

**GLOBALIZATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS
OF FEMALE WORKERS
IN TRADITIONAL SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES
OF JAIPUR CITY**

**Summary of
Thesis
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Introduction

Globalization is the integration of economic, political and social cultures and is related to the spreading of modernization across borders. It theorizes the development of a global economy in the sense that the world is moving in the direction of more efficient use of resource and the means of production. It refers to the increasing unification of the world's economic order through reduction of such barriers to international trade as tariffs, export duty and import duty and quotas. The goal is to increase material wealth, goods and services through an international division of labour by efficiencies catalyzed by international relations, specialization and competition. It describes the process by which regional economies, societies and cultures have become integrated through communication, transportation and trade.

Globalization has brought about numerous changes that dramatically affect the lives of women. The global expansion of trade, capital flows and technology have resulted in increased formal and informal market opportunities for women, which is referred to as the 'feminization of labour'. As the feminization of labour continues, women are increasingly recognized as central forces in the world of production and consumption. They are affected by globalization in diverse ways that include positive and negative development. New job opportunities are created for women in the era of globalization and expansion of economic liberalisation, as they are easily available on low wages and are ready to take part-time jobs also.

As global economy expands, even big national and multi-national companies wish to appoint women workers now as they are readily available on 'no job security' basis and are less likely to organize themselves into trade unions. Global capital flow, the expansion of trade and advancement of technology have drastically improved the lives of women worldwide. A large number of women are entering the labour force to improve their quality of life and of their families.

It is now well accepted that the poorest families are most dependent on women's earnings and that a lowering of economic status increases the importance of the women's contribution to the family income. Women can play a crucial role in alleviating the poverty of the country's nearly 500 million households living below the poverty line. In India the number of female labourers working in traditional small scale industries is continuously on the rise. Economic needs compel most women to take up that job, which appears to be easily available despite deplorable working conditions and low wages.

At present very few economically active women are in the formal sector. Majority of the women workers are in the informal sector and any plan to improve women's economic conditions will have to focus on this area. Like elsewhere in India, in Jaipur, too, globalization is having its own favorable and adverse effects on women aspiring to earn and stand on their own or add to family budget.

A look at the unskilled and semi – skilled women labourers reveals that though the growing population of the middle class, specially the upper middle class, employs in Jaipur, thousands and thousands of women for domestic work, but the wages paid are nowhere commensurate with the work load – dish and clothe washing, tidying the house, etc. Migrants from Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Nepal have increased the woes of local women workers as far as domestic work is concerned, for they are prepared to work on very low wages.

Female labourers in the informal sector face serious problems and constraints related to work such as lack of continuity, insecurity, wage discrimination, unhealthy job relationship, absence of medical and accident care etc. It is time to address the issues and discuss the kind of policy reforms and institutional changes required for the emancipation and empowerment of female labour force. This will surely help in uplifting the socio-economic status of the female labourers all around.

The current study is an attempt to identify the problems of female labourers. It has tried to bring to light the problems faced by women labourers vis a vis their standard of living, their social and economic status, their personal aspirations as well as aspirations about their children, their interpersonal relationships at home and at work place, the problems they face at work place: wages, working hours, leave facilities, clean drinking water,

washrooms etc., workplace harassment and last, but not the least, their awareness about social legislations.

This research is an attempt to highlight the problems of female labourers working in traditional small scale industries of Jaipur City. It also offers the results of the schedule with deductive conclusion and after investigation some useful suggestions have also been made that may prove useful in making some policies or laws which may protect the rights of female labourers and help to improve their socio-economic status.

The current research is undertaken to study the impact of globalization on the social & economic status of the female workers. The research is conducted to fulfill the following objectives:

- **To assess the socio-economic status of female labourers working in traditional small scale industries in urban Jaipur City.**
- **To identify gender based discrimination in areas like wages, allotment of work, working hours and terms of employment.**
- **To study the structure of aspiration among women labourers.**
- **To review their interpersonal relationships at home and workplace.**
- **To suggest remedies to improve the socio-economic status of female workers in the informal sector.**

More specifically the research is undertaken to study the impact of globalization on the social and economic status of the female labourers, who are working in the traditional small scale industries of Jaipur City.

The following is a brief summary of each chapter:

The first chapter deals with globalization and feminization of labour. In the first part of the chapter various definitions, meaning and importance of globalization are discussed along with its basic rudiments and different aspects.

Globalization is a term that is used in many ways, but the principal underlying idea is the progressive integration of economies and societies. It is driven by new technologies, new economic relationships and the national and international policies of a wide range of actors, including governments, international organizations, business, labour and civil society. Globalization means the coming together of different societies and economics via cross border flow of ideas, finances, capital, information, technologies, goods and services. The cross border assimilation can be social, economic, cultural or political.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "globalization" was first employed in a publication entitled "Towards New Education" in 1930, to denote a holistic view of human experience in education.¹ An early description of globalization was penned by the founder of the Bible Student movement/ Jehovah's Witnesses Charles Taze Russell who coined the term

'corporate giants' in 1897,² although it was not until the 1960s that the term began to be widely used by economists and other social scientists. The term has since then achieved widespread use in the mainstream press by the later half of the 1980s. Since its inception, the concept of globalization has inspired numerous competing definitions and interpretations, with antecedents dating back to the great movements of trade and empire across Asia and the Indian Ocean from the 15th century onwards.

Globalization is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon with a plethora of assigned meanings. Some definitions focus on its economic aspects and hence emphasize a global economic outlook, while others focus on the cultural aspects of this phenomenon and how it has affected different aspects of their cultural existence. Political definitions of globalization are also popular, as is an equation of globalization with advances technology, particularly in the area of communication and transportation.

An all encompassing definition of globalization conceives of it as a process of interaction among people, companies and government of different nations. It is a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology. This process affects the environment, cultural, political systems, economic development and prosperity and human physical well being in societies around the world – it is a process which compresses time and space.

Broadly speaking, the process of globalization has two aspects. The first refers to those factors – such as trade, investment, technology, cross-border production systems, flows of information and communication – which bring societies and citizens closer together.

The second refers to policies and institutions, such as trade and capital market liberalization, international standards for labour, the environment, corporate behaviour and other issues, agreements on intellectual property rights, and other policies pursued at both the national and international level which support the integration of economies and countries. In terms of the latter aspect the existing pattern of globalization is not an inevitable trend – it is at least in part the product of policy choice. While technological change is irreversible, policies can be changed. The technological advances have also widened the policy choices available.

The social dimension of globalization refers to the impact of globalization on the life and work of people, on their families, and their societies. Concerns and issues are often raised about the impact of globalization on employment, working conditions, income and social protection. Beyond the world of work, the social dimension encompasses security, culture and identity, inclusion or exclusion and the cohesiveness of families and communities.

Globalization brings new potentials for development and wealth creation. But there are divergent views and perceptions among people as concerns its economic and social impact and indeed widely varying impacts on the

interests and opportunities of different sectors and economic and social actors. There are many diverging view points on the loss and benefits of the current process of globalization, one thing is certain, globalization is here to stay.

In the second part of this chapter, Informal Sector has been studied in the context of Indian economy and female workers. The chief characteristics of informal sector and its importance for women workers are also discussed here.

The term informal sector was first used by Keith Hart (1971) in a study of urban – Ghana and it has been further refined by ILO (1972) while studying the employment situation in Kenya.

The informal sector or informal economy as defined by governments, scholars, banks, etc. is the part of an economy that is not taxed, monitored by any form of government, or included in any gross national product (GNP), unlike the formal economy. In developing countries, some 70% of the potential working population earn their living in the informal sector. They would define this economy or sector in other words: not in what is not, but what it is: the only way to earn a living for people who are self-employed outside the formal economy and not on anyone's payroll. Most of them live and work in this sector not because it is their wish or choice, but because they have no chance to be hired by an employer from the formal sector except for a few hours or days, with no legal right to be hired again.

The informal sector is characterised by ease of entry, small scale operations, unprotected labour market, family ownership of enterprise, labour intensive and adaptive technology, lack of support and recognition from the government etc. In addition to these, the other characteristics include deplorable working condition and low wages, low capital accumulation and reinvestment insecurities due to temporary nature of employment etc. There is a need to provide job security to the labourers of the informal sector. They need to be given minimum wages along with social security as it is essential for the workers of informal sector. Social security measures include maternity benefits to woman labourers, healthcare, childcare, hygienic working conditions and sanitation along with old age benefits. In order to remove poverty it is necessary to provide social security along with minimum wages to the labourers of the informal sector. The condition of the labourer in this sector will improve only when social and economic benefits are given to them.

Women tend to make up the greatest portion of the informal sector often ending up in the most erratic and corrupt segments of the sector.³³ Majority of female workers in developing countries are employed by the informal sector.³⁴ The reasoning behind why women make up majority of the informal sector is two-fold. Firstly, it could be attributed to the fact that employment in the informal sector is the source of employment that is most readily available to women. Secondly, a vast majority of women are employed from their

homes (most likely due to the large number of women who are involved in care work) or are street vendors, which both are classified in the informal sector. Furthermore, men tend to be overrepresented in the top segment of the sector and women overpopulate the bottom segment. For example, very few women are employers who hire others and more women are likely to be involved in smaller scale operations.³⁶ Labor markets, household decisions and states all propagate this gender inequality. The gender gap in terms of wage is higher in the informal sector than the formal sector.

The importance of Informal Sector in Indian economy is briefly discussed in the second part of this chapter.

About 370 million workers constituting 92% of the total workforce in a country were employed in the unorganized sector as per NSS Survey 1999-2000. It plays a vital role in terms of providing employment opportunity to large segment of the working force in the country and contributes to the national product significantly. The contribution of the unorganised sector to the net domestic product and its share in the total NDP at current prices has been over 60%. In the matter of savings the share of household sector in the total gross domestic saving mainly unorganised sector is about three fourth.

Thus unorganised sector has a crucial role in our economy in terms of employment and its contribution to the National Domestic Product, savings and capital formation. At present Indian Economy is passing through a process of economic reforms and liberalization. During the process, merger,

integration of various firms within the industry and up gradation of technology and other innovative measures take place to enhance competitiveness of the output both in terms of cost and quality to compete in the international market. The low inefficient units either wither away or merge with other ones performing better. In this situation, there is a special need to take care of the interests of the workers by providing them training, upgrading their skills, and other measures to enable them to find new avenue of employment, improve their productivity in the existing employment, necessary to enhance the competitiveness of their product both in terms of quality and cost which would also help in improving their income and thereby raising their socio economic status. It has been experienced that formal sector could not provide adequate opportunities to accommodate the workforce in the country and informal sector has been providing employment for their subsistence and survival. Keeping in view the existing economic scenario, the unorganised sector will expand further in the years to come. Thus, it needs to be strengthened and activated so that it could act as a vehicle of employment provider and social development.

The third part of this chapter deals with the role of women in informal sector vis a vis globalization.

Jawahar Lal Nehru - "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women".

Women work mainly for economic independence. They work to support their families, for a sense of achievement, to save money for the future of their family and mainly their children. Most of the Indian women are seen to be employed in the unorganised sector like match and beedi industries, domestic helpers in households, traditional small scale industries etc. Women spend more time on unpaid work household chores and children are still considered responsibilities of women and men's share is negligible. Women due to their reproductive roles also have to bear more social responsibilities and thus can't sometimes devote more time and energy than men. Women are thus discriminated against and there is still a lot to do in this field.

The International Labour Organisation says that women represent:

1. 50% of the population
2. 30% of the labour force
3. Perform 60% of all working hours
4. Receive 10% of the world income
5. Own less than 1% of the world's property.

The expansion of trade, capital flows and technological advances have affected the lives of women significantly. The benefits of domestic and global expansion are greater than the cost. We are frequently bombarded about the consequences of economic expansion, without being informed about the myriad of benefits which women have achieved. More and more women are

entering the labor force to improve their quality of life and their families and at the same time increase their autonomy.

In many countries, it has always been the responsibility of the man to go out, fend and provide for his family, but this 'tradition' has changed due to globalisation. Men and women both leave home in search of available employment now. In some cases you even find a reversal of 'traditional' gender roles – some men stay at home while their female partners go out to work.⁴⁴ Globalisation has enabled many women to loosen the traditional patriarchal bonds that previously hindered them from seeking paid employment. It is unfortunate that many women are now 'allowed' to work outside the home due to the international economic downturn and not simply due to a decrease in patriarchal power. One of the greatest achievements of globalisation, however, is the proliferation of women's movements at the local level, the emergence of transnational feminist networks working at the global level, and the adoption of international conventions that put women's issues at the forefront.³⁰

The chapter concludes on the note that Globalisation has had an impact on the lives of female workers in developing countries in a number of ways, positive and negative. Economically, the advent of flexible labour has increased the exploitation of female labour, yet also provided many more women access to economic activity. Politically, female workers in developing countries have been affected adversely by the weakening of the nation state and the

implementation of neoliberal economic policies which led to the weakening of welfarism. The international spread and popularity of concepts of human rights and of gender equality have, however, secured better treatment and more labour protection for many women. The prevalence of NGOs has furthermore facilitated women's organisation and demands for more amendable working conditions.

Culturally, female workers have been empowered by globalisation because many traditional patriarchal bonds that used to restrict women's employment options have been stretched or broken. The flipside of the coin, however, is marked by the emergence of fundamentalist reactions to 'Westernising' norms and values, which have tightened control over women and their labour activities in many societies. The globalisation process has therefore simultaneously provided new opportunities and restrictions to female labourers all over the world.

The second chapter is a narration of the available relevant literature on the field of study.

The views of Marx and Engles (1848), Frisby (1997) who quoted Simmel and Haac (1994) who quoted Comte have been reviewed. They talk about the importance of male dominance in society. Simmel believed that it is men who have created art industries, science and commerce, the state and religion.

For a comprehensive understanding of globalization the views of Giddens (1990), Hawkesworth (2006), Mukherjee (2008) and Choubey, Pendse & Shukla (2006) have been put forth. Giddens has described globalization as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.

The views of Rajkumar (2003), Menon (2008), Cauvery & Nayak (2003), Devi and Rani (2008), Nayak (2008) and Gurusappa (2002) have been reviewed to have an insight into Indian economy in context of globalization.

The role of small scale industries and their importance in a developing world, especially in India, vis a vis globalization have been analysed on the basis of the views of Kumar (2006), Rathod (2007), Mathew (2004), Bhatnagar (1995), Soundarapandian (2002), Mathur (2006), Swami and Gupta (2003) and Choudhary (2004).

The views of Sarkar and Bhumali (2005), Papola (1980), Bunster and Chany (1985), Jhabvala (1992) and Eapen (2001) have been reviewed which stress upon the importance of Informal Sector as the backbone of developing countries.

The views of Gimenez (2011), Mies (1995), and Dias (2004) have also been analysed in this chapter. These scholars, have talked about feminization of labour and this has been taken as supportive text in the present study.

The views of Tripathy (2000), Ranjan (1993), Kumari (1989), Sudan (2001) and Ahuja (2003) have been reviewed to develop a better understanding of the status of working women in developing societies. These studies reveal that despite the fact that women have to do double duties – at the domestic front as well as at workplace – still their contribution seems to be invisible and less rewarding.

The views of Nagaich (2001), Tripathy (2003), Goode (1989), have been reviewed to know more about the effects of job on family life. They feel that since women's primary responsibilities revolve with home and children so even in case when they get some help at home, they still have some extra duties at home apart from working outdoor.

Discrimination on the basis of various issues like working hours, wages and other facilities has been analysed on the basis of views of Sen (2009), Bagchi (2005) and Mishra (1999). According to them women workers have a constant fear of insecurity at workplace. Women workers are usually paid less than men for the same work.

Scholars like Plumwood (1993) and Gupta (2008) have critically evaluated gender inequality. Their views are reviewed for a better understanding of this problem in the informal sector vis a vis globalization.

The views of Rathod (2009), Dhoundoyal (2006), Narayanappa and Rao (2007), Naido and Patel (2009) and Atal (2006) have been analysed to know about the various acts and legislations which have been formulated to enhance women empowerment. The constitution of India provides for equal rights for both men and women and there are special provisions for women which help to improve their overall status in society. Many Social legislations like the Family Court Act, 1981, Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, the Equal Remuneration Act, 1987 have been helpful in removing the obstacles which hinder women's progress. But in reality women have still not been able to enjoy their rights due to social taboos.

The second chapter ends with a conclusion that the studies by various scholars undoubtedly, hold an important place in the study of women labourers in the informal sector. However, no study has been so far conducted on the social and economic condition of female labourers working in traditional small scale industries of Jaipur City. The current study might be successful in highlighting the socio-economic condition of the women working in traditional small scale industries of Jaipur City. This piece of work could also assist in developing appropriate policy paradigms to improve the socio-economic status of female labourers.

In the third chapter the methodology, objectives, research questions, area, universe and sample have been discussed. The tools of the current research have also been discussed in the chapter.

The operational definitions of the concepts used in the research viz. globalization, informal sector and small scale industries have been stated in this chapter.

For the purpose of study the urban Jaipur City has been selected. Female labourers between 21 and 50 years of age who are working in traditional small scale industries of Jaipur City have been selected for the study.

For the purpose of collecting first hand information and facilitating comparison of data a schedule was prepared and the information collected constitutes the primary data for the current study. The techniques of observation and unstructured interview have also been used for the purpose of analysis.

The limitations of the study have been discussed at the end of the third chapter.

The fourth chapter is based on the empirical findings and discussion based on the interview schedule. The schedule included various questions regarding the female labourers family economy, their interfers and relationships, their professional status, level of satisfaction regarding facilities at workplace, gender based discriminations, their personal aspirations and aspirations about children.

The findings reveal that:

- **even though globalization has opened new avenues for women in both the formal and informal sector, it has not really led to the empowerment of women working in the informal sector.**
- **their condition remains deplorable despite their being financial support for the family.**
- **harassment of women at workplace and at home prevails.**
- **they continue to work for lesser wages in unhygienic conditions.**
- **however, globalization has raised their levels of aspirations for their children.**

In the fifth chapter a summary of the previous chapters is given and the following concluding points have been drawn on the basis of the empirical findings:

1. **Neo-liberal globalization has thrown several opportunities in various workfields, specially for women, leading to their empowerment.**
2. **However, the statistics reveals that though it has led to ample employment opportunities, most of the women are not still at a bargaining position.**
3. **Employment of women depends a lot on their educational/professional qualifications, but the literacy rate of women in Rajasthan continues to remain less.**

- 4. As a result, their chances of employment in better service sectors are very less.**
- 5. Most of these women work in low/ underpaid jobs with little or no access to basic human rights and decent working conditions.**
- 6. Lack of required capital and assets draws them into a vicious circle of poverty and perpetual indebtedness.**
- 7. These women suffer from gender discrimination, not only at workplace but also in the domestic domain.**
- 8. Gender inequality is a common problem for them.**
- 9. Harassment, whether by the employer/ colleagues or by the husband/ in laws, weakens their spirit, both at the work place and at home.**
- 10. Globalization may have led to a number of economic opportunities for women; it has not altered the traditional patriarchal structure of society.**
- 11. Women (female workers) continue to be subordinated by males (employer / colleagues / husband) and raising a voice against them is a sacrilege.**
- 12. They continue to be silent victims of patriarchy.**
- 13. These women, however, have elevated aspirations for their children in terms of education, employment and their future. Thus**

it can be said that Globalization is riding on the backs of millions of poor women in India. It may have empowered some but the figures are not encouraging.

- 14. Millions of downtrodden, illiterate and semi-literate women are subjected to the inequalities of globalization, especially in the traditional small scale industries.**
- 15. They are ignorant of their rights as ‘women’ and as ‘workers’.**
- 16. It therefore becomes imperative that certain policies be framed which can render them a better economic / social status.**

The present investigation has reached a point where the following suggestions can be made:

- 1. Awareness among women regarding their rights and privileges should be spread extensively.**
- 2. Female workers should get all humanly allowed facilities of high standard such as drinking water, working fans / heaters, toilets and creche / child care centres – all at the cost of the employer.**
- 3. Family members, husbands, particularly, should be educated to share household labour. This will help in decreasing the burden of the women workers.**

- 4. NGOs, particularly, those dedicated to the upliftment especially of the down trodden women must play a significant role in this regard.**
- 5. Existing laws should be strictly enforced to safeguard women workers' dignity and interest while at the same time new laws should be framed where necessary, to make work places safe and healthy.**
- 6. Special courts should be set up to deal with cases of all types of violence against women workers, including, of course attempt to outrage their modesty.**
- 7. Special provisions should be made in Labour Laws to protect women from being victimized by their male fellow workers or superiors with ulterior motives.**
- 8. Government, most importantly, must enforce the policy of equal wages without gender discrimination and see to it that laws regarding minimum wages are strictly followed.**
- 9. The government must entrust the task of checking and evaluating the work atmosphere and conditions of women workers, both in the traditional small scale industries and in the organized sectors.**
- 10. The government should encourage traditional small scale industries so as to ensure more and more needy women can**

become bread winners and contribute to the family income and also to gain a sort of economic independence.

- 11. This will also ensure dowry harassment, heinous more often than not, and the mother-in-law menace and, notably the medieval 'purdah' system are put an end to and free women from bondage and slavery and guide India to modernity.**
- 12. In the wake of liberalization and the consequent free economy, our traditional and organized small scale industries, would no longer face cutthroat competition from cheap imports from abroad, especially China.**

The above mentioned suggestions may help to improve the condition of the female labourers working in the traditional small scale industries. These suggestions may prove useful in making some policies or laws which may protect the rights of female labourers and help to improve their socio-economic status.