

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW
MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

Volume 4 | Issue 3

2021

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Impact of Globalisation on Feminism

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ABSTRACT

The waves of feminism have spread all around the globe. Globalisation opens the window for the exchange of ideas, currencies, cultures, economics, trades, literature and what not. The concept of feminism has just changed the ideologies, perceptions and the stereotype thoughts on the gender roles and practices. The condition of women has been impacted and improved because of the globalisation of feminism. Women Empowerment is a global concern and it could be achieved by removing some irrational practices. This paper is a brief study of the concept of feminism, globalisation and how are the two concepts associated with each other. In this paper a small trial to highlight the positive impact and negative consequences of globalisation on Feminism.

I. FEMINISM

Feminism is a term which has been defined by many scholars in many manners, but everyone focused on one core point that is 'equality for women'. There are multiple of definitions of feminism covering social, economic as well as the political aspect. The whole demand of the definition has been women's equality should be prioritised.

Feminism, at its core, is more likely to be the belief that women have to be treated equally with everyone, socially, economically and politically.

Merriam Webster defined feminism as "the theory of the political, economic and social equality of sexes and organized activity on behalf of women's right and interests."² In fact Merriam Webster announced the term 'Feminism' as the word of the year in the year 2017 as the use of this word spiked up to 70% in that particular year.³

Feminism means that women shall have at least as much to say as men about everything in the arrangement of human affairs, including especially the meaning, purpose, and activities of their own lives.

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² Pat Mitchel, *Whats the definition of feminism*, (December 24th, 2017), <https://blog.ted.com/whats-the-definition-of-feminism-12-talks-that-explain-it-to-you/>

³ Merriam Webster- Since-1828, *Merriam-Webster's 2017 Words of the Year*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/word-of-the-year-2017-feminism>

In simple words we can say that the collective empowerment of women is known as feminism. Achieving such collective empowerment for the women of colour in the United States or indeed in the world, is not an easy task. It cannot be done unless the communities to which the set of women belong, are liberated from all forms of racial oppression. Similarly, without the eradication of colonialism and neo-colonialism, it would be very difficult for the women of Global South to get this collective empowerment.

For the achievement of collective empowerment, it is also important to be economically independent from men. Women has to be fully employed and shall be free from poverty. They shall have control over their own bodies. For empowerment of women it is highly necessary to have all the right to make decisions affecting their reproductive capabilities, including full access to choices concerning contraception, abortion, childbirth, pre-natal and post-natal care.

It is also extremely important for the women to be free from all forms of violence and sexual coercion. Crimes against women such as rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, molestation and many more plays a major role for the suppression of women. Not just these, violence against women also includes war and preparation for the war.

In recent past few years, we have seen a lot of talk about the women empowerment and the theories and practicality related to feminism. Feminism chiefly arose as a comeback to the Western traditions which were more likely to be restricting in nature and rights of women were restricted. But, the atrocities and discrimination against the women is not limited to any specific territory. It could be seen any where around the world. So, the feminist approach towards the same has global manifestation and variations.

II. FEMINISM AND GLOBALISATION

Globalisation while defining we can say that it is the exchange of ideas, concepts, currencies, trade, economics, culture etc. between one country to another country.

Whereas the formal meaning of globalisation is given by WHO is “the increased interconnectedness and interdependence of peoples and countries. It is generally understood to include two inter-related elements: the opening of international borders to increasingly fast flows of goods, services, finance, people and ideas; and the changes in institutions and policies at national and international levels that facilitate or promote such flows.”⁴

Feminism and Globalisation has been in talk from couple of years. The awareness about the

⁴ World Health Organization, *Globalisation*, <https://www.who.int/topics/globalization/en/>

concept and its importance has now reached almost so many countries. But like all other things, the impact of globalisation on feminism is positive as well as negative also.

III. IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON FEMINISM

Positive impact and negative consequences are could be easily noticed. But when it comes about the impact on feminism and women empowerment, it's a very thin line that segregate the good and bad impact of the subject. Globalisation has not just helped the approach of feminism to reach in various corners of earth but also responsible for the upliftment and improvement of women's status and condition respectively, in the society.

There are various platforms and medias in order to create awareness regarding the subject, but the real challenge is to shape policies and processes in order to promote improved living standards and spread gender equality. Additional to it, it is very much required to supervise and do policy research on the impacts of globalisation.

Listed down is the three major and positive impact of globalisation on feminism:

Quality of jobs created: It has been the history that the jobs in the growth sector have low wages, insecure tenure and limited training or promotional prospects. Because of globalisation the awareness regarding the same was created. These unpleasant and pathetic conditions of the women workers have been improved because of the alteration in the labour laws. It sets out the labour standards and their rights which not just attract investment but also creates a quality job for women.

“Downward pressures on wages and working conditions where increasing numbers of workers must resort to lower-wage jobs and the informal sector. The increased use of subcontracting and low rates of unionisation also decreases the negotiating position of workers.”⁵

Decreased state investment in social services: The government revenues were decreased. The tariffs and licensing fees has been reduced and are compensated through social services. It this scenario it is women who are more likely to get directly impacted than that of men. It encouraged women to step out and utilise their skills in order to be independent.

IV. GENDER DISCRIMINATED EFFECTS OF GLOBALISATION

The gender-differentiated effects we can also address it as the negative impact of globalisation on feminism are more likely to be connected with the traits of the society. It is also related to

⁵ Globalisation, *Globalisation and equality between women and men*, <https://www.oecd.org/social/gender-development/1896368.pdf>

the economy that reflects the existing pattern of gender-based inequality between men and women. Listed below is couple of difficulties which are still faced by women even in the era of globalisation and modernisation.

Uneven distribution of the labour force by sectors: In many countries the distribution of men and women are done differently across the manufacturing sectors, within agricultural sector and also between formal and informal sector. This irregular and uneven impact of globalisation has gender-based effects including increased number of female employees in labour intensive manufacturing whereas in formerly protected industrial sector the increase of male employment can be seen. Even the new opportunities for agricultural exports for farmers with resources in order to increase the production, also for more likely to be for men.⁶

Areas of comparative advantage: For the nations which are emerging now, it could be often found that low-wage labour concentrated employment which are women predominating, are a good area of comparative advantage. Industries based on garment manufacture, etc encourages the practice of hiring women in a large proportion but at low wage compared to that of men.⁷ This creates an overall wage gap between men and women and decreases the opportunities for closing this gap and making the wage equal. This apparently looks like the empowerment of women but it is actually a harassment and a deceive for women low wage workers.

Distribution of productive assets: By productive assets here we mean the creative skills, beneficial property, valuable credit, quality education etc. The capacity to take advantages and benefits of new opportunities is very much related to be being rich in productive assets per se. Women in comparison to men has less access to theses resources.

Distribution of unpaid household labour between women and men: When it comes about household responsibilities and maintaining family and the labour force, the obligation tends to be more on women to take the charge of the same. This necessary but unpaid work is generally taken for granted, with little attention to the impact of trade policy choices and the load of work and economic opportunities.

There are lot of said and unsaid practices existing in the world which looks like they are for the empowerment of the women but deep down it somehow ends up being a dictatorial authority over women which administers the empowerment of the women also.

⁶ Globalisation, *Globalisation and equality between women and men*, <https://www.oecd.org/social/gender-development/1896368.pdf>

⁷ Globalisation, *Globalisation and equality between women and men*, <https://www.oecd.org/social/gender-development/1896368.pdf>

V. CONCLUSION

To create women empowerment and encourage feminism, it is very much important for all the individual and specifically ‘women’ to have absolute control over their own sexuality, they shall have the right to choose their sexual preferences and their partners. The violence against the women has to be completely eradicated from the society to see a better future. As long as violence against women, sexual intimacy is because of some unwanted force or is any revenge or any punishment (anything where the free consent is not given), exists in the society, it is impossible to achieve gender equality and women empowerment.

It is very much needed to provide quality education to all boys and girls including having a full curriculum of sex education free from fear, and with the fullest scientific accuracy and disclosure.

The flexibility of gender and the right of the people to pursue their identities as transgenders is embraced by the concept of feminism. Feminism encourages people to practice in according to their tendencies and wishes. It makes people (specially women and transgenders) free from all forms of discrimination, reprisal and censure.

One of the good approach by the feminists is, they proposed the idea to use the pronouns apart from HE/SHE to indicate a non-specific gender designation.

“Feminism is the complicated enterprise of achieving equality between women and men, and among all peoples. Feminism is about the elimination of all forms of hierarchy, and all systems of domination. It is about honouring the preciousness of all life. In accord with cultural, legal, historical and political understandings of gender this definition uses specific designations of women and men, and designations of racial and sexual identities in order to appropriately recognize struggles for gender, racial, sexual, and social justice while simultaneously acknowledging that these categories are neither fixed nor permanent. For these reasons, feminism, as defined here, requires a radical reconstruction of human society.”⁸

Globalisation has played a very important role in empowering women and exchange the ideas and waves of the concept called ‘FEMINISM’. The improvement in the condition of women, globally, is one of the outputs of globalisation.

⁸ Bettina Aptheker, *Working Definition of Feminism*, <https://blackcigarette.livejournal.com/1076751.html>