

Problems of Indian Women in Changing Economic Perspectives



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Introduction

One of the major problems of recent times is the alarming proportion of trafficking of women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In today's world hundreds of women and children are trafficked in the name of jobs, domestic work, films role or marriage. Today trafficking generates more money than even arms trade or drugs trade. Trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation is one of the worst forms of human rights violation. Adolescent girls from marginalized families are the most vulnerable. Our girls are our wealth and the future women who should be nurtured and need protection. Hence we need to wake up to this issue and take it with all seriousness it deserves. Trafficking of women and children has severely negative consequences for women and societies involved. It is an issue that involves both gender and basic human rights abuses. The problem is complex, deep, insidious, corrupt and multifaceted involving criminal enforcement challenges at the dark realm of human race. It is the vilest form of crime since it consists of using persons as merchandise that becomes the source of gain for both the trafficker, the one who sells the person and the one who buys her in order to profit from the prostitution. The nature of this work is such that there are chains of people who live out of the sexual exploitation of a single woman or girl. Trafficking is prevalent at various levels, local, inter-district, inter-state and cross-border. It is estimated that there are at least 8 million women and children in prostitution. About 25% or some 2 million of them are children. More chilling is the fact that not only is child trafficking on the increase, but also that the age at which they are victimized is also fast declining. Today trafficking in women has emerged as the most important issue on women's agenda-violence against women.

Another major issue that hinders the process of development and empowerment is the issue of gender violence. The many forms of violence against women and children are to be understood as gender violence. Only when we look at violence not as a private issue but as a Developmental and human rights issue, that will be able to see the question in its totality. Violence has an economic, social and political cost to society and is not a private affair. Gender violence is rooted in the theory that the cause of domestic violence is one person's arbitrary belief in the right to exert power over another person, interpersonal interactions or interpersonal relations and is situated in the socio-economic and political content of power relations. In Indian families, most of the working-class women, even while facing violence, also face trivialization of reality in their lives. Middle class women face another kind of censoring of the violence that they face within homes. The public private divide which operates very strongly in many middle-class women's lives do not allow them to speak about the humiliation and violence they undergo. Both these trivializing as well as silencing are political acts which support a structure of oppression of women. Girls, who observe domestic violence, are more likely to tolerate abusive partners as adults, thus subjecting another generation to the same sad dynamics. The wife's tolerance is explained in terms of traditional socialization or learned helplessness. Women tend to be the peacemakers in relationships, the ones responsible for making the marriage work.

Globalization and Women

Most of the economies of the developing world are now in the process of restructuring from an inward looking and state directed policy regime to an outward looking economy in the direction of free market and liberalization. India had adopted the New Economic Policy in 1991 in the wake of debt crisis, as an essential part of the structural Adjustment Policy urged by the IMF and the World Bank. It was believed that this would make India to overcome its foreign exchange deficits, encourage foreign investments and strengthen the balance of payments. The World Bank gave substantial loans to tide over the crisis. The globalization of trade and commerce was part of this package. Though, these reforms focused mainly on industrial, fiscal, financial and external sectors, it was anticipated that a market determined exchange rate regime, reduction of protection to the industry and removal of restrictions on agricultural exports would benefit the agricultural sector. It was also expected that the new multilateral trading regime would enable India to increase its share in world exports of agricultural and agro based products.

In the global system, marked with widening income disparities, economic growth disparities, human capital disparities in the distribution of global economic resources and opportunities, the disturbing question arises as to protect the interests of the poor and under privileged. The dominance of rich nations, multinational corporations and international capital over markets, resources and labour in the developing countries through trade, aid and technology transfer has greatly weakened the capacity of nation states and governments to promote human development and offer protection to the poor people. If the global opportunities continue to be unevenly distributed, the consequences of the most pressing problem, poverty, would increasingly overflow national frontiers.

Globalization has been described as the gradual elimination of economic borders and concomitant increase in international exchange and transnational interaction. Globalization has been identified with economic reforms, structural adjustment programs, New World trade order and the opening up of the commercial markets and the global communication village and the world increasingly becoming similar and smaller. In the context of women this would mean a better social and economic status. But it has a growing interdependence and interconnectedness, necessarily lead to women's development but a lot of statistics in India, shows that it is not necessarily.

Globalization gets manifested in many ways. These include increased collaboration between companies in production and research greater use of international financial markets, spatial spread of production activities to utilize local factors, cost advantage and gain access to new markets, increased intra-firm trade and trade in semi-finished parts, increased merger and acquisitions and greater use of international labor market for specialized and senior management staff. It is necessary to look at globalization in terms of its impact on the entire economy and society but with a perspective that is sensitive to women's needs and conditions because women comprise about half the sub-continent's population. Gender has been increasingly acknowledged as a critical variable in analysis and development planning. Gender is an expression of power relation derives from institutional arrangements which provide men of a given social group, with greater capacity than women from that social group to mobilize institutional rules and resources to promote and defend their own interests, The analytic

concept of gender is meant to challenge the essentialist and universal dictum that, "biology is destiny"

In every form of activity be it agriculture or allied activities, domestication of animals, fishing, weaving, garment making, women contribute substantially to the value addition of the final product and yet their work is perceived by all as subsidiary, unskilled and often as skill only of domestic value. These women are burdendwice with double burden of work and vulnerable to exploitation. Though, not a homogeneous group by way of caste, class or economic activity, deprivation and discrimination is common to all the workers in this area. They suffer from lack of opportunity to work, low and discriminatory wages and exploitative conditions resulting in casualization. They lack social security, face occupational health hazards, and do not have access to new technologies, skills and knowledge.

Globalization has created a vast divide between the haves and the have-nots. There is strong evidence to show that the contemporary process of globalization with emphasis on technical change in agriculture associated with higher capital intensity, greater mechanization of production and postharvest operations, the development of crop and livestock with varied characteristics geared to the requirement of commercial commodity production has been accompanied by changes which women experience in a unique ways. This includes the loss of knowledge, skills and production contributions.

These growth-oriented policies have taken away whatever control women had over traditional occupations and denied them better avenues of employment. In the shift from welfare development to economic development the worst hit has been women, because a large number of women are in an informal sector. Globalization has only widened the gender disparity and increased feminization of poverty.

Conclusion

Globalization has also decreased the control of women over resources. It has led to displacement and when both men and women land up in urban slums it affects the women more due to lack of sanitation and increase of violence. In this process, the knowledge of traditional medicines, herbs and plnats have been destroyed. Hence we need a holistic approach to development and empowerment approach based on equality, love and respect and

starts from the family rather than an approach which is based on power and privilege of men and boys and weakness and subservience prescribed for women and girls.

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