



GLOBALISATION AND ITS IMPACT ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SECTOR IN INDIA

Social Science

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ABSTRACT

The term globalization first appeared in the early 20th Century with a process of increasing interdependence and integration among the economies, markets, societies and cultures of different countries worldwide. The reduction of barriers to international trade, the liberalization of capital movements, the development of transportation, and the advancement of communication technologies made this process of globalization possible to a large section of women to integrate themselves into economic developments through exchange of variety of socioeconomic ideas and cultures from various countries in the global markets. The advancement in transportation facilities, development in telecommunication infrastructure are the major factors in globalization and have created further interdependence on economic and cultural activities around the globe. There are steady increase in women's labor force participation, the static substantial cross-country variation in women's rates of employment and gender linked occupational inequality has brought the socioeconomic positive and negative effects on gender based economic inequalities.

KEYWORDS

Women, Globalisation, Gender Equality, Socio-Cultural Dynamics, Empowerment

Globalisation has emerged as one of the most influential driving forces shaping modern economies and societies across the world. In India, it has significantly transformed the socio-economic landscape, particularly with regard to women's participation in education, employment, entrepreneurship, and decision-making processes. The integration of national economies with global markets has created new employment opportunities and expanded women's participation in the labour force. Although globalisation has contributed to reducing certain gender-based occupational inequalities, the progress remains inconsistent and far from conclusive.

The concept of the "feminisation of poverty" highlights the declining economic and social condition of women in comparison to men. Women contribute enormously to society through unpaid domestic work, caregiving responsibilities, agricultural labour, and other non-market activities that are often ignored, unrecognised, unmeasured, and undervalued. Recognising these concerns, the 2012 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Doha Mandate encouraged a transition from finance-driven globalisation towards development-centred globalisation that prioritises inclusive and sustainable growth. Economic policies aimed at market integration frequently affect men and women differently, making it essential for development strategies to promote gender equality and social justice.

Globalisation has the potential to improve the lives of the world's poor, a large proportion of whom are women and girls. However, there continues to be a worldwide failure to acknowledge women's unpaid labour in households, agriculture, and the informal sector, which has further intensified gender inequalities. Finance-driven globalisation has often failed to utilise women as a powerful force for sustainable economic growth and has deprived many women of employment opportunities, property rights, workers' protections, and social security mechanisms. In contrast, development-oriented globalisation can create inclusive growth, reduce poverty, and generate sustainable employment opportunities for women.

The present condition of women remains a matter of serious concern. Although several opportunities have emerged for women's social and economic advancement, the actual impact is still limited and uneven across different sections of society. Women play a crucial role in the development process and act as catalysts for economic, environmental, and social transformation essential for sustainable development. Yet, inadequate access to education, healthcare, credit facilities, and employment opportunities continues to restrict their progress. Furthermore, global agricultural crises, economic instability, and climate change have intensified the challenges faced by women, especially in developing countries.

Globalisation today is an unavoidable reality and is widely considered a major contributor to economic growth. Liberalisation, privatisation, modernisation, increased productivity, and accelerated economic expansion form the foundation of modern economic policy. Therefore, expanding women's representation and participation in global forums and economic activities, rather than limiting their potential, is essential

for improving the socio-economic status of women in contemporary society. As a concept, globalisation extends beyond economics and includes information technology, communication systems, ecological concerns, work organisation, culture, and civil society.

The current wave of globalisation has significantly influenced the lives of women worldwide, particularly in developing countries like India. Despite the emergence of new opportunities, women continue to face disadvantages in several areas such as education, employment, healthcare, civil rights, and economic independence.

Economic Development -

- International Interconnectedness: Globalization enables the flow of ideas, commodities, and capital, giving corporations competitive advantages and access to new markets.
- Job Creation and Growth: It stimulates job creation and economic growth, but these benefits are unevenly distributed across industries and countries.
- Trade and Investment: Increased trade, foreign direct investment, and capital flows enhance production efficiency and promote fair competition.

Gender Inequality and Women's Roles -

- Unequal Benefits: Women often face restrictive barriers and are frequently left behind, despite some progress toward gender equality.
- Labor Force Shifts: Women's roles have shifted from domestic work to agriculture, manufacturing, and assembly, but their contributions remain undervalued.
- Economic Agency: Women are gaining more control over their earnings and independence from traditional gender roles, especially in marriage and childrearing.
- Breadwinner Responsibilities: Women increasingly become primary earners, with young daughters contributing financially and women seeking part time work to support families.
- Workforce Participation: Women make up a significant portion of the labor force in metropolitan and rural India, with notable contributions in agriculture and the software industry.

Policy and Social Implications -

- Need for Public Action: More public policy is required to address gender disparities in endowments, agency, and access to economic opportunities.
- Changing household dynamics: intra household responsibilities have shifted, with women taking on more responsibility for family survival.

Development Indicators -

- Human Development Index: India's ranking declined from 118 in 1997 to 131 in 2021, reflecting ongoing challenges.
- Gender Gap: India ranked 140 out of 156 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, indicating persistent gender inequality.

These points highlight both the opportunities and challenges globalization presents, especially regarding gender equality and

economic development. Despite these positive developments, the impact of globalisation on women remains complex and uneven. Alongside new opportunities, women continue to face challenges such as wage inequality, workplace discrimination, job insecurity, exploitation in informal sectors, and the burden of balancing professional and domestic responsibilities. Therefore, globalisation has brought both empowerment and new forms of vulnerability for women in India.

Expansion of Employment Opportunities:

One of the most significant impacts of globalisation has been the expansion of employment opportunities for women. The growth of sectors such as Information Technology (IT), Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), retail, hospitality, banking, healthcare, aviation, textiles, and e-commerce has created millions of jobs for women across urban and semi-urban India.

Growth in Education and Skill Development:

Globalisation has increased awareness regarding the importance of women's education and skill development. Exposure to global competition, international standards, and digital connectivity has encouraged families to invest more in girls' education.

Rise of Women Entrepreneurship:

Globalisation has opened new business opportunities for Indian women entrepreneurs by connecting them to national and international markets. Easier access to technology, communication tools, digital banking, microfinance, and e-commerce platforms has enabled women to establish businesses in sectors such as handicrafts, food processing, fashion, agriculture, education, wellness, and digital services.

Social Transformation and Changing Gender Roles:

Globalisation has contributed to important social changes in Indian society by challenging traditional gender stereotypes and expanding women's participation in public life. Exposure to international media, modern lifestyles, and global human rights movements has increased awareness regarding gender equality and women's rights.

Challenges and Negative Consequences of Globalisation:

Informal and Exploitative Labour -

A significant number of women workers remain concentrated in informal sectors such as agriculture, domestic work, garment manufacturing, and small-scale industries. These jobs often involve low wages, poor working conditions, long working hours, and lack of maternity benefits or social security.

Wage Inequality and Workplace Discrimination:

Despite increased participation in the workforce, gender inequality continues to persist in many professional sectors. Women frequently receive lower wages than men for similar work and often face barriers in career advancement.

Double Burden of Responsibilities:

Although women are increasingly participating in paid employment, household responsibilities continue to remain largely unchanged. Many working women face the "double burden" of balancing professional work with childcare, household management, and family responsibilities.

Rural Women and Unequal Access:

The benefits of globalisation have not been distributed equally among all women. Urban educated women have benefited more compared to rural women and economically weaker sections.

Many rural women continue to struggle with illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, limited healthcare access, lack of internet connectivity, and financial exclusion. The digital divide has created unequal access to opportunities generated by globalisation.

Economic and Social Implications:

Globalisation has reshaped labour patterns, family structures, and economic responsibilities. Women increasingly contribute to household income and, in many cases, become primary earners. This shift has changed intra-household decision-making and improved women's economic agency.

Policy Measures and Recommendations:

To ensure that globalisation becomes a genuine instrument of women's empowerment, stronger policy interventions are necessary. Important

measures include:

- Strengthening women's education and digital literacy
- Ensuring equal pay for equal work
- Expanding maternity benefits and childcare support
- Improving workplace safety and enforcing anti-harassment laws
- Encouraging women entrepreneurship through financial assistance and training
- Increasing women's representation in leadership and governance
- Supporting rural women through skill development and digital access
- Strengthening labour rights and social security protections
- Promoting gender-sensitive economic and employment policies
- Protecting traditional sectors where women are predominantly employed

Both government and private sectors must work together to create a more inclusive, equitable, and gender-sensitive development model.

Development Indicators and Gender Challenges:

Although India has made progress in women's empowerment, several development indicators continue to reflect gender inequality.

India's position in global gender equality rankings highlights ongoing challenges related to women's workforce participation, educational access, healthcare, political representation, and economic opportunities. Gender wage gaps, occupational segregation, and social discrimination remain major barriers to equality.

CONCLUSION:

Globalisation has significantly transformed the socio-economic status of women in India. It has expanded opportunities for education, employment, entrepreneurship, and public participation, enabling women to contribute more actively to economic growth and social development.

At the same time, the benefits of globalisation remain uneven and incomplete. Many women continue to face exploitation, wage inequality, job insecurity, social discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities.

True empowerment requires more than economic participation. It must include dignity, equality, safety, social justice, healthcare, education, and equal representation in decision-making processes.

In conclusion, globalisation has opened new pathways for Indian women, but the journey toward genuine gender equality and inclusive development still continues. India's future progress will depend greatly on how effectively it empowers women and ensures their equal participation in every sphere of socio-economic life.

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