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Impact of Globalisation on Women in Third World Countries: Indian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation has two sides, like a coin. One side is making the world a better place whereas the other side is not. In this paper, the core focus would be on how Globalisation has affected women in third world countries with an Indian perspective.

This paper will introduce the topic by highlighting the difficulty faced by Indian women in having equal status to men and by also underlining how the developed countries have influenced the mindset of Indian families towards women rights.

This paper's scope is restricted to two aspects. The first focuses to assess the affect through technological advancement which has helped women to uplift themselves and, the second part focuses on the involvement of industries i.e., the Construction and the Textile Industries respectively and if the globalised world of the West i.e. The American and European world liberalized or exploited women of third world countries by converting them into their virtual colonies. Women provide cheaper labor than men because of which both the construction business and the textile market makes women do the most work for almost no wage with an abundance of unethical labor practices for women. Both Industries are one of the largest exploiters of women under the guise of liberators by providing women with employment.

The author has conducted a small survey of about 100 people of ages 15 and above and asked them some questions regarding the research topic. This survey will be used as a reference throughout the paper along with other information through various articles to create an understanding of the impact of globalization with respect to technology and job opportunities to women in construction and textile industry.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization in simplest terms is the development of the world, be it economic, social, political. This phenomenon of Globalisation is like a river, which flows from developed

countries to developing or underdeveloped countries. It breaks all the barriers which come in its way to reach the Grassroot but, when it breaks barriers, just like with overflowing of rivers during floods which destroys nearby villages and

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lives of people, globalization also has the tendency for the same i.e., affecting life of the vulnerable population, mostly women, children, rural population and ones who don't have access to the bounty of developed world.

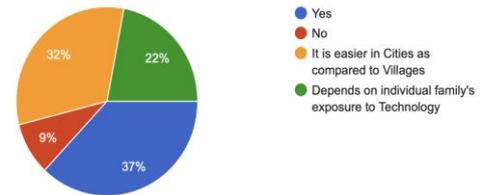
A river provides fresh water, food to people living around it, similarly, globalization provides job opportunities, access to technology, a platform to uplift women but, when that river gets polluted, maybe by industrial effluents, which is also, by the way, a byproduct of globalization demands, the population which depended on that river for its prosperous livelihood now wouldn't have access to the greater part of it but would just try to get what's left or maybe even use the contaminated river because they don't have any other option for survival, similarly, when the globalization chain, gets corrupted by unethical demands of the rich world, the people who depend on this chain for their survival, end up getting exploited by the ones in power, they are left with nothing to defend themselves with because they are dependent on the minimal they get through this river of globalization.

The focus of this paper would involve exploitation of women at the helm of the globalised world.

The survey (**Fig. I**) highlighted that 37% of people find that Women in India find it difficult to reach social and economic equality with their men counterparts. Women continue to face discrimination in a variety of sectors, including

Do you think that it is difficult for women to achieve social and economic equality with men in India?

100 responses



health, education, jobs, and civil rights.² About 32% of people do feel that the access to equal status and rights is easier to achieve in Cities as compared to rural areas. 22% also (**Figure: I**) feel that the access to technology and a family's exposure to it also plays a role in women getting their inherent equality.

In India, one of the most serious issues is sex discrimination at birth. According to a 2017 demographic study, India's sex ratio would remain the lowest in South Asia even in 2050. Gender inequality can hurt a country's ability to compete worldwide, especially in countries with a large female workforce and export potential in goods and services. Gender inequality may also have a negative impact on a country's international stature. All of these variables work together to increase the incentives for policymakers to take action in the direction of gender equality across the world. Globalization alone, however, will not be able to alleviate gender disparity in the absence of governmental policies.³

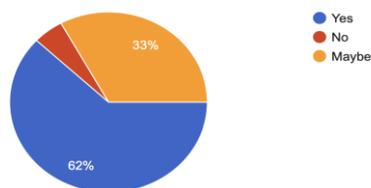
As per the survey (Fig. II), 62% of people believe that there is a shift in mindset of the Indian

² Kaur, P., 2018. Impact of globalization on women. Global Journal of Commerce and Management Perspective, 7(2), pp.41-44.

³ *Id.*

Do you believe that the influence of west like The USA and Europe has created a shift in mindsets of Indian families with respect to Women Rights?

100 responses



population for upholding women rights with the help of globalization influences the developed world but at the same time 32% of people think that this position is a neutral one.

This highlights the dual nature of the effect of globalization. At one place it creates a growing **(Figure: II)** environment for women and then throws traps of exploitation under the name of women liberalization. Women working at home as “housewives” is nothing but wageless labour. Maximum number of domestic help workers are women, who are not paid even a basic livable wage per day. Female domestic employees accounted for 1.68 million in 1997-98, whereas male domestic workers accounted for just 0.62 million.⁴

Street vendors which include women who sell various items such as broomsticks, cane baskets, kitchenware, small cosmetics, bangles, vegetables, and others who manage roadside tea stands, among other things. Women account for about 40% of all vendors, and 30 percent of the total of these women are the primary breadwinner in their homes.⁵

⁴Mohapatra, S., n.d. *Women workers in informal sector in India*. [online] Cusb.ac.in. Available at: <https://www.cusb.ac.in/images/cusb-files/2020/e1/ds/Week%203%20MADVS2003C04%20_%20Gend.%20&%20Dev.pdf> [Accessed 5 November 2021].

II. GLOBALIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY EFFECT ON WOMEN IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

Though the influence of women rights in the developed countries has made a significant impact in India, a lot of women still don't even have access to technology as compared to their male counterparts due to families focusing more, providing more, giving more to the male child. The benefit of information technology on society has not always been constructive, and the technological divide is widening, particularly in poorer nations. Gender equality continues to face significant challenges.

The gender repercussions of the digital divide are quite significant in India. Internet access and use bring enormous economic, educational, and social benefits, and those who are refused access will be denied these opportunities.⁶

There are 143 million (30%) women among internet users, according to the male-female ratio. In rural regions, the percentage reduces to 12%. In India, the Internet market is still mostly dominated by men.⁷ Along with gender, technology is socially created or co-produced.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Kaur, A., 2015. The Impact of Western Culture on Indian Women. *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 5(10).

⁷ Pawar, Nisha. (2017). *Women's Empowerment through Digital Media*. 1.

Men's dominance in science and engineering is explained by the continuing symbolic relationship between masculinity and technology, in which cultural concepts and representations of technology fuse with widespread ideals of masculinity and power. In its application, technology is always biased.⁸

Did access to Technology in recent times help in uplifting women of India by way of access to education, access to help in case of any crime against women, access to starting businesses of their own etc?

100 responses



(Fig III) 98% of the total survey said that technology has given women the much-needed support for education, safeguard from crimes, to start her own business and work.

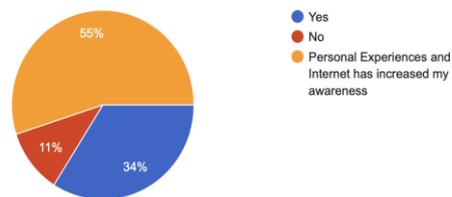
If technology and the internet are to be used for gender equity, access to inexpensive infrastructural facilities is, without a question, a must.⁹ Even when infrastructure is (Figure: III) available, affordable access is a concern in most developing countries. Women face social stigmas in all fields, from home to office. The Internet in recent times has created a roadway for women to reach their goals. Indian society has not been very accepting towards women working or using technology or the internet especially in the rural areas but with passage of time, with Digitization of almost all work, internet is reaching villages of India.

⁸ Das, K. and Das, M.B., 2006. Technology and Women in India. *With Special Reference to the rural sector* <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download>.

(Fig. IV) The 56% people in the survey bring

Have you ever experienced a change in Women related mindset in a positive way after learning from Internet about Women Rights?

100 responses



attention to the fact that personal experiences of women along with access to the internet has helped them learn about the rights of women. Whereas 34% people are very much sure about the role of the internet in women rights knowledge and only 11% say the internet has not done anything in (Figure: IV) creating awareness and positive mindset about women rights.

The Internet is a grey space. The content available, the kind of social interaction people have on it, defines their access. The Internet has a critical role in moulding our worldview, attitudes, and principles as a platform for study, recreation, and information flow. Gender stereotypes, which are at the foundation of inequalities between men and women and the source of gender violence in the offline world, are also prevalent in the digital environment.

Children and teenagers are acquiring their thoughts and opinions about social standards and appropriate behaviour, as well as sexuality through the internet. Internet material has a significant impact on their attitudes regarding

⁹ Bhat, Mohd. (2019). Women Empowerment and Technology: An Overview.

women and men, as well as their current and future actions and positions. They can also be put at danger by some internet services and have easy access to violent and discriminatory material.¹⁰

III. GLOBALIZATION: WOMEN LIBERATION OR EXPLOITATION?

Within the women's liberation movement in western countries, two analytical trends seem to have emerged. Women's exploitation is a result of the capitalist economic system, which offers a general structure for those with money to exploit those with less, who have nothing to sell but their labour capacity. This is where the bulk of people (including women) belong.¹¹

A similar trend can be seen in the south Asian countries. India, though independent, is still a virtual colony not of the British, but of all the first world countries. The Informal sector in India, the abundance of cheap labour, the absence of labour laws in special economic zones are a bait to bring in investments from rich countries but at the cost of human dignity, safe working conditions, rightful remuneration and exploitation.

Globalization has a different influence on women in developed countries than it does on developing countries. Nonetheless, they are influenced in varied ways depending on their background and ethnicity, rather than as a group. The temporary workforce is dominated by women. Women

make up the majority of those who leave the workforce.

The worldwide division of labour was advanced in the 1970s by moving labor-intensive processes of manufacturing in the apparel and electronic sectors from the industrialized north to the developing south. As a result, the cost of salaries and other labour costs in highly industrialized nations gradually decreased. This occurred at the expense of women's employment, as labor-intensive production was and continues to be conducted mostly by women. This is sometimes referred to as "remaining work," which cannot yet be replaced by automation, at least not at a lesser cost than women. Women work for a lower salary in "low wage nations," where, as the term implies, local businesses are dominated by cheap wages. They also want to save money on additional wages and taxes. Women in "low-wage nations" are more eager to work since very few of them join a union. Female labour is preferred by corporations over male labour because women are thought to be "docile" employees who would comply with production needs at any cost. Certain sorts of employment, such as textile production, are regarded as an extension of female home tasks in underdeveloped countries. As a result, in emerging countries, cultural factors have an impact on job segregation.¹²

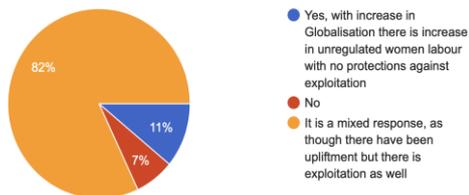
¹⁰ 2021. *Internet content and equality between men and women*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/internet-and-equality>> [Accessed 5 November 2021].

¹¹ Ariffin, R., 1986. The exploitation of women: An overview. *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 1(2), pp.133-154.

¹² Kaur, P., 2018. Impact of globalization on women. *Global Journal of Commerce and Management Perspective*, 7(2), pp.41-44.

Do you believe that Globalisation in recent times have increased difficulties for women in informal sector in India?

100 responses



In the survey (Fig. V), 82% of people have a mixed response because they think there is upliftment and exploitation together. This holds true in the Indian context. Women, in lieu of getting a job, get exploited in forms of low wages than their men counterparts, unsafe working conditions, abuse at the workplace.

(Figure: V)

Though in cities, in large corporations, this might not hold true but when we discuss the informal sector such plight of women exists. The two cases which can highlight this are of the construction workers and the garment industry.

India is one of the few places in the world where women are actively participating in the construction sector thought to be a primarily male-dominated field.¹³ Despite their enormous numbers, women are considered second-class workers and are assigned to professions that are considered menial. There is no upward progression for these women workers, and women in supervisory or foreman positions are uncommon.¹⁴

¹³ Rahul. *Participation of the Female Workers in the Construction Industry in India: A Review* (October 14, 2014). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2509916>

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Mohapatra, S., n.d. *Women workers in informal sector in India*. [online] Cusb.ac.in. Available at:

Women are subjected to forced labor as unskilled laborer, carrying building materials to the construction area on their heads, while males perform skilled and semiskilled tasks.¹⁵ The majority of female construction employees are engaged on a temporary basis. They work in low-skilled jobs. Construction workers' essential features of labour include uncertain job earnings and moving workplaces. There are no vacations because of the demands of the job.

Women laborer are well-known for not being paid the basic wage. Construction work by women is sweat labour, and it is a violation of fundamental wage laws as well as equitable wage regulations for unskilled labour with no defined working time.¹⁶ The majority of women workers are engaged in small and medium construction projects since large construction undertakings are becoming increasingly capital and technology-intensive, with the use of pre-fabricated parts and automation. As women who work in construction have a poor level of education or are illiterate, their employment in these emerging industries is constrained.¹⁷

Whereas the textile industry is another form of killer of women rights. The textile and garment sector accounts for 2% of India's \$2.6 trillion GDP and 17% of its export earnings. It employs 45 million people in India, making it the 2nd largest employer. Importantly, the industry employs the majority of women in India,

<https://www.cusb.ac.in/images/cusb-files/2020/el/ds/Week%203%20MADVS2003C04%20_%20Gen.%20&%20Dev.pdf> [Accessed 5 November 2021].

¹⁶ *Id.*

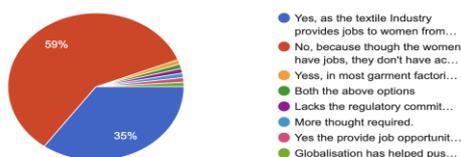
¹⁷ *Id.*

accounting for more than 60% of the labor workforce.

Women make up 60 to 80 percent of garment workers nationwide, with the majority of them working in informal, unregulated, or home-based operations.¹⁸ The majority of these women come from low-income families and have minimal education. Many of them are members of India's disadvantaged and socially excluded “Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes”, who have long faced shame and discrimination. They're more common in low-wage professions with dangerous working conditions, limited career options, and, in some cases, animosity based on gender. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 issue has definitely impacted these women more than most other workers, who were already struggling with work under challenging circumstances.¹⁹

* There are roughly 40 million garment workers in the world today; many of whom do not share the same rights or protections that many people in the West do. They are some of the lowest paid workers in the world and roughly 85% of all garment workers are women.” – The True Cost . Do you think Globalisation of textile has contributed to women upliftment in third world countries like India?

100 responses



While conducting this survey (Fig. VI), 59% of people found that globalization of the textile industry has not uplifted women though the women have jobs, they don't have access to sanitary working conditions, benefits, rightful

wage in the industry. About 35% of people found the textile industry to be an uplifter, a liberator as it provides jobs to women from poor strata of society. A few people gave their own opinion on it which includes Lacks the regulatory (Figure: VI) commitment. The idea is to provide livelihood but that shall not be devoid of dignity. Hence textile sector can have positive impact, if regulated efficiently and removing these rudimentary anomalies; Yes the provide job opportunities even to less qualified women also but the way of pressure, no facilities steep down the opportunities of uplifting them; Globalisation has helped push the mandate of corporation at the expense of their blue collar employees (particularly women); Yes, in most garment factories there are better working conditions equal pay and less sexual accidents compared to the yesteryear's due to growing awareness which is the direct effect of globalization in the textile industry.

The responses above paint a divided picture on participant's awareness about the textile industry. The need to have a better regulatory mechanism for better wages, sanitary conditions, prevention from abuse etc. is highlighted. Also one of the participant gave a view about better working conditions for women in the textile industry, this may be possible in a very less number of factories and that too developed countries because they have better labour legislations and are allowed to form unions to

¹⁸Shukla Mukherjee, A. and Narayanan, P., 2020. From hardship to hope: women migrant workers in the Indian ready-made garment industry. [online] OpenGlobalRights. Available at: <<https://www.openglobalrights.org/hardship-to->

hope-women-migrant-workers-in-the-indian-ready-made-garment-industry/> [Accessed 5 November 2021].

¹⁹ *Id.*

demand their rights, but with reference to the third world countries, The exploitation of women workers has allowed European fashion companies to make huge profits while denying the workers who produce their clothes the most basic rights.

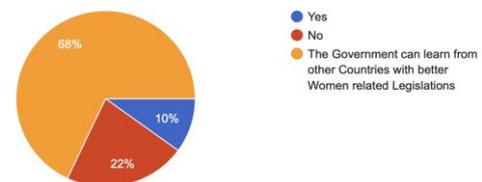
By outsourcing production to third world countries including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India etc., these companies are able to both step away from their responsibility and to play producers against each other to get the best and most profitable deal. Employees' legal rights are relatively limited, and their freedom to organize and bargain collectively is gradually reduced, due to the unregulated character of the global economy and incentives provided to major brands to bring investment at the expense of workers' dignity.²⁰

IV. CONCLUSION

Since they are in desperate need of money, the informal women workers have no other option than to do labour. The few alternatives accessible to women are primarily low-paying, low-status positions in the informal sector, with no prospects for development, efficiency improvement, or training to enable them to graduate to better jobs in the future. In the general situation of unemployment and lack of opportunity, women are a secondary consideration to males in the pursuit of employment. They are from a part of society that has to struggle to make a living and is socially, economically, and traditionally backward and

disadvantaged. Work comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. Construction workers, domestic staff, and garment workers are among them, while a few are modest dealers in miscellaneous commodities. However, there is little or no variance in terms of work characteristics such as salary bias, job instability, rest breaks, and other incentives.

Do you think whether the Indian Government laws and Policies are sufficient for women in spheres like Violence against women, Wage gaps, Opportunity in education, Prevention of female foeticide and infanticide?
100 responses



During the Survey (**Fig. VII**) When participants were asked about the adequacy of present government policies to protect women, 68% found them to be insufficient. The government can do better, learn from other nations how they have taken care of providing women in their country the safety they are entitled to. 22% of participants found the government policies are not at all sufficient and only 10 % found them to be sufficient. The (**Figure: VII**) goal of a developing country is to provide its citizens with equal opportunities. The constitution of India, provides for equality of sexes but even the holy book of laws cannot help the deep-rooted patriarchal society which puts women second to men.

²⁰ Fashion Revolution. n.d. Exploitation or emancipation? Women workers in the garment industry - Fashion Revolution. [online] Available at:

<<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/exploitation-or-emancipation-women-workers-in-the-garment-industry/>> [Accessed 5 November 2021].

“The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987, The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION and REDRESSAL) Act, 2013, The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956”, are some examples of women specific legislations in India.

“Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme, Women Helpline Scheme, One Stop Centre Scheme, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation, UJJAWALA : A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue,, Working Women Hostel, Ministry approves new projects under Ujjawala Scheme and continues existing projects, SWADHAR Greh (A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances), Working Women Hostel, Awardees of Rajya Mahila Samman & Zila Mahila Samman, NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR Awardees of Stree Shakti Puruskar, 2014 & Awardees of Nari Shakti Puruskar, Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK), Mahila police Volunteers, NIRBHAYA” are some other examples of schemes by the Indian Government.

All these schemes and laws have a tendency to protect women and uplift them but they are neither sufficient nor properly implemented. The sectors this paper focuses on highlights the absence of such schemes reaching the vulnerable women in the construction and textile sector. Mostly the NGO’s and other social organizations

work in propagating the various schemes of the government but it's not enough.

The labour laws of our country, including “Factories Act, 1948 The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, Minimum Wages Act, 1948”, which provide for healthy working conditions, safe environment, protective equipment, fixed timings, maternity benefits, Parity in wages etc. and provides for penalty for contravention of above-mentioned requirements but if looked at various instances around the places where women labour works, hardly any application of the laws or any check on them is carried on.

Though it may appear impossible to address the issues that women workers in India's informal economy confront, the community must do so at all costs. It must be done in the strategic interests since the National Income is made up of all people's earnings, and if half of the workforce is compelled to earn less than two-thirds of the other half, the economy as a whole would hurt. If the government provided assistance in the form of money, training, machinery, proper implementation of labour laws or other means, the women workers might earn a more respectable livelihood.

Educational institutions should also step up by creating awareness of such issues highlighted above in this paper and teach them to students, creating programs for social work as a part of the curriculum. It will surely create a difference.

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