



International Research Journal of Humanities, Language and Literature

ISSN: (2394-1642)

Impact Factor 6.959 Volume 9, Issue 5, May 2022

Association of Academic Researchers and Faculties (AARF)

Website-www.aarf.asia, Email : editoraarf@gmail.com

GLOBALIZATION'S EFFECT ON INDIAN WOMEN

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Abstract: Globalization, the process of international integration that arises from the interchange of world views, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture, has impacted India in many ways. One of the most significant impacts of globalization has been on the status of women in Indian society. In this paper, we will explore the effects of globalization on women in India and analyze the changes that have occurred in their lives. Globalization has brought about significant positive changes in the lives of women in India. One of the most important changes has been in the area of employment opportunities. In addition to employment opportunities, globalization has also brought about changes in the educational opportunities available to women in India.

However, the effects of globalization have not been entirely positive for women in India. One of the most significant negative impacts has been on the traditional role of women in the family. Another negative effect of globalization has been the increase in violence against women in India. Overall, globalization has brought about significant changes for Indian women, but there is still a long way to go in terms of achieving gender equality and empowering women.

The empowerment of women is becoming very important in the present scenario in the country. The India women are coming forward to compete with their male counterparts in various spheres of life. The males and females feel the effects of economic globalization and privatization in quite different manner, resulting out of in-depth differences in gender roles and expectations. The women are getting more and more involved and active as they accept lower wages. The result is that although there is an increase in female participation, they are disempowered in the field of economy. The burden of family work rests upon women and they have very little liberty to spend even their own salary.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda – “The best thermometer to the progress of nation is it’s treatment of women.’ The meaning of globalization is interpreted in different ways by different people. It is, therefore, an ambiguous term. Globalization, hence, is defined in various ways in varied dimensions like – social, political, cultural economic technological etc. There are certain factors which affect the life of each individual. Being able to assert control over those life-affecting factors is labeled as “Empowerment”.

In 1985, the International Women Conference at Nairobi introduced Women Empowerment as a concept. The following factors have been included by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNDFW) in its definition of Women Empowerment –

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the way in which these relations maybe 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”.

This paper intends to analyze the effects of Globalization on Indian Women and the changes that have occurred in their lives consequently.

Positive Effects of Globalization on Indian Women:

Significant positive changes in the lives of Indian women have been brought about through Globalization. The area of employment opportunities has greatly been changed, resulting in getting many MNCs (Multinational companies) established in India. As a result, more job opportunities have been opened for Indian women. They are now getting chance to work in various different fields like insurance, banking, marketing, software development. Consequently, the Indian women have become economically independent and have also been able to exert themselves in the public sphere. Thus, with the growth of Indian economy, education has become accessible to more and more women. The women, hence, are entering the workforce, which is adding to the economic growth of the country. There has been an increase in the demand for workers, especially in the fields of IT and BPOs. The technological advancement and Internet have enabled women to pursue higher education and enter the fields, which were dominated by men traditionally. Increased participation of women in the process of decision making, in their homes and in the society, is the result of their economic empowerment.

Negative Effects of Globalization on Indian Women:

Every coin has two sides. So is the case with any policy or project. Globalization also has not been entirely positive for Indian women. Traditional roles of women as mothers or wives, especially if they are working women is the one most affected and questioned. As the culture of nuclear families and breakdown of joint or extended families is rapidly growing, it is upon the women alone to manage both – the household chores and workplace. The pressure and stress of women has thus affected women to participate fully in the workforce. They continually have to try to maintain a balance between work and family responsibilities.

Next aspect to be taken up under the head of negative effects of Globalization is- Gender inequality. This is to be observed mostly in the rural areas. The women have lesser opportunities for advancements and progress in their careers as compared to men and are also paid less than men for the same work.

Increase in violence against Indian women is another negative effect of Globalization. Cyber crime and online harassment have become more prevalent with the rise of social media and Internet. They constantly face fear and anxiety as they are often the targets of such crimes.

In conclusion, Globalization has had positive as well as negative effects on women in India. It has brought about remarkable changes for women in India, but there is still lots to do to achieve gender equality and women empowerment. Until and unless there is an understanding of the plight of women in the process of Globalization, it is difficult for the Government or the NGOs to prepare proper plans for women empowerment. In the words of Sh. Narendra Modi – “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”.

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