

IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON WIDOWS**Miss. Priya Vithalrao Gaikwad***Research Scholar**(A.M. College, Hadapsar, Pune-52)**Email Id: priyavg1709@gmail.com***Abstracts**

India is a country with the highest widow population of about 40 million – 10% of the country's female population. If on one hand, a woman is at the peak of the ladder of success in many spheres of public life, on the other hand, when she is a widow, she suffers a silent social death every day which is bound by the customs and traditions in the orthodox Indian Society this condition has changed a bit since 1991 when India adopted - LPG policy - accepted Globalization. The low status of widows can be traced back to since post-Vedic era when widows were restricted to contribute towards socio-religious values of the society. Widows were culturally, socially, economically, and politically excluded from the mainstream of society. The Globalization and modernization of society have led to changes in economic structure, a decline in societal values. Globalization encourages the spread of Western values around the globe. Globalization began with the earliest human development in the history of the world. In India specifically, it can be said that a significant spread of Western values – those values that are widely accepted in Western society, including divorce and remarriage – began in the 16th century, when the British first colonized India. The earliest law in the favour of widows in India was in 1829 – Sati Abolition and many more such laws were made thereafter. However, more recently, trends across India are showing that society is changing its stance on the remarriage of widows, and the acceptability of divorce. These concepts were once considered 'Taboo' in Indian society; however, these issues are now being discussed and change has occurred at a legal level. I will explore whether globalization – as the spread of Western values – has influenced this change in societal sentiment in India?

Key Words: *Globalization, Widows, Society, Condition.*

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Introduction

Globalization is the process of growing, developing, and expanding businesses, services, and technologies throughout the world. Globalization is increasing substantially and is creating new opportunities for especially developing countries, which are now able to attract foreign investors and foreign capital. In industrialized countries, the process of globalization bears a different impact on women than on men. The concept of Globalization in its present context was used in the 1960s in the western world and India in 1990. Globalization is

a multidimensional phenomenon and a complex process. It is defined as the ongoing technological, social, economic, and political integration of the world that began after the Second World War (Asian Development Outlook: 2001). It also meant the Liberalization of trade and market, free flow of money, labor, and greater integration of the National economy into the world economies by dismantling barriers (S. Kumar: 2004, Mallavarapu: 2005). Thus, Globalization is a composite process.

Globalization in India

Until the liberalization of 1991, India was largely and intentionally isolated from the world markets, to protect its fledgling economy and to achieve self-reliance. After suffering a huge financial and economic crisis Dr. Man Mohan Singh brought a new policy known as Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG Policy) also known as New Economic Policy, 1991 as it was a measure to come out of that crisis. New Economic Policy aimed at the capital, energy, and export extensive growth with the help of 4 D's – devaluation, deregulation, deflation, and denationalization (Patel:2007).

In the last three decades since we adopted the 1991 policy, these new economic policies have further intensified the process of Globalization. Over time the forces of globalization and marketization have intruded into every sphere of human life: be it rural or urban, poor or rich, literate or illiterate, male or female. But when it comes to women, the impact goes deeper and it touches our hearts especially when that woman is a widow. Since women constitute a socially and economically backward community of the country, they are the least suited segment to cope with the liberalized global market. There has been a wary debate going on between the supporters and opponents of globalization as to how it is been affecting everyone? Yet nothing firm can be said about it. Globalization arrived in India through an external and internal alignment of political and economic forces that led to the opening of the country to the outside world. There have been both positive and negative impacts of globalization on social and cultural values in India. Globalization has had a significant and nearly instantaneous impact on India as a whole.

Widowhood in India

To begin with, during the Vedic era, women had high admiration in society. They enjoyed the right to education and freedom in the choices of spouses (swayamvar). Regarding widowhood as well, the norms were flexible. She had several choices like Sahamarnath (voluntarily joining the dead husband on his funeral pyre), Brahmacharya (rigid celibacy where she ceases to perform any sexual activity) or she also had the option of finding another spouse of her choice.

But during the later Vedic era and early medieval era, the status of women went on a downslide. Sati was terminated during the British rule and in 1856 the British validated widow remarriage in India. In the medieval period, widows were mostly devoted to religious movements and beliefs. They even inverted the traditional ideals of womanhood by rejecting marriage and family and protesting against patriarchal social conventions.

In the modern era, there were movements to liberalize the attitudes towards the widows, eliminate practices like sati, and give them access to religious life. The opportunities began to develop during this period, leading to the empowerment of women; they enhanced their educational qualifications and acquired roles of professionals such

as a doctor, lawyers, teachers, engineers, and journalists. It has been 75 years since Independence, despite all of the advancements; still, widows lead a dejected and miserable life in many towns and villages in India. Within the country, irrespective of religion, caste, class, and education, a large number of widows are deprived of their universally acknowledged human rights (Anji & Velumani, 2013). Many constitutional safeguards are introduced from the last two or three decades by the Government of India against window discrimination but the condition of the widow is still pitiable.

Globalization and Widowhood

Globalization has enhanced the lives of women worldwide, particularly the lives of those women in developing countries. Even so, women remain disadvantaged in many areas of life including education, employment, health, and civil rights. Women in Patriarchy society have always been in a lower position and status. They have been facing discrimination, violence, and exclusion in some form or other and if a woman has become a widow, then their condition becomes even worse and more vulnerable. Women in general and widows, in particular, have always been a subject matter of subjugation and discrimination since time immemorial. The estimated 40 million women widows in the country go from being called “she” to “it” when they lose their husbands.

“Widowhood is a state of social death, even among the higher castes,” says Mohini Giri, a veteran activist in the fight for women’s rights and a widow herself, who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. Widows are still accused of being responsible for their husband's death, and they are expected to have a spiritual life with many restrictions which affect them both physically and psychologically. Although widows today are not forced to die in ritual sati (burning themselves on their husband’s funeral pyre), they are still generally expected to mourn until the end of their lives. The Hindu progenitor of mankind: “A virtuous wife is one who after the death of her husband constantly remains chaste and reaches heaven though she has no son.”

Impact of Globalization on Widows

Widowhood is regarded as one of the most unfortunate aspects of the lives of women. For many women around the world, the devastating loss of a partner is magnified by a long-term fight for their basic rights and dignity. Even though there are more than 258 million widows around the world, widows have historically been left unseen, unsupported, and unmeasured in our societies. The United Nations observes 23 June as International Widows Day (resolution A/RES/65/189) since 2011, to draw attention to the voices and experiences of widows and to galvanize the unique support that they need. Now more than ever, this day is an opportunity for action towards achieving full rights and recognition for widows. This includes providing them with information on access to a fair share of their inheritance, land, and productive resources; pensions and social protection that are not based on marital status alone; decent work and equal pay; and education and training opportunities. Empowering widows to support themselves and their families also means addressing social stigmas that create exclusion, and discriminatory or harmful practices.

Accepting globalization has made it easy for widows to get easy access to such laws made internationally. Furthermore, Governments should take action to uphold their commitments to ensure the rights of widows as enshrined in international law, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Even when national laws exist to protect the rights of widows, weaknesses in the judicial systems of many States compromise how widows' rights are defended in practice and should be addressed. Lack of awareness and discrimination by judicial officials can cause widows to avoid turning to the justice system to seek reparations.

Programs and policies for ending violence against widows and their children, poverty alleviation, education, and other support to widows of all ages also need to be undertaken, including in the context of action plans to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (<https://www.un.org/en/observances/widows-day>). Widowhood may generate an increased propensity to participate in paid work. Globalization has increased the exports of different countries and wages in export sectors are much higher than in other sectors and in many cases, women get higher wages than men in formal industrial sectors. So, globalization has increased the average wages of women, also the bigger portion of wages goes to women. Data from the Indian Human Development Surveys suggest that there has been an increase in women's work participation rates for women with dissolved marriages between 2004-05 and 2018-19. The increase was the greatest among separated and divorced women, but it was also substantial among widows, while it remained almost stagnant at a very low level among married women. Because of globalization, there are structural changes in agricultural production. Many countries started manufacturing agricultural products to increase their export values and it is especially for women, who got benefitted from this because these activities are a good source of high wages than working in their family farms. Women's health conditions are also improved by working in companies rather than farms. Especially widows who have not inherited the farm from their husbands, rather than working in family farms, they are paid nothing or very low wages but they will get higher wages while working in companies, especially in export industries.

Multinational companies offer a job without discriminating between men and women because they work in a competitive environment and choose the best employees regardless of their gender. It motivates more women to get jobs. Globalization has opened up many ways for men and women in India. As India was a restricted economy before 1991. After the launching of "liberalization", "globalization", "privatization" policy, many opportunities in the form of new jobs are available for women, especially those educated. With globalization, widows are getting higher wages, which raises self-confidence and independence among them. Globalization has the power to uproot the traditional views towards widows so they can take an equal stance in society. Globalization has posed a major challenge to the institution of patriarchy in India. As women especially the widows experience financial problems, they undergo major problems in meeting their basic requirements as well as in taking care of the needs and requirements of their children or other family members; they have taken up jobs and achieved social mobility and also, they have begun to stand up for their rights. Employment in technological and other advanced sectors, which have a global bearing, has opened up for suitably qualified widows. With changing attitudes towards women, especially widows in both urban and rural areas, they enjoy the more egalitarian set of gender relationships. This has also made it easy for widows in their 30s, to get remarried again even if they have a child or so.

As we know every coin has two sides and we see many positive impacts of globalization on widows similarly there are negative impacts as well. Globalization has increased the number of low-paid, part-time and exploitative jobs

for women including widows such exploitation is much more than any other woman. Globalization is providing easy employment but only for more educated women and when we consider widows, especially from rural areas are not much educated as urban women so they remain exceptional from this positive impact. The migration of widows from rural to urban areas for economic reasons has led to increased exploitation including sexual exploitation and trafficking. Globalization has promoted equality between the sexes, something those Indian women have been struggling with their entire life but still, it has many negative consequences. Because of lower education levels, female producers experience more constraints in accessing international markets than males. Widow's weaker property rights and limited access to productive inputs also constrain their capacity to benefit from trade openness.

Globalization has improved the living standard of Indian women and also widows', due to media and advertisements. So many non-profit organizations are working for widow empowerment. The Loomba Foundation's global campaign to eradicate discrimination against widows can be traced to more than half a century ago in Dhilwan, a small rural town in the State of Punjab in India. These organizations have given widows the skill they need to advance such as literacy and vocational skills.

Conclusion

With the rise of NGOs in the 21st century, various organizations have been founded and created to defend the rights of widows around the world. No doubt, globalization offers widows great opportunities but equally new and unique challenges. The Loomba Foundation is currently campaigning with the Government of India to set up a National Commission for Widows and Widows Help Centres through Panchayats in India, as part of advocacy initiatives. To lead to effective growth and progression of widows, there is a need to formulate more laws, measures, and programs, which make provision of rights and opportunities to widows to bring about improvements in their living conditions. To alleviate the problems, public education programs can promote healthy lifestyles, eliminate gender discrimination, access services, and prioritize help for widows.

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