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Critical analysis of Globalization's Effect on Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh

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Abstract: ***This study aims to investigate globalization's positive and negative effects on women's empowerment in Bangladesh. The study uses the Global Gender Gap Index to measure women's empowerment and the KOF index to measure globalization. Using quantitative analysis, the study demonstrates four Scatterplots to estimate the correlation between globalization and women's empowerment in Bangladesh with data (2006-2020). The four Scatterplots show the positive relationship between globalization and women's empowerment. However, Bangladesh is not free from the negative effects of globalization. While globalization has brought women into the marketplace, increasing their labor force participation, and affording them greater opportunities and choices, it has also made them vulnerable to fluctuations in the global marketplace.***

Keywords: ***Economic Globalization, Political Globalization, Socio-Cultural Globalization, Women's Empowerment.***

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, globalization has gained popularity as a buzzword. The globalization of economies has been seen by many as an opportunity for women's empowerment. Working conditions have changed in various ways due to the effects of globalization on the gendered division of labor, global market strategies, the use of information technology, and evolving work organization [1].

The broad dimensions of globalization are Economic globalization, Socio-cultural globalization, and Political Globalization. These dimensions are overly simplistic and frequently conceal links and overlaps among the globalization compasses [2].

Gender equality is facilitated by the creation of export-oriented firms, the growth of commerce, and the "feminization of labor," which increases women's prospects for a higher standard of living. On the other hand, deindustrialization and the wage difference between skilled and unskilled employees disproportionately disadvantage women [3].

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Bangladesh entered the global market at the outset of its existence as an independent nation-state in 1971, under the influence of an export-driven policy to integrate the country into the world economy [4]. As observed by Islam [5], Bangladesh began to embrace the globalization wave in the 1990s after an uncertain start in the middle of the 1980s. One of the key industries that have profited from Bangladesh's economic development as well as the globalization waves that started in the early 1980s is the ready-made garments (RMG) sector [6].

With such a stance, the RMG industry was the first to offer women as "women's empowerment" catalysts [7]. However, the RMG sector specifically targeted women as a source of labor for its low pay and long working hours without enough economic or social advantages. It illustrates how exploitation varies by gender in international production networks. Racism is successfully used by capitalism and class, while sexism is the true motivator [8].

With a score of 0.714, Bangladesh placed first in South Asia and 71st globally in the Global Gender Gap Report (2022). Bangladesh performed poorly in the subindex measuring economic participation, ranking 141st overall and 9th in the subindex measuring political empowerment,123rd for educational attainment, and 129th for health and survival [9].

The new era of globalization has profound implications for women. Multinational businesses (MNCs) have moved many of their operations into Third World nations like Bangladesh because of globalization, which has resulted in the internationalization of labor. In turn, this has led to a demand for low-skilled labor in assembling line factories with less advanced technologies, with very little significant increase, and in which MNCs nonetheless maintain control over marketing and manufacturing.

Bangladesh transitioned from an industrialization strategy that relied on export-led growth under a covered trade system to one that relied on import substitution, as noted by Khundaker [10]. Bangladesh's policy has been one of trade liberalization, pro-market reforms, and the implementation of structural adjustment measures. These adjustments, especially export-led industrialization, have feminized labor in Bangladesh, both in domestic tariff zones and in special export-processing zones.

The three objectives of this research paper are as follows:

1. To investigate the impact of economic globalization on women’s empowerment in Bangladesh with a Scatterplot.
2. To discuss the impact of political globalization on women’s empowerment in Bangladesh with a Scatterplot.
3. To figure out the impact of sociocultural globalization on women’s empowerment in Bangladesh with a Scatterplot.

2. RELATED WORK

Empirical evidence indicates mixed results examining the effects of globalization on women. Profit-driven firms hire the finest workers without tying them to conventional social mores that typically favor men, according to Neumayer and Soysa's [11] argument that globalization emancipates women by providing chances through trade and investment. The researchers extrapolated that, only in the trade sector and not in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), economic globalization had a favorable link with women's empowerment.

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Kroliczek [12] examines the relationship between three dimensions of the KOF Globalization Index: economic globalization, social globalization, political globalization, and gender equality level as measured by the Global Gender Gap Index (GGG) and SIGI Index to determine the relationship between different globalization types and their capacity to support gender equality. Kroliczek [12] notes that sociocultural globalization has the greatest capacity to reduce gender inequalities.

Cho [13] discovers that social globalization favorably improves women's economic and social rights by using panel data from 150 countries throughout the 1981–2008 period. Cho [13] concludes that social globalization has improved and empowered women's rights. When social globalization is considered, commerce and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) have less of an impact on women's empowerment.

According to Bacchus [14], globalization has made it harder for women in developing countries to find secure, well-paying jobs. Bacchus [14] claims that while women's traditional agricultural and domestic jobs have given way to manufacturing and assembly production, the overall impact of globalization has been detrimental.

Cooray et al., [15] argue the effects of FDI and trade, two indices of globalization, on the involvement of women in the labor force. The researchers found that trade and FDI generally had a detrimental effect on the labor force participation of women.

Past Empirics in the Bangladesh Context

Globalization and the processes have had significant effects on women in the case of Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi component of the intersection of globalization and women is hypothesized by Khundaker [10]. Through pre- and post-analysis, the effect of globalization on women in Bangladesh is examined using several social and economic indicators.

Haque [16] focuses on the social and political ramifications of globalization for women in developing nations, particularly Bangladesh. Because of the increased rivalry brought on by globalization, major participants in business commodities are primarily motivated by financial considerations.

The identification of the social, political, and economic forces driving globalization is a crucial step in comprehending how it affects women in Bangladesh. Barkat and Maksud [17] explain that modern capitalism degrades women's satisfaction by using it as a commodity in advertising media, even though globalization increased female participation in the labor market, empowered women, and subsequently increased women's bargaining power at the household level.

Jahan [18] examines the economic, social, and cultural effects of globalization on women in Bangladesh. The researcher demonstrates how intersecting elements including class, color, ability, age, and education affect how a woman is affected by globalization.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study investigates the data with a quantitative research method (Scatterplot Diagram). In this study, the Global Gender Gap (GGG) Index is used to measure Women’s empowerment, and the KOF Index is used to measure globalization. The GGG index has four sub-indices (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and

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Political Empowerment) and the KOF index has three sub-indices (Economic Globalization, Social Globalization, and Political Globalization). The GGG Index data has been taken from the World Economic Forum (WEF) and KOF Index data are taken from the Swiss Institute of Technology in Zurich for the period (2006-2020) except data for 2019 (due to COVID-19). In quantitative methodology, four Scatterplots have been plotted to investigate the correlation between globalization and women's empowerment.

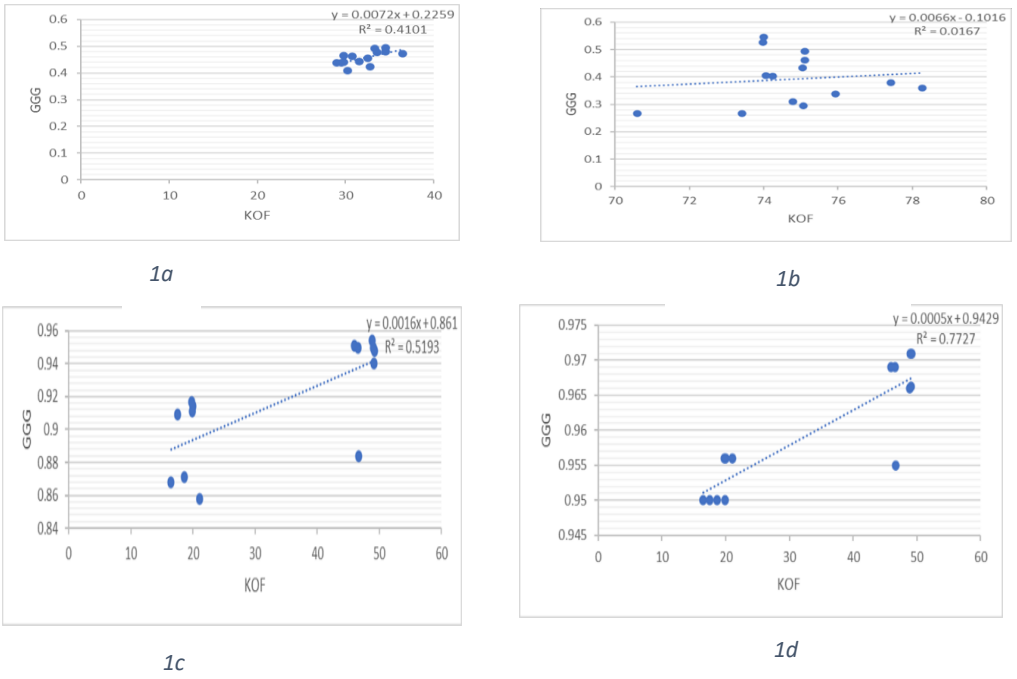

Figure 1a,1b,1c, & 1d: Scatterplot of KOF sub-index and GGG sub-index (2006-2020)

Source: The author's generation

The KOF economic globalization sub-index is positively correlated with the GGG economic participation and opportunity sub-index as shown in Figure 1(a). The estimated correlation between the two indices is 0.64. The estimated regression coefficient indicates that an increase in the KOF sub-index by one percentage point leads to an approximately 0.007 percentage point increase in the GGG sub-index and vice versa. The KOF political globalization sub-index and the GGG political empowerment sub-index are highly positively correlated (see Figure 1(b)), and the correlation coefficient is 0.1. The regression coefficient suggests that a one percentage point increase in the former leads to about a 0.007 percentage point rise in the latter and vice versa.

As shown in Figure 1(c), the scatter plot of the KOF social globalization sub-index and the GGG Educational attainment sub-index shows that the two indices are highly positively correlated. The correlation coefficient is 0.71. The regression coefficient suggests that a one percentage point increase in the KOF index leads to a 0.002 percentage point increase in the GGG index and vice versa. Figure 1(d) shows that the scatterplot of the KOF social

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globalization and the GGG Health and survival sub-index are positively correlated. The correlation coefficient is 0.88. The regression coefficient suggests that a one percentage point increase in the KOF index leads to a 0.005 percentage point increase in the GGG index and vice versa.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Impact of Economic Globalization on Women's Economic Empowerment in Bangladesh
Between 1990 and 2000, Bangladesh experienced rapid growth in its economy. This growth was the result of the emergence of apparel industries in Bangladesh whose purpose was to export apparel overseas; thus, beginning globalization in Bangladesh.
Bangladesh has been impacted by economic globalization in two main ways. First, through portfolio investment, which is linked to short-term financial obligations, foreign investors, particularly multinational corporations (MNCs) and foreign financial investors, maintain their presence in global economies [19]. Second, direct foreign investment is a source of global money.
The effects of economic globalization on Bangladeshi women are ambiguous. Even though it has improved work prospects and given women greater social and economic mobility, problems including discrimination, gender inequality, and labor rights issues still exist which are as follows:

Employment Opportunities
Bangladesh's textile and apparel industry has expanded because of economic globalization. Women now have more employment options thanks to this expansion, especially in urban areas. Many women have been able to find employment in the garment industry, allowing them to make a living and support their families.
The International Labor Organization (ILO) reports that while the male participation rate increased marginally to 80.7 percent in 2017 from 79.4 percent in 2016, the female labor force participation rate in Bangladesh increased to 36.3 percent in 2017 from 33.2 percent in 2016. Because of the garment industry's faster expansion between 2010 and 2017, the percentage of women in the labor force increased steadily. According to a survey report by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), female labor force participation in Bangladesh climbed to 42.68 percent in 2022 from 36.3 percent five years earlier [20].

Empowerment and Social Mobility
Women in Bangladesh now have more economic freedom because of expanded career options, which has aided in their empowerment and social mobility. Women contribute equally to the development of the nation with their male counterparts, according to a report by the Aspire to Innovate (a2i) Program, but their work is not given much credit because 92 percent of them work in the unorganized sector, with 60 percent of them employed in the agricultural sector, 17 percent in the industrial sector, and 23 percent in the service sector [21]. Fatema [22] highlights that to the RMG working women in Bangladesh, empowerment means social and economic empowerment and argues that lack of aptitude to raise their voice in the family and at the workplace against exploitation and discrimination seriously hinders women's actual

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levels of empowerment. Four million people are employed in the RMG/textile sector, which accounts for more than 80 percent of exports and has a female labor share of 65 percent.

Education and Skill Development

The demand for skilled people has increased because of economic globalization, particularly in the service and information technology industries. As a result, Bangladesh now places more of a focus on education and skill development. Shamsuddin [23] investigates the potential effects of a women's stipend scheme on Bangladesh's labor market. Bangladesh's efforts to close the gender gap are commendable because they demonstrate a concern for the future of the labor force, and the benefits are already becoming clear.

Microfinance and Entrepreneurship

The expansion of microfinance institutions in Bangladesh, which gives women access to financial services and capital to launch their companies, has also been encouraged by economic globalization. Rural women who participate in microfinance programs are now more capable of starting their businesses, which allows them to make money, create jobs, and advance the local economy. By introducing a new factor that could have affected the labor market participation rate, Islam [24] investigated the effect that access to microfinance has on the participation rate of female laborers in Bangladesh.

Challenges and Labor Rights

Women in Bangladesh's textile industry have struggled with issues like low earnings, subpar working conditions, and restricted access to labor rights despite the employment prospects brought about by economic globalization. For instance, women have received a tiny fraction of the 14 million farmers' cards that have been issued throughout the nation. This is especially troublesome because, according to Ahmed [25], 77 percent of women spend the entire day working in the fields alongside their male colleagues. Women are also subject to salary discrimination in comparison to men. They also frequently lack family property rights, which are poorly understood and unsettled.

Gender Inequality and Discrimination

Women in Bangladesh are dominated by a patrilineal and patriarchal kinship system, which enforces the social and economic dependence of women on men and prescribes the relatively lower status of women. Although there has been steady progress in reducing gender inequality in different sectors (education, health, employment, etc.) there exists a huge inequality in Bangladesh, and the participation of women is very low compared to their male counterparts. Gender inequality has appeared as the major stumbling barrier in achieving development targets [26]. Despite the numerous still-existing restrictions, Kabeer [27] contends that Bangladeshi women's paid jobs have been linked to an increase in "power to choose" and favorable subjective evaluations. In this way, women have evolved into what Kabeer refers to as "weak winners, powerful losers."

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Gendered Division of Labor

Women are disadvantaged around the world. Bangladesh is not exceptional. Women continue to fight for an equitable distribution of resources, services, and opportunities in the workplace, where male supremacy predominates. In addition to employment sectors, the gender gap is personified in occupational categories and income disparities. This is primarily due to how expensive it is to employ women because they are "degraded" and considered "auxiliary."

Due to their insufficient knowledge and experience, women continue to be excluded from the market, and because of the intense competition, they are marginalized and at a disadvantage. As a result, there are different types of feminization because of the gendered division in the workforce. 'Feminizing' jobs in the sense that all paid work done by women has been low-paid and unstable is the alternative route to the nature of the work experience [28].

Women's Marginalization in the Informal Sector of the Economy

Jagger [29] argues that because of globalization, many women are forced into non-traditional employment, such as temporary, seasonal, and part-time jobs. The worsening economic situation hastens the commercialization of women and their co-modification, as shown by the rise in cases of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Because of poverty, women make up most migratory labor flows both domestically and globally. Women's movement to urban Export Processing Zones (EPZs) is significant in Bangladesh who are easily exploited both economically and sexually due to their fragility.

The Exploitative Nature of Multi-National Corporations (MNCs)

It is practically impossible to separate the relationship between capitalism and globalization. As demonstrated by the textile sector in Bangladesh, this also entails lower earnings and fewer employment possibilities for millions of employees, particularly women in developing nations. According to Kabir et al., [30], women were purposely chosen for low pay to exploit them in factories. Women are viewed as a docile obedient workforce that will take low earnings without demanding labor and human rights. Patriarchal societal norms have made it difficult for rural Bangladeshi women who were hired by RMG factories to participate in collective bargaining.

Impact of Political Globalization on Women's Political Empowerment in Bangladesh

Women in Bangladesh have been significantly impacted by political globalization, which is the term used to describe the growing connectivity and interdependence of political systems worldwide. In Bangladesh, the promotion of women's rights and gender equality has been greatly aided by political globalization. It has given advocates a forum, influenced legislative changes, and raised women's political engagement.

The following are the arguments on how political globalization impacts on women's empowerment in Bangladesh:

Women's Political Participation

A growing emphasis on women's political engagement and representation in Bangladesh is a result of political globalization. The significance of gender equality in politics has been stressed by international accords and standards, which have prompted initiatives to enhance the representation of women in positions of decision-making. Bangladesh had an active part in the

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inaugural World Women's Congress, which was held in Mexico in 1975. A campaign was started outside of Bangladesh to mainstream Bangladeshi women's progress. This dynamic helped to shape the landscape of Bangladesh's current state of women's development.
The second women's convention took place in Copenhagen in 1980, followed by the third women's convention in Nairobi in 1985, and the fourth women's convention in Jakarta in 1994. Women's political participation was the focus of these strategies [31].

Policy Reforms and Gender Equality
Policy changes in Bangladesh have been affected by political globalization, with a focus on women's rights and gender equality. International organizations, including the UN and non-governmental organizations, have promoted gender-responsive policies and programs, resulting in changes to the law and government efforts that aim to boost women's empowerment and address gender inequities. Bangladesh stands out as having the greatest degree of decision-making, with women serving in several ministries of the cabinet and the Honorable Prime Minister being a woman. International organizations and embassies must work on politically neutral ground and exercise direct control over the female contestants.

Women's Rights Movements
Political globalization has made it easier for women's rights concepts and information to spread, which has fueled the expansion of women's rights movements in Bangladesh. Women's organizations have worked for legal reforms and increased public awareness of issues like violence against women, gender-based discrimination, and the value of women's political involvement through activism and campaigning, frequently with funding from abroad. To safeguard its inhabitants from the whims of the markets or the elements, the Bangladeshi state was forced by the politics of the crises to build "biopower" [32].

Access to International Platforms
Political globalization has given Bangladeshi women the chance to engage with international forums and take part in cross-cultural discussions about women's rights and gender equality. Women's organizations and activists have participated in international conferences, seminars, and summits, giving them the chance to exchange experiences, research best practices from around the world, and promote their rights internationally.

More Participation by Women at Local Levels
Local and grassroots initiatives can have a positive impact on women's lives, both materially and in terms of their sense of efficacy and self-confidence. Bangladesh has tried to allocate seats in local government councils for women. Even yet, their purpose is not always understood.
Union Parishad is the name of Bangladesh's local administration, and the representation of women there is still minuscule. 19 women were elected as ward commissioners to the Dhaka City Corporation's reserved seats for the first time in 1994. The Bangladeshi government made a good decision in 1997 to ensure women's representation in local elected bodies. For the three reserved ward member seats in each Union Parishad, the government passed a law requiring the direct election of women.

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Impact of Socio-Cultural Globalization on Women's Social Empowerment in Bangladesh

Women in Bangladesh have been significantly impacted by social globalization, which is the process of ideas, attitudes, and cultural practices spreading beyond national boundaries. Social globalization has questioned established standards, given women more access to education and information, conscious about health issues, empowered them, and fostered international unity among women's movements. The functional literacy rate among the rural people aged between 11-45 years in 2023 is 70.54 percent which was 50.60 percent in 2011. The functional literacy rate among urban people in the same age group people in 2023 is 80.35 percent which was 65.60 percent in 2011 [33]. Bangladesh's maternal mortality rate for 2020 was 123.00, a 21.66 percent decline from 2019 (157.00).

The impacts of sociocultural globalization on women's social empowerment in Bangladesh are as follows:

Changing Social Norms

Women in Bangladesh have been exposed to various cultural customs, concepts, and values because of social globalization. This exposure has put old gender norms and expectations to the test, which has gradually changed how society views women's responsibilities and rights. For instance, women's rights to education, work, and involvement in public life are now more widely acknowledged.

Women's Empowerment Movements

Social globalization has aided in the communication of ideas and the organization of Bangladeshi movements for women's emancipation. Inspired by international movements and initiatives, women's rights activists have created groups and networks to promote gender equality, confront discriminatory behavior, and increase public awareness of women's issues. Platforms for social media have been essential in bringing campaigners together and amplifying their voices.

Access to Information and Education

For women in Bangladesh, social globalization has increased access to knowledge and education. Women now have easier access to educational resources, information about their rights, and social media platforms thanks to the development of the internet, digital technology, and social media platforms. Women now have more power to make educated decisions about their lives and pursue educational possibilities thanks to this greater access to information.

Influence on Fashion and Beauty Standards

Bangladesh's beauty standards and fashion trends have been impacted by socio-cultural globalization. Traditional ideas of beauty have been challenged by the growth of popular culture and the globalization of media. This has both positive and negative impacts because it encourages body acceptance and self-expression but may also put pressure on women and lead to unattainable beauty standards. In Bangladesh, fashion shows and beauty pageants are becoming commonplace occasions, and even parents encourage their daughters to participate in these events.

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International Trade of Sex Trafficking

In receiving nations including India, Pakistan, and the Middle East, the majority of Bangladeshi women who are victims of cross-border trafficking are sold in brothels or forcedly exploited in related labor [34]. Between 1990 and 1997, more than 2,00,000 Bangladeshi women were trafficked via the route Dhaka-Mumbai-Karachi-Dubai. Many of the victims were forced into prostitution in Pakistan and India or served as sex slaves to wealthy individuals in Middle Eastern nations.

Sex Tourism Trade

One industry where prostitution and international migration are linked is sex tourism. Transnational sex trafficking has increased recently, and trafficking organizations are sending an increasing number of Asian women abroad. These women are frequently treated like sex slaves. At the Thai-Burma, Nepal-India, and Bangladesh-Indian borders, these sensations are common. The rising issue of violence against women is perhaps the greatest detrimental effect of globalization on women.

Business Mafias factor prostitution into government policies that promote tourism as a means of increasing cash earnings. Despite their social significance or the hazards and negative impacts on the women themselves, local young women serve as a sexual reservoir for tourists [19]. Barkat and Maksud [18] claim that the sex tourism industry exploits thousands of Bangladeshi women through the sale of women, prostitution, pornography, etc.

Conflict of Civilization Around Differing Opinions of Women

Globalization brings about multifaceted cultural tendencies that may conflict with long-standing conventional ones. Therefore, a clash of civilizations continues to be the norm in third-world nations. For instance, young ladies in Bangladesh increasingly sport trendy haircuts and T-shirts and trousers. While ladies in sarees and salwar kameez had the responsibility of upholding tradition, males dressed in Western attire symbolized modernization and a forward-thinking mindset. Even after getting married, most women dress according to tradition.

The practice of bottle-feeding infants in place of breastfeeding is another excellent and well-known illustration of the damaging potential of pushing new foods to replace conventional habits. Breastfeeding rates in Bangladesh and other developing nations have been declining. According to the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2022 [35], the percentage of women in Bangladesh who exclusively breastfeed dropped from 65 percent in 2018 to 55 percent in 2022.

5. CONCLUSION

The study analyzed the positive impact of globalization on women's empowerment in Bangladesh with quantitative methodology (Scatterplot diagrams). But there are still negative effects of globalization in Bangladesh which should be mitigated for the advancement of women.

The positive impact of globalization relates to increased agency for women, increased employment opportunities outside the home, widespread inclusion of women in the labor

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market, and a narrowing of the income gap, which leads to an improvement in their economic status, improvement of women's education thanks to the introduction of new technologies.
The negative impact of globalization refers to the imprisonment of women in low-income and low-status jobs that support their nether position, limited economic retaliation for women, which leads to increased expenses in their economy, a cut in public jobs mainly held by women, being pushed to performing tasks with minimal importance for society.

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