

IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIAN CULTURE

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Abstract

Indian culture has been the unique synergy of multi-cultural identities. Globalization has held no fears for us, for we have been cultural ambassadors who have conquered the world. But cultures are neither sufficient nor insufficient in themselves, but always in a process of negotiation and evolution. Globalization affected India and the Indian culture. The process of globalization has made deep inroads into India's social, economic and cultural life. It has not only affected all aspects of human life but also influenced the social institutions to great extent. India is a multi-lingual, multi-religious, and multi-caste country and has been a dominant player in the world system and part of the global economy for ages. It therefore becomes essential to understand India in a global context to examine its problems and to seek solutions. Globalization indicates that the world today is more interconnected than before. The role of women in India has been changing and they are now emerging from the past traditions into a new era of freedom and rights. There is a need to evaluate the impact of globalization on women in India and also to know the positive and negative impacts of it on the position of women in India at present. The basic objective of this paper is to examine the changing role of women due to globalization in Indian society.

Keywords: Globalization, Cultural Change, Religion, Consumer Culture, Status of Women.

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Introduction:

Globalization has a wide role to play worldwide. It has left back its footprints at every sphere of life. Not only in India, but the interchange of world views and ideas has resulted in a major transformation of the lifestyle and living standard of people globally. Indian culture is no bar to this transformation process. Our deep rooted traditions and customs have loosened up their hold with the emergence of globalization. India has a rich cultural background and pride of its culture is famous throughout the world. Globalization has not only inculcated the westernization in India, but conversely the Indian culture has also spread its impact globally. Culture and traditions of any geographic region hold a special significance with respect to its uniqueness and that is the differentiating factor for a population within a geographic boundary from the other. This uniqueness has been disturbed to the varying degrees in lieu of globalization. Such an impact is very much pronounced when they hit a developing country like India. The culture of any country does not only portray the region and language of the region, but it starts with the mindset and mentality of the residing citizens.

India is the diverse country with deep rooted traditions, a deep rooted culture and religion that lives alongside one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Globalization is also giving a voice to people from various cultures. Culture is an idea and philosophy of specific society at a specific time. In fact Culture is formed out of the ethics and moral values that control a society. It is the result of several factors like social beliefs,

traditions etc. India has several states with diverse food habits, traditions, social customs, attire, language, festivals, etc. It is important to cultivate our culture with rich and positive thought.

The concept of "Indian culture" is a very complex and complicated matter. Indian citizens are divided into various ethnic, religious, castes, linguistic and regional groups, making the realities of "Indianness" extremely complicated. According to Amartya Sen, the India born Nobel Laureate in Economics, the culture of modern India is a complex blend of its historical traditions, influences from the effects of colonialism over centuries and current Western culture – both collaterally and dialectically. There is a considerable inclination in the Western countries to distance and highlight the differences in Indian culture from the mainstream of Western traditions, rather than discover and show similarities.

Globalization and its impact on Indian

Culture can be defined as the shared patterns of behaviors and interaction, a cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. Globalization is a process by which the people of the world are unified into a single society and function together. This process is a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural and political forces. India is an ancient state but a modern civilization. This ancient state has "survived" during the process of globalization. India's diverse and deeply rooted culture has always been and still is influenced by a lot of different religions, languages and traditions. Additionally, in connection with globalization, the western values seem to have gained acceptance in India. . National differences have disappeared or at least have become less important and noticeable. There is close affinity between translation and globalization. Translation, by dint of its trans-cultural dimension, plays pivotal role in the process of globalization. World Literature, in the modern sense, refers

to literary works that are translated into multiple languages and circulated to an audience outside their country of origin. It underscores the growing availability of texts from other nations. Multiplicity of the cultures in the globalised world also calls in the sense of comparison among cultures.

Women in ancient India

Many historians claim that women enjoyed an equal status with men in ancient India. It is said that women were educated, had a say in family matters, took important decisions of life and were free to choose their own husbands. The ancient system of "*Swayamvara*" is mentioned in holy scripts and also in many epics. A woman in ancient India was respected and was given due importance in the society. Child marriage was unheard of and many women were also famous sages like *Gargi*, *Maitreyi*, etc. With time, women started to lose their importance and their status began to wane. The freedom given to women was curtailed slowly and she was not allowed to voice her opinions in political matters in a society. Polygamy began to increase and child marriage came into vogue. Daughters were considered to be a burden and they were reduced to doing the chores of household. Sati, an ancient practice in which a widow had to lie beside her husband's pyre, came into vogue. Women were tortured and humiliated and their position and condition degraded.

In ancient India, remarriage of widows was not encouraged. They were seen as a disgrace to the family and had to give up all the comforts of life. They wore plain clothes, tonsured their heads, had a separate place to stay and ate bland food. Reformers like Raja Ram mohan Roy, Jyotirao Phule, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar and emperors like Asoka, fought for the rights and welfare of women. Due to the efforts of many such reformers and philosophers, the condition of women improved and they were able to walk on the streets again with their heads held high.

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. This concern is not merely academic but is central to the process of emerging development in India. There is a need to evaluate the impact of globalization on women in India and also to know the positive and negative impacts of it on the position of women in India at present. Modern India is a country of very diverse cultures with many languages, religions and traditions. Its civilization past has been shaped and has evolved through a number of events, crises, people, and communities. The present study seeks to investigate the implications of globalization in the arena of socio-economic, perspective.

Positive and negative impact on status of women in India: Changing status of women at present

Globalization has undermined the traditional role of women in homemaking, farming, livestock, animal husbandry, handicrafts, handlooms etc and resulted in a relatively better environment for women. Women have more jobs, become more active in avenues generally reserved for men, have played a more prominent role in society and not just restricted to the household. It has affected both the quantity and the quality of work available to the majority of women in India.

Changing role of women in Family, Marriage, Caste

Globalization has posed a major challenge to the institution of patriarchal India. As women take up jobs and achieve social mobility, they have also begun to stand up for their rights. As nuclear families have become more common, it has become easier for women to assertively claim their rights and ask for equality in an environment not stuck in ancient mores. Marrying within the same caste has become less important, and women have in

many cases reserved the right to marry whoever they choose irrespective of caste. As countries come closer, and boundaries disappear in the globalised world, women in India are inspired by women the world over to fight for their rights. Of course, there are some notable exceptions to the above generalizations. But, to a large extent, these changes have received a great push from the new era of globalization.

Changing attitude towards women: Positive Impacts

The changing global scenario is bringing other positive changes in the status of women in India:

- Reductions in gender inequalities have positive effect on women's empowerment in the socio-economic context. With changing attitude towards women, especially in the urban areas, women enjoy more egalitarian set of gender relationship.
- Prospects of higher and quality education have become feasible for those women who can afford them, economically and socially. Attitudinal changes towards women's role in the family due to good education, benefits of family planning and health care, child care, good job opportunities etc. surely help in the development of more confident and healthy women.
- Positive approach to economic and cultural migration facilitates women to be exposed to better prospects at the international level. Augmentation of women's movements through exposures at the international level help to bring about major changes in the economic, social and political lives of women.
- Employment in technological and other advanced sectors, which have global bearing, has opened up for suitably qualified women. The women also gain business skills that inform them about career opportunities.

Negative Impacts

- Globalization has increased the number of low paid, part time and exploitative jobs for women.
- With increasing nuclear families, the older women's life has become pitiable, sometimes spending their later days in old age homes and isolation.
- Similarly, male migration from rural areas to urban centers has put the women under triple burden of home making, farming and job in rural sector.
- At the same time, migration of women for economic reasons has led to increased exploitation including sexual exploitation and trafficking.

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 per cent of the world's income, and own less than one per cent of the world's property.'

According to Vandana Shivea, and Indian economist and scholar, globalization along with the support of organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have created slave wages. The work available to women is almost always poorly paid, mentally and physically unhealthy, demeaning, or insecure. Women are suffering two fold. As women in developing countries move into the work force, their domestic responsibilities are not alleviated. Women work two full time jobs.

Impact of globalization on Indian Writings: Indian Feminism and its representation in Indian Writing

Literature isn't left untouched by the process of globalization. Some literary works feature the model of world cities and some have the traces of anti-globalization protests. The theories of postmodernism and post colonialism have diverged from and converged with globalization studies. In the Indian Feminist writing, the modern Indo-English writers have explored the human psyche, inner climate and they distinctly unraveled the mystery of inner life in their woman characters. The contemporary Indian Women Writers have

surpassed complexity of human relationship and the miserable plight of women suffering under their insensitive and inconsiderate patriarchal conventions. Individualism is considered a western perversion and female individual space is unacceptable and inconceivable.

Even today, strict emphasis is laid on social, cultural, domestic and personal aspects of life. In case, a woman flaunts the rules and regulations of her family, she is blamed to ruin the honor and prestige of the family and is compelled to digest torture reluctantly. The problems and predicaments peculiar to the Indian Women found artistic expression in the Indian Literature in English since 1970's. In the creative writing of contemporary writers like Kamala Markundeya, Kamala das, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and many others started discussing openly the sexual problems of women and questioning the gender- role expectations. The female protagonists evince sufficient vigor and courage to question the oppressive role of society, religion and culture, but yet they refrain from taking the paths suggested by the western feminists, the custom of child marriage. They rather seek to find their own paths.

Shashi Deshpande's Women Characters: Deshpande bares the subtle processes of oppression and gender differentiation operating within the institution of family and the male centered Indian society at large. Deshpande's feminism does not uproot the woman from her background but it only tries to expose the different ideological element that shapes her. These include social and psychological factors such as woman's subordinate position in the Contemporary Indian woman writer Shashi Deshpande -From the Feminist Perspective family and her restricted sexuality .She seeks to expose the ideology by which a woman is trained to play her subservient role in society. Her novels eclectically employ the post modern technique of deconstructing patriarchal culture and customs, and reveal these to be manmade constructs. In her novel 'That Long Silence', the protagonist Jaya is a representative of a typical middle class educated Indian women.

That Long Silence is not an imaginary story. It is a story that happens in every middle class and educated Indian woman's life. Yes, the Indian women in this era are born at a time when there is much awareness about her rights, liberty to express her ideas, freedom to enjoy finance and the chance to stand for a cause. Still the silence continues to be in her life.

The protagonist Jaya is an educated middle class woman who lives with her husband Mohan and their kids Rahul and Rati. She is the typical Indian middle class woman in the present century who is confined between her realizations and the restrictions. Her father brought up Jaya as an "individual", who has the rights in the society as well as family irrespective of gender. Yet, this upbringing still looks strange in front a society that hesitates to accept the woman as an individual. Immediately after her graduation Jaya gets married and steps into her role as a dutiful wife, affectionate mother, "carefully being" dutiful to her in-laws.... to Aa, Ajji, kaka and her relatives. Her husband Mohan also plays his role as a dutiful Indian husband and never looks up to consider any imperfections in the life. As time goes Jaya's dutiful behavior to Mohan and his family becomes a routine.

According to the author Indian husbands take in for granted their wives emotions, likes and dislikes to be same like them and here author reciprocates the emotions in vivid detail. The husband never realizes where he lacks and the agony behind his wife's destined roles.

Jaya ponders throughout the novel for her role clarity, her life or is she living for someone else! She searches her identity as an individual and where her emotions are getting subdued! She, a failed writer and who had been forced to change her name as "Suhasini" to get submissive in marriage gets haunted by memories of the past. Mohan leaves home due to his failure in career and to avoid the situation of "two bullocks yoked together." By the end of the novel Jaya gets back to her destined role, being present to the happiness of the family and ready to subdue her emotions.

Findings:

Indian Writer, Shahsi Deshpande through the protagonist's conscious-raising voice, struggling to assert her femininity, gets to the root of existence and gives vent to a kind of female subjectivity which refuses to reconcile and identify herself with a patriarchal and male-dominated society. Deshpande evolves a feminist understanding of the woman's problems out of a purely Indian climate. She does not hold the torch of women's liberation beyond making the woman realize her 'self'. For though she is aware of the seriousness of the Indian woman's dilemma and the generation old struggles behind it, she also believes that a positive change in women's social status cannot materialize without bringing about a change in women's mindset first.

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 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.

Conclusion:

Globalization has surely had effect on Indian Culture. But finally I would state that globalization has had many positive impacts on the Indian Culture. India is the fastest growing economy. We are leading internationally in national sectors and surpassing so

called first world countries. As far as our culture is concerned, India as a country has thrived since time immemorial. We have been able to live past the harsh realities of time. The country has seen various changes of power, people or even civilization as a whole. All of it can be seen through numerous history records that we have. And there is only one reason we have been able to cope up with the world and keep our self united as a nation and that is because of our culture.

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