

“IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT”

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ABSTRACT

Gender is a common term where as gender discrimination is meant only for women, because females are the only victims of gender discrimination. Females are nearly 50 percent of the total population but their representation in public life is very low. Recognizing women's right and believing their ability are essential for women's empowerment and development. This study deals with Globalization's impact on gender equality: What's happened and what's needed, its various forms and its causes. The new forces associated with globalization—understood as the combination of economic integration, technological diffusion, and greater access to information—have operated through markets, formal institutions, and informal institutions to lift some of the constraints to greater gender equality. That is why public action aimed at closing existing gender gaps in endowments, agency, and access to economic opportunities is necessary for countries to fully capitalize on the potential of globalization as a force for development and greater gender equality. Importance of women in development, legislation for women and solutions for gender discrimination are also discussed in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Gender is a common term where as gender discrimination is meant only for women, because females are the only victims of gender discrimination. Females are nearly 50 percent of the total population but their representation in public life is very low. Recognizing women's right and believing their ability are essential for women's empowerment and development. This study deals with Globalization's impact on gender equality: What's happened and what's needed, its various forms and its causes. The new forces associated with globalization—understood as the combination of economic integration, technological diffusion, and greater access to information—have operated through markets, formal institutions, and informal institutions to lift some of the constraints to greater gender equality.

Trade openness and ICTs have increased women's access to economic opportunities -Over the past 25 years, trade openness and the spread of information and communication technologies have expanded economic opportunities. The demand for female workers in the export and ICT-enabled sectors has increased, and as women have filled these new jobs, the gender distribution of employment across sectors and across countries has changed. Women have moved out of agriculture and into manufacturing and particularly services. These changes have taken place across all countries, but female (and male) employment in the manufacturing and services has grown faster in developing than developed countries, reflecting broader changes in the global distribution of production and labor. In developing countries, the shares of female manufacturing and service employment in global female employment increased from 6 and 17 percent respectively in 1987 to 7 and 24 percent in 2007. In contrast, in developed countries the share of female manufacturing employment in global female employment fell from 12 percent in 1987 to 6 in 2007, while the share of female service employment rose from 44 to 46 percent over the same period

Changes in male employment shares were qualitatively similar but different in magnitude. At the same time, improvements in ICT technology have allowed women (and men) around the world to access markets in growing numbers by lowering information barriers and reducing the transaction costs associated with market work. Greater access to economic opportunities and, in some cases, higher returns to economic activity provide stronger incentives to accumulate human capital, particularly for women, and are likely to increase investments in the skills of girls and young women—tomorrow’s workers

DEMAND FOR FEMALE WORKER

The early years of trade liberalization were mainly characterized by the move of textile and information technology manufacturing from developed to developing countries.⁹ New employment in manufacturing often consisted of labor-intensive assembly line jobs, and the initial gains in manufacturing employment were greatest in countries with abundant unskilled labor and a comparative advantage in producing basic manufactures. This shift in geographic location of production promoted female labor force participation and the feminization of employment in manufacturing in developing countries—particularly in Asia and Central America.¹⁰ In the Republic of Korea, the share of women employed in manufacturing grew from 6 percent in 1970 to around 30 percent in the 1980s and early 1990s. The importance of manufacturing as an employer of female labor in the Republic of Korea has since declined (to 14 percent in 2007), but the sector still employs 10 times more women today than in the 1960s. Similarly, in Mexico, female employment in manufacturing grew from 12 percent in 1960 to 17 percent in 2008, with 10 times more women in 2008 than in 1960.

In the past 15 years, the spread of ICTs has expanded trade in services and has, to a lesser extent, promoted the growth of ICT sectors in developing countries. Mobile phones, the Internet, and more traditional communication technologies, such as radio, are providing new platforms to disseminate information and increase access to services among those in remote or underserved areas and among those with lower mobility. Because women are overrepresented in these groups, they tend to benefit disproportionately from these initiatives—even when the initiatives are not targeted to women. Most experiments have been in banking, health, and education. A few examples follow. Mobile phone technology provides access to financial services, such as processing money transfers and small payments, and promotes savings (M-PESA in Kenya). Text messaging provides women and health workers valuable information about pre- and postnatal care, nutrition (Text4Baby in the United States and the Russian Federation, Rapid SMS in Rwanda), and ongoing treatments. Some projects allow for interactions with users, including the customization of services (Wawanet in Peru). And some health services have been combined with other tools to promote savings to pay for the cost of prenatal care and delivery (Mamabika, in coordination with M-PESA, in Kenya).

LEVERAGING MOBILE AND ICT TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO SERVICES

Mobile phones and the Internet also promote literacy (Mobilink and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization in Pakistan) and facilitate access to distance education, particularly higher and vocational education (Community Nurses in Kenya). Beyond access to services, mobile phones and the Internet allow women to be more connected to each other and their communities (Project Zumbido in Mexico, Tostan and UNICEF in Senegal) and to have a stronger social and political voice (Mobili-ise in Kosovo). Most of these initiatives are fairly new and have not yet been evaluated. Moving

forward, it will be important to learn more about what works and what does not in each context and to continue experimenting to fully capitalize on the potential power of new technologies.

TRADE OPENNESS

Technological diffusion and access to information have fundamentally changed the way countries interact and compete with each other in the global economy. Because gender (and other) inequality has more costs in a globalized world, these changes could translate into stronger incentives for both firms and governments to move toward gender equality. Specifically in countries with a comparative advantage in female goods, gender differences in access to market work and persistent employment segregation by gender could severely undermine the country's capacity to compete internationally and ultimately hamper economic growth ultimately promoting more egalitarian views. Women turned income earners may be able to leverage their new position to change gender roles in their households by influencing the allocation of time and resources among household members. Access to economic opportunities has also brought change in the public sphere. In Bangladesh, the employment of hundreds of thousands of women in the ready-made garment industry feminized the urban public space, creating more gender-equitable norms for women's public mobility and access to public institutions.

The impact of ICTs and access to information on gender norms and, more broadly, gender in the public sphere is more mixed. The spread of ICTs has empowered women socially and politically by increasing access to networks. The forces unleashed by trade openness, technological change and diffusion, and increased access to information have lifted some of the constraints to greater equality. Not everyone has benefited, however, and it is often women, for whom existing constraints are most binding, who are left behind. Trade openness and the spread of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have increased women's access to economic opportunities and in some cases increased their wages relative to men's.

Growth in export and ICT-enabled sectors, together with a decline in the importance of physical strength and a rise in the importance of cognitive skills, has increased the demand for female labor, and entrepreneurs by easing time and mobility constraints. Several factors associated with a more global world strengthen the incentives for action toward greater gender equality. Gender inequality is more costly in an integrated world because it diminishes a country's ability to compete internationally—particularly if the country specializes in female-intensive goods and services. International peer pressure has also led more countries than ever to ratify treaties against discrimination, while growing media exposure and consumers' demands for better treatment of workers has pushed multinationals toward fairer wages and better working conditions for women.

Increased access to information, primarily through wider exposure to television and the Internet, allows countries to learn about life and social mores in other places—knowledge that can change perceptions and ultimately promote adoption of more egalitarian attitudes. And increased economic empowerment for women can reinforce this process by promoting changes in gender roles and allowing newly empowered women to influence time allocation, shift relative power within the household, and exercise agency more broadly.

In the absence of public policy, globalization alone cannot and will not make gender inequality go away. Despite significant increases in agency and in access to economic opportunities for many women in many countries, large gaps remain in some areas. Public action aimed at closing existing gender gaps in endowments, agency, and access to economic opportunities is therefore necessary for countries to fully capitalize on the potential of globalization as a force for development and greater gender equality.

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