

The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention

Volume 1 issue 5 2014 page no.360-368 ISSN: 2349-2031

Available Online At: <http://valleyinternational.net/index.php/our-jou/theijsshi>

Plight of Rural Women in The Era Of Globalisation

Dr. S. K. Dash

HOD, Political Science,
Adivasi (Degree) College, Balliguda,
Kandhamal, Odisha, 762103
e-mail: susantadashacb@gmail.com

Abstract:

Globalisation is multi dimensional and multifaceted concept. It is a process by which societies, politics, cultures and economies have in some sense integrated. Globalization is economic, political, cultural, ideological and technological. Due to technological advances especially in the economic field it increases the interdependence of the states. The dawn of globalization era from 1990's has ushered in an era of greater turbulence and lesser stability in the socio-economic and political life of women. The rapid changes in socio-economic and political life of women due to globalization expected to elevate better status and role to women. But in contrast to the expectation it affects rural and urban women both positively and negatively. In this scenario this paper will give an overview of the positive and negative impact of globalization have in store for rural women in India.

Introduction:

The history of Indian women's oppression or emancipation by & large confines itself to women in those sections of society that have universal visibility. Rural / Tribal women in a agrarian underdeveloped economy like ours have never formed part of the so called national main stream. Even few scholars or developed agencies have thought it necessary to create a systematic record of varied facets of the lives of rural / tribal women in India. partly because of the ignorance on the part of many, rural / tribal women for a long time failed to attract the kind attention they deserve in the socio-economic field. To quote Smt. Indira Gandhi, the first women Prime Minister of India "what short society we shall have lies very much in the hands of women in the country". That's

why we should attach much importance to the status of women. Swami Vivekananda said "As a bird can't fly with one wing, no society can make progress unless its women too join men in all activities". Alike, J.L. Nehru also said "the status of women indicates the character of the country". In the words of Dupire "Man and women complete each other like the prow and poop of ship, the west and east of a line on the horizon, the head and hind quarters of an animal, the blood and milk of a living creature. The men proceeds and the women follows". These statements about women's role and status in socio-cultural, economic and political life are not a mere adjectives rather it emphasizes and highlights the multiple role of women in family, society, economy and polity throughout the human history.

Historical Settings

India has been the second populous and the seventh largest country in the world & it is basically a village/rural oriented sub-continent. It has a agrarian economy where women constitute the backbone of agricultural production. In rural India women constitute 68 percent of the agricultural work force. Rural women have, since many centuries been putting in unfathomable, unbearable and inadequately paid. Despite the burden of poverty and house hold management they contribute significantly to family income in the form agricultural productions, storage, marketing, food processing and engaging in other small house industries. Joyless drudgery to earn for their families & livelihood, women in rural India provide food security to the country's 1.13 billion people. The plight of most rural women has been pathetic since they have to collect firewood, fetch drinking water, search for fodder to feed cattle, work on their meager land to raise crops, work as laborers on other farms, take care of children etc. In our rural economy agriculture & allied sector employed as many as 89.5 percent of total women labour. Women's average contribution, in over all farm output, is estimated at 55 percent to 66 percent of total work force. According to World Bank Report, women accounted 94 percent of total employment in dairy sector. Women contributed 51 percent of total employment in forest based small-scale enterprises.

A large group of working rural / tribal / dalit women are in the rural and unorganized sector. Socially the majority of rural women are conservative, tradition bound and subject to socio-cultural constraints. The lack of opportunity for education and due to ignorance the so called globalization or liberalization yet placed them in disadvantaged position. Since globalization is opening up the Indian economy suddenly at a high speed without providing adequate opportunity to this innocent and tradition bound teeming millions of rural women of 7 lakh Indian villages. The women in India are facing numerous challenges and yet try to tackle these problems which can assure them to avail the benefit of globalization in rural India. A woman should get proper status in society. Her role is not confined to only to breeder & feeder but should contribute substantially in all fields of society. Today it is universally recognized that women are integral to all priorities and development. World Bank report (1991), observed that economic success for women will improve their own lives and those of women communities. To achieve this women's access to goods & services, to productive assets and to markets must be improved & brought probably at par with that of men. A global outlook however shows that with the social, educational, economic and scientific development situation has undergone a change throughout the world in this globalised age. Today whether it is developed or under developed country due recognition is given in all the fields to women. The international, national, regional &

local movement's aims to ensure socio-economic & political equality for women to improve not only the status of all but increase their role in nation building process. On the positive side globalisation has contributed to bring about welcome changes in the lives of women who have been able to avail of the opportunities, which have opened up in the various sectors of development.

These are:-

- I) Prospects of higher and quality education have become feasible for those women who can afford them, economically and socially.
- II) Employment in technological and other advanced sectors, which have global bearing, has opened up for suitably qualified women.
- III) With the changing attitude towards women especially in the urban areas, women enjoy more egalitarian set of gender relationship than in rural areas.
- IV) Augmentation of women's movements through exposures at the international level will help bring about major changes socio-economic and political lives of women.
- V) Reduction in gender inequalities will have positive effect on women's empowerment in the socio-economic context.
- VI) 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.

will surely help in the development of more confident and healthy women.

- VII) Positive approach to economic and cultural migration will facilitate women to be exposed to better prospects at the international level.

Keeping in view of the positive impact of globalization the central & Odisha Govt. specially after 1990's vigorously implementing the various innovative socio, economic, political, educational & health sanitation measures & policies to improve the status & living standard of the rural / tribal women.

- 1) International empowerment movement of women in the era of Globalization impacted rural women in India to play active role in Rural Development Programme after the enactment of 73rd and 74th Amendment Act came into force in the year 1992.
- 2) In the era of liberalization women both in rural and urban area broken all barriers and fights against all injustice, violence and crime against them, besides the socio-environment issues like fight against illiteracy, bonded labour and child marriage.
- 3) Rural women in this decade faith more in women leaders than men because women are more committed, sincere, less corrupt and can understand their problems more effectively and easily.
- 4) Government initiatives in recent years marks visible changes in the life of rural women with financial assistance, employment opportunity, education, formation of self help groups to make women self-reliant. The voluntary organizations and women self help groups are now playing more efficacious role in empowering rural / poor women in the village oriented rural India.

- 5) The National Rural Livelihood Mission a policy implemented by the central govt. with an aim to self reliant rural / poor below poverty line women into self help group fold including the SC and ST.
- 6) The central govt. at present implementing various innovative social security measures to improve the economic condition and status of rural and urban women in India. Among them the most important are MGNREGA, SGSY, IAY, IWDP, DPAP, DDP, TSC, BSY, MDM, SSA, RCH, NRHM, ICDS and other women related welfare measures like improvement of health and nutrition, water and environmental sanitation, immunization, supplementary nutrition for pregnant women, institutional delivery incentives like Janani Surakshya Yojana, Village Health Nutrition Day observation, health checkup, referral services etc. including old age, widow and disabled pensions.
- 7) To provide better opportunity to rural women to avail the facilities of education, marketing of their forest products, health facilities and other allied services affecting rural women are viable with the introduction of Pradhan Mantri Gramya Sadak Yojana which provides rural road links to urban area.
- 8) The growth & development of mines & industries, entry of MNC's to India provides employment opportunities to Rural / Tribal women. They substantially contributing to the working force than the urban / non-tribal women the ratio between male & female workers in the general population of the country is 5:1, it is 3:1 among the rural / tribal women.

The Globalization movement not only integrated the economies of the nations but also results in modernization of socio-political and cultural system. Now there has been perceptible change in the value system. With the impact of westernization, people no more think that it is the

degradation of social prestige if their female counterparts working in public or private sectors. The proliferation of administrative jobs both in public and private sectors created a demand for educated personnel's. Welfare and developmental activities in science, technology, medicine in defense sectors women are given due weightage in this age of globalization earlier it was a dream for the women. The women's movement in India contributed largely for state intervention in the economic sphere, initiate legislation to widen women's entry into education, employment technology, research, management and natural resources and several other socio-economic issues affecting women in the Indian society.

Recognition of women's socio-economic needs and their integration in rural development programme facilitated political empowerment of women through 73th and 74th Amendment Act of the Constitution. This was done since women empowerment became an international movement which had its impact on Indian society too during the 1990's. In order to ensure gender equality and allow women to play more active and effective role in socio-economic and political field of the society the govt. of India reserves seats for women in education, employment and in three tier local and urban government. There is no denying the fact that women in the present time began to acquire equal status and role with men. Yet in several field the door is closed for them.

The non-availability of data for analysis has made the assessment of the negative impact of globalisation on rural women's is a daunting task. This analysis is further compounded by the multiplicity of the roles performed by women. Globalisation has had such negative consequences for women & children that some critics argue 'that globalisation is a man'. They point to the way women suffer disproportionately from IMF & World Bank policies as public services are cut and

they are forced to care for sick, disabled and older relatives as well as earn living.

Prof. Amartya Sen, aptly remarked that disadvantages of women are not; of course, unique to India, and there is much evidence of extensive gender based inequality even in the elementary matters of health care and nutrition in many regions across the world. But fairly detailed comparisons of mortality, morbidity rates, hospital care, nutritional attention etc. have been made in India, and they clearly confirm a fairly decisive future for women being systematically deprived vis-à-vis men in our country especially in rural area.

Globalisation is a double edged process as far as women is concerned. On the one hand majority of women in India & other developing countries find themselves striped off the benefit of social security, government subsidy protection of labour rights and than safety nets. On the other hand there are possibilities of better education facilities and opportunities at the transnational sense which are very attractive to the privileged few.

In case of Odisha it is observed that instead of any positive impact numerous socio-cultural-economical problems entangled the rural & tribal women in the era of Globalization. Due to POSCO project in Jagatsingpur Dist. large numbers of people under compulsion of forcibly displaced for the mega project. They are deprived of their traditional source of perennial income. Since last 12 years except 2700 acres of land acquisition nothing has been done so far for the

steel project is concerned. Similarly in the case of Vedanta Alumina project in Lanjigarh of Kalahandi District ,after the direction of Hon'ble Supreme Court special Grama Sabha were held & accordingly people rejected the proposal of Odisha Govt. to lease Niyamgiri Buxite hill to Vedanta Companies. The Dangaria Kandha shows an example how they united to fought against the unholy nexus between companies & Odisha Govt. who made all sort of illegal attempts to displaced the Dangeria tribals & want to deprived them from their home & earth.

Apart from it lack of employment opportunities in Odisha the rural people of Ganjam, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Nuapara, Kandhamal, Koraput, Sonepur, Baragarh are compel to migrate to neighbor states like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal Gujrat, Karnatak, Kerala and Tamilnadu to work there as migrant labour & forced labour. Case of women atrocities sexual abuse, immoral trafficking of adult girls along with child labour is alarming in rural Odisha since the so called globalized era starts it gear in Odisha. A report of the Govt. of Odisha indicates how in recent years women & children along with labour force of rural Odisha is facing numerous challenges for their food & fodder. The TATA Project in Ganjam, Kalinga Nagar Steel Project in Jajpur District, Vedanta Companies, Private University in Puri etc makes. the rural people nowhere. In case of Kalinga Nagar TATA Steel Project, Jajpur during land acquisition 12 innocent tribal people brutally killed in 2002 by the District

administration to disperse the violent mob but the project is not yet materialized. Rampant Mining scam, Cheat Fund scam & Coal Block allotment scam, Non- collection of crores of amount of taxes, royalties from the companies further weaken the economic backbone of Odisha in the globalized era. Casualisation & contractual jobs, slashed in government jobs ,excessive mechanization, unutilized and under utilization of human resources along with divide and rule policy of the Odisha Govt. in the name of globalization defeated the very purpose and pious declaration of the Indian constitution under the unfathom pressure of globalization. Excessive bureaucratization of administration in rural Odisha, naxalite problem also a nightmare for the innocent, illiterate teeming rural tribal people in Odisha. Far from any visible positive impact Odia rural economy suffers lot & is going to be paralyzed if the same trend continues for another decade or so.

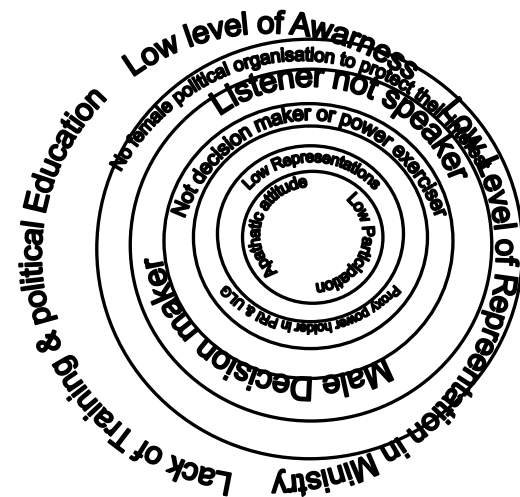
VECIOUS CIRCLES OF GLOBALIZATION
RURAL & TRIBAL WOMEN
SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS



ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS



POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS



Globalisation & Plight of Rural/ Tribal Women:-

- 1) Modern rapid industrialization due to Globalisation after 1990's results in the decline of household industries. Since they constitute biggest traditional source of women's employment out side agriculture and rural women are the greatest victims of this process of economic transformation.
- 2) The technological changes and unskilled nature of women labour exclude them

- from industrial sector. Absence of any rule or authority to enforce women's rights leads to their exploitation.
- 3) It is found that women are low earning groups having low skill & technology, besides the level of education & employment opportunities for rural women is considerably decreased which affects their role & status in society.
 - 4) The committee on status of women in India projected that nearly 94 percent of women are engaged in unorganized sector of the economy, 81.4 percent being in agricultural occupations, almost half of the rural women works as agricultural labourers & they are the source of cheap labour. In this era of globalisation their work goes undervalued in an economy which puts premium on marketable work.
 - 5) Women dominate the traditional subsistence sector, the development process ignores their contribution. Modernization & Globalisation deprives them their status as producers & providers of families. Generally it is believed that all the process of modernization & technological advancement is equally good for both men & women but in rural areas, even the introduction of simplest machine which adds to the skill of a man deprives the women in the absence of proper training opportunities.
 - 6) The process of Globalisation excludes the weaker sections particularly the rural / tribal / poor dalit women from benefit of social sector. The withdrawal of funds, fiscal deficit, lack of employment opportunity deprived the welfare measures for women as the state gradually abdicated its responsibility.
 - 7) It is argued that even as Globalisation provides benefits & opportunities for many thus threatening livelihoods & survival. It is hold that Globalisation in future likely to increase 'Skill selectivity' as economic sectors become more receptive to information technologies & biotechnologies thus adversely impacting those without such skills particularly the rural women.
 - 8) Today rural women have lost their original world under the impact of industrialization. Massive commercialization of minor forest product & large scale deforestation diminished their economic role & lead to severe stress on her economic backbone. Their role in multiple work of rural economy are generally ignored in the andocentric environment of planning & development.
 - 9) The agricultural land in rural areas are taken away from the people with low compensation to established industries without providing any permanent source of

- income which affects the women more than the men.
- 10) Globalisation leads to prostitution, illegal trafficking of young girls, women from rural & poor family by pretty man for flesh trade which is now recognized in certain countries like Indonesia as Sex Tourism. It is a serious crime against women in the name of earning foreign currency & globalizing contagious diseases.
 - 11) Modern industrialization under Globalisation leads to displacement of rural & tribal people. As the MNC are intensifying the appropriation of mines, minerals & forest resources which are the basic source of livelihood of rural & tribal people.
 - 12) The traditional role of women in agriculture livestock and animal husbandry, Khadi & village industries including handicrafts, handlooms fisheries, etc, is being undermined because mechanization & automation is becoming prevalent in the market based economy which adversely affect the rural women.
 - 13) Privatization & reduction of public services will reduce regular employment opportunities for women as it increased the low paid, part-time, exploitative jobs & worse working conditions.
 - 14) Privatization of education & training will increase the cost of getting education. When family budget are readjusted, the female children will be the main causality because most of the resources will be spent to educate male children.
 - 15) On account of Globalisation, health, migration, employment and environmental problems are rising. Specifically it affects rural, tribal and dailt women to a greater extent as they are the soft target of the government.
 - 16) The N. C Saxena Committee came out with startling findings that 85.39 lakh tribals in rural India have been displaced since 1990 for mega projects of MNC's. Since 1980 9.8 lakh hectares of forest land that of the rural / tribal people have been diverted for 11,282 projects.
- Unfortunately the so called globalisation has widened and intensified socio-economic inequalities & marginalize majority of women in India due to reduction of employment opportunities, wages, casualisation of jobs & women workers exclusion from the modernized production process due to lack of education & training. Advances in technology have not benefited women at all. The planned development perspective of the govt. generated several welfare schemes for bettering women's socio-economic position yet to be fully materialize even after six decades of independence.
- Globalisation for an Indian women could have been interpreted as amelioration of women's status, decline in her fertility, obligations, a reduction in her mortality and contraception

burdens her empowerment for that could be overcome her predicaments and her active participation in all democratic institutions of society to ensure equity & justice. Globalisation further feminise their poverty by bringing them to the level of poorest among the poor. They are victims of social neglect and crime, suffer life long injustice, inequalities & discrimination. Their standing in the globalised society will further deepen their miseries.

Conclusions

It is seen that situation facing the majority of Indian women is far from positive. However efforts are under way to short out the adverse effect through governmental & non-governmental level. Both the government and NGO's seem to aware of the fact that globalisation process require proper focus on rural development, education, health, childcare & proper gainful employment for the under privileged rural women. Special focus should be laid on strengthening public distribution system for food security, health schemes, child care credit and insurance scheme. The role of

NGO's & women organisation like SEWA WWF, CWDS are of paramount importance in this direction to meet the challenges of Globalisation on rural women.

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