Impact of Globalization on the Women of Urban Slums: A Sociological Analysis

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Globalization is a double edged process as far as women are concerned. On the one hand, majority of women in India and other developing countries find themselves stripped off the benefit of social security, government subsidy protection of labour rights and the safety nets. On the other, there were possibilities of better education facilities and opportunities at the transnational sense which are very attractive to the privileged few. The impact of globalization on slum has a tremendous influence which is positive as well as negative. India is getting global recognition and slowly moving forward to become a major economic and political life clearly. Thus the paper clearly elucidates that globalization is a complex phenomenon and its impact on women in slums. This is an empirical study carried out in Meerut city of Meerut district. The study proved, globalization is the major vehicle for the development of slum women. As a result globalization has shown remarkable changes in the life of slum women like contribution in family income, awareness about health, used means of communication and living pattern has been improved.

[Keywords: Globalization, Urban slums, Labour rights]

1. Introduction

Globalization, which gathered momentum during the last quarter of the twentieth century, has created unparalleled opportunities and posed unprecedented challenges for development. Yet, the virtual ideology of our times has transformed globalization from a descriptive word in to a prescriptive word.

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But the reality that has unfolded so far belies the expectations of the ideologues. The exclusion of countries and of people from globalization, which is partly attributable to the logic of markets, is a fact of life. Even so, there is a strong belief and an influential view that globalization is the road to development during the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Globalization, now as much as then, promises economic prosperity for countries that join the system and economic deprivation for countries that do not. It needs to be stressed that this prescriptive view of globalization is contested and controversial. The process of urbanization and globalization is a part of the larger process of economic and social change, which is affecting not only the existing urban centers but the countryside as well.

Globalization is a movement resulting from the daily need of people in general to deal with an advanced integrated and all-inclusive social economic. Globalization apparently emerged as an economic necessity. It was also a tool through which advanced technologies could be introduced and improve civilization. Advanced technologies became the only means of communication without which man or society feels “outside” the world. It indicates the changes and alternatives in special contexts in the whole of the world. There are numerous invocations in newspapers, popular books, magazines, on television and radio programs and in the internet communication in which the term is used without any impressive or clear definition. Globalization have posed several challenging threats to the developing and underdeveloped countries primarily in generating social and economic inequalities and specially points of view inequality and poverty and their potential impacts on slum dwellers, lots of debates are raging on, yet concluding have been very hard to arrive it. Anita Trevedi (2002) examined the impact of globalization of labor organization through a sectoral analysis of a newly developing industrial Noida and Greater Noida region through the interviews and case study. She found that Indian society has had a close alliance with labor and is now under constant challenge from the forces of globalization. P.V.L. Ramana (1999) has been talked about in detail impact of globalization on living conditions of workers in the unorganized sector and found that the living conditions of slums are not good. The poor and the weaker sections get marginalized. Sabir Ali and S.N. Singh (1998) attempted to highlight the serious problems of Urbanization and observed that the National Capital territory of Delhi is facing today like sanitation situation, issues of public health socio-spatial situation of housing and strategy for the speedy and sustainable improvement.

Most of the studies about slum dwellers are mainly descriptive, serving only to focus attention on the magnitude and gravity of the problem, through here and there some theoretical insights are added. It would appear that, for an understanding of the slum problem, a mere survey of the socio-economic background of the sociological dimensions also in more analytical manner. Majority of the studies have been conducted on rural women. There is dearth of the studies on impact of globalization on the slum women in this regard. Hence the
present study intends to enquire the impact of globalization on the women of urban slum areas.

2. An Overview of Literature

Globalization is not a new phenomenon for the twenty one century yet it is being treated as a most recent, mainly because certain aspects of globalization have posed several challenging threats to the developing and under developed countries primarily in generating social and economic inequalities. It is a comprehensive process, which includes both modernization and post modernization liberal democracy, nation-state and capitalism are the major idiom of globalization. Globalization starting from the west has been diffusing across the globe but the effect may remain diluted from centre to periphery and within a country from urban to rural and urban centre to urban periphery where the slums are located. One of the major factors responsible in the spread of globalization has been media, particularly, television, internet and mobile.

2.1 Meaning and Definition of Globalization

Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of conciseness of world as a whole both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole in the twentieth century. The many meanings of the word “globalization” have accumulated very rapidly and recently and the verb “globalize” is first attested by the Merriam Webster Dictionary in 1944. Globalization means, in brief, making the whole world a small village for some it is building up a “United Universal Empire”. A growing number of people around the world are leading globalized lives. The basic political-economic conditions of their daily existence are directly or indirectly affected by the restructuring of global capitalism and the state-market links underpinning it. Roland Robertson could be considered as father of globalization. In his article “Mapping the global condition : Globalization as the central concept”, published in year 1990, in the book “Global Culture” edited by “Mike Featherstone” for sage publications, London. He explained the globalization as analytical and empirical aspects of globalization as “Global Culture” is, necessarily trans-societal culture which takes a variety of forms which have preceded the inter-state relations in to which nation-states can be regarded as being embedded, and processes which sustain the exchange and flow of goods, people, information, knowledge and images which give rise to communication processes which gain some autonomy on the global level. “Meluhan” used the term “global village” in context of globalization.

Anthony Giddens (1990) “Globalization as the intensification of worldwide social relations linking distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many thousands of miles away and vice versa.”
Malcolm Waters (1995) “Globalization is a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding.”

2.2 History of Globalization

The history of globalization accepted in a planned way is not very old. It is the concept of the 1990s. Countries like U.S. and France have accepted globalization as their nation-state policy. Malcolm Waters (1995) state that the word ‘Global’ has been in usage for about 400 years from now, but it was not used in its technical connotation. In 1961 Webster Dictionary first defines the terms globalism and globalization. Robertson (1992) defines the history of globalization in terms of five major phases:

Phase 1: The Germinal phase (Europe, 1400-1750): Globalization had begun in Europe during the period 1400-1750, as the beginning of international trade relations in Europe.

Phase 2: The Incipient phase (Europe, 1750-1825): In this phase the formal relations began to take shape, it include, emergence of nation-states, diplomatic relations between nation-states, international agreements etc.

Phase 3: The Take-Off phase (1825-1925): In this phase the idea of acceptable national society came up. There appeared very sharp increase in the number and speed of global forms of communications.

Phase 4: The Struggle for Hegemony phase (1925-1969): Disputes and wars about the fragile terms of the globalization process were established by the end of the take off period. Globe wise international conflicts increased concerning forms of life.

Phase 5: The Uncertainty phase (1969-1992): In this phase world community itself is not certain about its future direction. In this phase there is heightening of global consciousness in the world community aided by exploration of space, international relations, global environmental problems, and global mass media via space technology.

3. Slums

In India, economic development plans undertaken to attain a faster rate of growth, coupled with natural growth of urban population have resulted in unprecedented expansion of urban areas, specially the metropolitan centers. The continuous increase of population in urban centers is creating several problems like housing shortage, crowding, congestion and environmental hazards etc. A large portion of urban growth today is carried over by illegal development taking place the shape of swims and squatter settlements. This has become a worldwide phenomenon and no major city in the world-developed or the developing is free from this. Such type of urban growth that takes place independent from the control
of the authorities charged with the external or institutional control of local building and planning, large scale and uncontrolled migration is an imperative force in congregating large masses of population in substandard localities popularly known as slums.

3.1 Meaning and Definition

The term 'slum' is known variously in different cities like in Delhi, slums are known as 'Katras', 'Gallis' or 'Jhuggi-jhopad patti', in Mumbai as 'Chawls', in Kolkata as 'Bustee', in Chennai as 'Cheris', in Kanpur as 'Ahatas' and in Bangalore as 'Keris'. Slums are described as congested localities with substandard housing and insanitary surroundings accommodating poor people who follow low paid occupations or are underemployed or unemployed and who lead a life of crime and are morally deprived. Slum has been defined differently by economists, town planners, social workers, administrators, sociologists etc. keeping in view their own disciplines and professional backgrounds. Different definitions for the term slums are as follows:

Hunter (1968) “The slum is a residential area in which the housing is so deteriorated, so substandard and so unwholesome as to be a menace to the health, safety, morality or welfare of the occupants.” Implied in this definition is the assumption that the poor housing is the cause underlying slum conditions.

Bergel (1950) “Slum may be characterized as areas of substandard housing conditions within a city. A slum is always an area; a single, neglected building even in the worst stage of deterioration does not make a slum.”

3.2 Characteristics of Slums

Anupurna Rathor in 2003 has been defined that slums are basically characterized by overcrowding, insanitary conditions, absence of basic facilities and amenities of water, drainage, latrines, roads and electricity.

3.3 History of Slums

Historically, slums have grown in Bombay as a response to a growth of population for beyond the capacity of existing housing. The first slum in India got developed in Mumbai. (Yadav and Srivastava, 2006) Mumbai is an old city with slums inhabited by rural migrants who have been pouring in to the city for the last many years. (Gill, 1994) The word 'slum' has been long in use almost since the 18th century when it was used as a term for squalid housing in densely populated districts of industrial cities (Yadav, 1987). Suritola in now Dhaka, (Bangladesh), is a typical old inner city slum district having many multistory buildings interspersed with Shanties, built before 1990 in the old part of Dhaka that covers a total area of 20 hectors. (UNCHS, 1982)

Slum has been a concrete social phenomenon since the time of industrial revolution in Western Europe, particularly in Great Britain where the bulk of rural
population in search of employment migrated into the new industrial centers. Their continued exploitation, poverty and overcrowded living conditions resulted in sub-standard housing conditions and poor amenities. The entire social environment of the region where they were inhabited became polluted (Sinha, 1985). Slum and squatter settlements are growing at alarming rates. They are the product of failed policies, bad governance, corruption, inappropriate financial systems and a fundamental lack of political will, each of these failures adds to the toll on people already deeply burdened by poverty and constrains the enormous potential for human development that urban life offers.

3-4 Types of Slums

N. Jayapalan (2002) has been pointed out three main types of slums in Indian cities, these are:

1. Original slum: This is a kind of slum which from the very beginning consisted of unsuitable buildings. These are usually areas around an old factory or mining site which is now given up or in the zone in transition. These sections are beyond recovery as they consist of age old structures and they need to be razed in order to be eradicated e.g. The Mexican slum in U.S.A.

2. Transitional zone: The second type consists of slums created by the departure of middle and upper class families to other sections or it may be due to the starting of a new industry or due to congestion and subsequent deterioration of the living area. These types of slums are to be found in the transition zone of developing cities such as south end slum in Boston (U.S.A.) these are the areas which house vice and crime and where all sorts and shades of people live.

3. Phenomenon of transition: The third and most unpleasant type of slum is mainly a phenomenon of transition once the area around a main business district has become blighted, physical and social deterioration spreads rapidly. This type of slum looms with flophouses, one night accommodations for the destitute, houses of prostitution and speakeasies. It is populated by transients, tramps, vagrant’s chronic alcoholics, beggars, homeless men and habitual criminals. Its economic activities are carried out by proprietors of saloons and pool rooms' fences, pawn brokers, dope peddlers etc.

Slums differ physically, thus there are rooming house slums, tenement slums and slums of one family home. Rooming house slums consist of structures where different rooms are let out for different persons and families. Tenement slums consist of multi-storied structure which house two or more families in a single dwelling. Rooming houses are let out on a temporary basis. Slums of one family houses are very rare which consists of typical small family structures.

3-5 Development of Slums Area

With industrialization large numbers of people have migrated to cities for gainful employment. In the initial stages, nothing was done by industries to meet
the housing needs of the laborers. Workers wanted to live near their work places. Most of the industrialization came up in the fringe areas of the central cities on agricultural lands acquired and allotted by the government. The tanks, canals and other common facilities of the agriculturists became government property. Government agencies did not have ready plans for these common lands to be immediately implemented. Hence, there were very little resistance from many quarters and the poorer sections erected their temporary, huts as their dwelling. In course of time more and more people came to erect their huts. These poor people did not have sufficient money to erect big huts or construct good houses. In the industrial regions of many cities, space occupied by tanks, canals and other common agricultural facilities have common slums areas. The city disowned the responsibility for this haphazard growth of hutments. No particular building regulations were imposed.

Above all no provision was made to house these people. These slums have developed on the sites wholly unfit for human habitation.

4. **Objective of the Study**

The overall objective of the present study is to analyze the impact of globalization on the women of urban slums in the Meerut city of Meerut district.

5. **Area of the Study**

The area of present study is a notified slum in the Meerut city of Meerut district. Meerut city is governed by Municipal Corporation which comes under Meerut Metropolitan Region. Meerut district is one of the most important districts in North West region of the state Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh lies between Ganga and Yamuna close to the national capital Delhi. Geographically, the locale of the study, i.e. Meerut city lies between 29°.01’ north latitude and 77°.43’ east longitude. It is situated at an attitude of 290 meters. The major portion of the city lies on the fertile land.

As per provisional reports of census India, population of Meerut city in 2011 is 1,305,429; of which male and female are 688,118 and 617,311 respectively. Total number of Slums in Meerut city is 92,034 in which population of 544,859 resides. This is around 41.74% of total population of Meerut city.

6. **Methodology**

The purpose of this research paper is to analyze how globalization to promote the women of urban slums in Meerut city of Meerut district. The present study is basically empirical in nature, which is based on the primary and as well as secondary data of information for systematization analysis and conclusion. 100 respondents were selected through the purposive sampling. In the regarding impact of globalization development and change in socio-economic, political status of women in slums. The primary data have been collected through observation,
interview and scheduled methods from the women in slums and secondary data have been collected through the census of India, research institutions, and relevant journal, article, newspapers, books and magazines and various departments of government and non-government etc.

7. Findings of the Study

In the present study analysis the impact of globalization on the women in urban slums socio-economic and political perspective. The sample consisted of 100 respondents. The data analyzed through appropriate statistical technique revealed the following outcome:

Table-1 : Type of Impact on the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Impact on the Respondents</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Living pattern has been improved</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Change attitude towards new globalized technology</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Used means of communication</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Education level has been increased</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Gain occupation</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Contribution in family income</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Awareness about health</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Awareness about fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Decision making power has been increased</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</table>

The above table shows that 19 respondents (19%) out of 100 respondents improved the living pattern, 16 respondents (16%) out of 100 respondents change attitude towards new globalized technology, 12 respondents (12%) out of 100 respondents used means of communication, 06 respondents (06%) out of 100 respondents increased the educational level, 08 respondents (08%) out of 100 respondents gain occupation, 09 respondents (09%) out of 100 respondents contribute in family income, 10 respondents (10%) out of 100 respondents increased awareness about health, 11 respondents (11%) out of 100 respondents increased awareness about the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution, 09 respondents (09%) out of 100 respondents increase decision making power.

Thus the largest segment of the respondents (19%) has been improved the living pattern.

8. Conclusion

Globalization is a double edged process as far as concerned. On the other hand, majority of women in India and other developing countries find themselves
stripped off the benefit of social security, government subsidy protection of labor rights and the safety nets. On the other hand, there were possibilities of better education facilities and opportunities at the transnational sense which are very attractive to the privileged few. Globalization has opened by broader communication lines and brought more companies as well as different worldwide organizations in to India. This provides opportunities for not only working women, but also women who are becoming a larger part of the work force. With new jobs for women, there are opportunities for higher pay, which raises self-confidence and brings about empowerment among women. This is turn provides equality between men and women, something that Indian women have been struggling with their entire lives. Globalization has the power to uproot the traditional views towards women, so they can take an equal stance in society. It is, however necessary to understand that effective development requires full integration of women in the development process as agents of change as well as beneficiaries because Indian women can be utilized as development resources in many ways.

References


