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Globalization And Women Empowerment In India

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Abstract

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 objective of this paper is to examine the changing role of women due to globalization in Indian society. According India's constitution, women are legal citizens of the country and have equal rights with men (Indian Parliament). Because of lack of acceptance from the male dominant society, Indian women suffer immensely. Women are responsible for baring children, yet they are malnourished and in poor health. Women are also overworked in the field and complete the all of the domestic work. 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 & negative impacts of it on the position of women in India at present. and also discussed about the Women's Contribution to the Economy

Introduction

“Yathro Narianthu Poojyothay,Ramanthe thathra Devathey”

Where the woman is worshipped, there lies the Goddess.

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. Names like Kalpana Chawla: The Indian born, who fought her way up into NASA and was the first women in space, and Indira Gandhi: The Iron Woman of India was the Prime Minister of the Nation, Beauty Queens like Aishwarya Rai and Susmita Sen, are not representative of the condition of Indian women.

Women in India

The Constitution of India guarantees equality of sexes and in fact grants special favors to women. These can be found in three articles (Article 14 , Article 15 (3) and Articles 15 (A)(e) All these are fundamental rights. Therefore, a woman can go to the court if one is subjected to any discrimination. The most important issues stand as those pertaining to marriage, children, abortion, crimes against women, and inheritance. Crimes like rape, kidnapping, eve teasing and indecent exposure can be grouped as crimes against women.

India today, a country where women are becoming more prominent., yet increasing numbers, women are fighting long-standing prejudices .Women faces enormous pressure to conform to social mores - conforming to traditional roles within families poses as much of a barrier to businesswomen in India as the still-too-thick glass ceiling at companies. Though women have made great strides in the corporate world in the last three decades, women from all income classes are still too often discouraged by family members from having careers that infringe too much on family life.

Today, globalization has had positive and negative implications within the male-dominant society. Even though India's constitution grants women legal citizenship, women get very little respect and standing in this country. With the help of the media, women's organizations have helped to advance women in the workforce, creating an increase in the standing of women. Even though globalization is broadening the workforce for women, it can have a negative impact by exploiting women in dangerous jobs, in which they are overworked. Globalization can have a positive or negative effect on women in India, but with globalization there is the power to uproot the traditional views towards women so they can take an equal stance in society.

Current Status of Women in India

According India's constitution, women are legal citizens of the country and have equal rights with men (Indian Parliament). Because of lack of acceptance from the male dominant society, Indian women suffer immensely. Women are responsible for baring children, yet they are malnourished and in poor health. Women are also overworked in the field and complete the all of the domestic work. Most Indian women are uneducated. Although the country's constitution says women have equal status to men, women are powerless and are mistreated inside and outside the home.

India is a society where the male is greatly revered. Therefore women, especially the young girls, get very little respect and standing in this country. The women of the household are required to prepare the meal for the men, who eat most of the food. Only after the males are finished eating, can the females eat. Typically the leftover food is meager, considering the families are poor and have little to begin with. This creates a major problem with malnutrition, especially for pregnant or nursing women. Very few women seek medical care while pregnant because it is thought of as a temporary condition. This is one main reason why India's maternal

and infant mortality rates are so high. Starting from birth, girls do not receive as much care and commitment from their parents and society as a boy would. For example a new baby girl would only be breast fed for a short period of time, barely supplying her with the nutrients she needs. This is so that the mother can get pregnant as soon as possible in hopes of a son the next time. Because women are not educated and cannot hold a prestigious job, they take on the most physically difficult and undesirable jobs. A typical day for a woman in an agricultural position lasts from 4am to 8pm with only an hour break in the middle. Compared to a man's day, which is from 5am to 10am and then from 3pm to 5pm. Most women are overworked with no maternity leave or special breaks for those who are pregnant. Plus women do the majority of the manual labor that uses a lot of energy compared to the men who do mostly machine operating (Coonrod). Even though women work twice as many hours as men, the men say that "women eat food and do nothing." This is mainly because the work the women perform does not require a lot of skill and are smaller tasks.

Positive Effects of Globalization

Globalization has opened up broader communication lines and brought more companies as well as different worldwide organizations into India. This provides opportunities for not only workingmen, but also women, who are becoming a larger part of the workforce. With new jobs for women, there are opportunities for higher pay, which raises self-confidence and brings about independence. This, in turn, can promote equality between the sexes, 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.

Negative Effects of Globalization

Globalization has had negative implications for Indian women. Their plights are similar to those of women in other developing regions such as Africa and Asia. Globalization has made many international corporations richer by the billions. However, what most people are not aware of is that women in these developing countries are suffering enormously due to this expansion of corporate empires. According to estimates from World Development Indicators, "Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours, produce half of the world's food, but earn only ten percent of the world's income, and own less than one percent of the world's property (Tomlinson)". According to Vandana Shivea, and 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 trade devalues the worth of people's lives and work (Aujla). While globalization has brought jobs to rural, developing areas such as India where there was previously no employment, these jobs seem to be wolves in sheep's clothing. The work available to women is almost always poorly paid, mentally and physically unhealthy, demeaning, or insecure.

Women's Contribution to the Economy

Although most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics. Women plough fields and harvest crops while working on farms, women weave and make handicrafts while working in household industries, women sell food and gather wood while working in the informal sector. Additionally, women are traditionally responsible for the daily household chores (e.g., cooking, fetching water, and looking after children). Since Indian culture hinders women's access to jobs in stores, factories and the public sector, the informal sector is particularly important for women. There are estimates that over 90 % percent of workingwomen are involved in the informal sector.

The informal sector includes jobs such as domestic servant, small trader, artisan, or field laborer on a family farm. Most of these jobs are unskilled and low paying and do not provide benefits to the worker. More importantly, however, cultural practices vary from region to region. Though it is a broad generalization, North India tends to be more patriarchal and feudal than South India. Women in northern India have more restrictions placed on their behavior, thereby restricting their access to work. Southern India tends to be more egalitarian, women have relatively more freedom, and women have a more prominent presence in society. Cultural restrictions however are changing, and women are freer to participate in the formal economy, though the shortage of jobs throughout the country contributes to low female employment. But in the recent years, conditions of working women in India have improved considerably. More and more women find themselves in positions of respect and prestige; more and more workplaces are now populated with women who work on equal terms as men. Working is no longer an adjustment, a mere necessity; but a means to self worth and growth.

Women have now not only found their place in work places but are also want their part in governance. In recent years there have been explicit moves to increase women's political participation. Women have been given representation in the Panchayati Raj system as a sign of political empowerment. There are many elected women representatives at the village council level. At the central and state levels too women are progressively making a difference. Today we have woman as President of India and few women Chief Ministers in large states of India. The Women's reservation policy bill is slated to further strengthen political participation.

Conclusion:

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 due to globalization. Women have made great strides in the corporate world but still the patriarchal nature of Indian society stops from having careers that infringe too much on family life.

Women are now supporting their families with dual incomes thereby increasing the voice not only at home but also at Parliament for 50 % Reservation as they are contributing to Indian Economy at large. They have dual roles to play – as unpaid servant at home and as

paid servant in an organization. Not only this, they have to undergo stress & tensions at both places. Women today, consider themselves as the true `ardhangini of their husbands. She is more cognizant of his world today and she understands his work pressures. It is widely felt that earning power allows them to voice their opinions on bigger decisions.

Women today are more practical and rational than earlier. Indian women have never been as expressive and independent as she is today. Today's women no more feel that a career would be at the cost of neglecting the family and children. The Indian woman is also spending a lot more money on her personal appearance.

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