskilled workers who receive low wages. Availability of work is irregular; and when work is available, women must work long hours. It is not only in the unorganized sector or in small enterprises, but also in the modern sectors like the Information Technology and the automobile sectors where working women are forced to work for more than 12 hours. The uncertainties of obtaining work and the dire need to retain a position in the midst of intense competition cause mental tension, strained social relationships, psychological problems and chronic fatigue, all of which are difficult to prove as work-related. The advent of assembly line jobs and the increased use of machinery have resulted in a degradation of working conditions for women in India. Unemployment, underemployment and temporary work are more common among women than among men. This subset of workers does not have any social security or health care benefits. As a result, the work-related illnesses, which they suffer from, remain hidden. Furthermore, long-term unemployment constitutes a serious risk for the worker's emotional stability, because it leads to poverty and deteriorates self-image and self-esteem.

4. PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIETY AND FAMILY:

Though more and more women seek paid employment, the stereotypical attitude towards women and their perceived role in the familial hierarchy has not undergone much of change. Women continue to be perceived as weak, inferior, second-class citizen. This discrimination is also extended to the workplace even today. The improper and insufficient dietary intake along with the heavy workload results in health disorders. In addition, this perception that they alone are responsible for the domestic work, leads to a feeling of guilt when they are not able to look after the children or family members due to their official work, often resulting in emotional disorders. The women are often pressurized to leave jobs for reason to up bring her children which is believed to be one of their major responsibilities in her family life. Therefore, both the workload and household pressures results in emotional, psychological and physical imbalance which makes her weaker and helpless further resulting in resigning from one of it.

5. SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

One of the evils of the modern society is the sexual harassment female workers endure from their male counterparts and other members of the society. Regardless of whether they are skilled or unskilled laborers or work in the organized or unorganized sector, a large number of women are harassed sexually at their workplaces. In addition to sexual harassment in the workplace, women who are employed during the night shift often face hard time regarding their safety and protection. They often face cruelty of the men who are not a part of their offices but are out on roads thinking women as a secondary gender, not equal to men and many other personnel issues. The Sexual Harassment Act, has although protected the women from various crimes of harassment at workplaces but still there are certain major punishable and counseled laws to be implemented keeping women at an equal gender level.

6. NIGHT SHIFTS:

For several years women have been working in hospitals, telecom department and fish processing industries during the night shifts. In the era of globalization, there is increase in number of women working at night shift -call centers and export oriented companies located in the Export Processing Zone employing women in larger capacity during the night shift, without any proper protection or transport facilities to them. The Factories Act also a landmark piece of legislation, as it theoretically nature could not provide sufficient protection to women workers as its legislative intent was to enact laws that protected women from harassment and exploitation at the workplace. But with the demand of time the protection of women became a major necessity for the companies as well as for the nation. Under Section 66 of the Factories Act expressly prohibits employment of women in night shifts, varies the limits on night shifts. The Act also provides for exemption from restriction of working women in fish-curing or fish canning factories. The court has extended the protection to women workers and transportation is also one of the main aspects among the guidelines of the Act.

Lacking with protection against any crime, women continue to work in the same circumstances. With day to day changing trends liberal women working in every field during night shifts, faces some or the other harassment. The present global scenario has witnessed women entering all fields despite various societal pressures. Thus with regard to night works, though there are guidelines provided by the highest court of the country, it is essential to ensure if the guidelines are carried out in reality towards protecting the women. Further, it would be highly appreciable if preventions are taken to curb the activities that lead to harassment and also ensure that each and every woman is safe and secure to move and work where they feel.

7. CONCLUSION:

From the above observations, it is evident that the harassment of women is a major social problems with the wide spread entry of women into the labor force. Sexual harassment is a multidimensional phenomenon that needs to be studied from multidisciplinary perspectives. No doubt, the aspects of globalization have provided women with greater opportunities to work but women are still treated as thrash. However, it has also led to gender wage differentials and the marginalization of women which is clearly reflected through segregation of women workers in certain specific jobs. Unfavorable working hours, lack of training and skill up-gradation opportunities and lesser career mobility in the formal sector of economy still prevail in almost every country. Therefore, a new vision for the future is required and there is a need to create an alternative society based on gender justice, ecological sustainability and local global democracy.

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