



# Feminist Research

Homepage: [www.gathacognition.com/journal/gcj2](http://www.gathacognition.com/journal/gcj2)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21523/gcj2>



Original Research Paper

## Some Issues and Challenges to Women's Development and Empowerment in India



**Rekha Pande\***

Professor, Department of History and Centre for Women's Studies, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad-500046, Telangana, India

### Abstract

The present paper looks at the history of development and empowerment and discusses the impediments to development and empowerment in India. It focuses on the three major issues in India today, namely, the attitude towards, Girl child, Gender violence and Globalization, which have to be dealt with as a priority in bringing out the development and empowerment of women in the present era. If we look back into the history about the discussions and debates related to the issue of development and empowerment, we can see some broad trends. The whole debate on development states that there were number of women who organized and mobilizing around the globe for their rights. The development planners and policy makers did not have any interaction with these groups and they considered feminism as irrelevant to development and it was viewed as a luxury for the better of women in the industrialized countries. Hence, the first stage, main stream development models gave rise to jargons like, "basic human needs", "meeting the needs of the poorest of poor", "growth with equity". This phase viewed development as an administrative problem whose solution lay in transferring vast amount of resources and technological innovations from rich to poor countries. As compensation to this followed, integrating women into the development process. Education and employment as a means of income generation became indicators of women's involvement in the development process, but again under this phase a large chunk of rural women were left behind. Today women have addressed the question of development from a feminist perspective. They have raised important questions on issues of child care, reproductive rights, violence against women, family planning, transfer of technology and rural development and given the concept of development a new meaning. If development leads only to an increase in production, then it tends to reinforce and exaggerate the imbalances and inequalities within and in between societies. Development has to be an integral process with economic, social and cultural aspects leading to the control of one's life situation.

### Article history

Received: 18 March 2017

Accepted: 31 May 2017

### Key words

Empowerment;  
Development;  
Feminist perspective;  
Gender violence;  
Globalization;  
Girl child.

### Processing Editor(s)

Marilyn Porter  
Fatima Sadiqi

© 2017 GATHA COGNITION® All rights reserved.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The present paper looks at some debates and focuses on the three major issues namely, the attitude towards, Girl child, Gender violence and Globalization, which must be dealt with priority to bring out the development and empowerment of women in the present era. If we look into the history, the discussions and debates related to the issue of development and empowerment have some broad trends. The whole debate on development states that there were several women who organized and

mobilized around the globe for their rights. The development planners and policy makers did not have any interaction with these groups and they considered feminism as irrelevant. Moreover, it was viewed as a luxury for the betterment of women in the industrialized countries. Hence, the first stage, main stream stage, main stream development models gave rise to jargons like, "basic human needs", "meeting the needs of the poorest of poor", "growth with equity". This phase viewed development as an administrative problem

\* Author address for correspondence

Department of History and Centre for Women's Studies, University of Hyderabad, P.O. Central University, Hyderabad- 500 046, Telangana, India

Tel.: +91 9849428030 (M), +040- 23133150 (O),

E-mails: [panderekha@gmail.com](mailto:panderekha@gmail.com)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21523/gcj2.17010103>

© 2017 GATHA COGNITION® All rights reserved.

whose solution lay in transferring vast amount of resources and technological innovations from rich to poor countries. This was followed to integrate women into the development process. Education and employment as a means of income generation became indicators of women's involvement in the development process, but again under this phase a large chunk of rural women were left behind.

Today women have been addressing the question of development from a feminist perspective. They have raised important questions on issues like child care, reproductive rights, violence against women, family planning, transfer of technology and rural development and have given the concept of development a new meaning. If development leads only to an increase in production, then it tends to reinforce and exaggerate the imbalances and inequalities with in and in between societies. Development has to be an integral process with economic, social and cultural aspects leading to the control of one's life situation. Here, this is the concept of empowerment.

The National Education Plan for women emphasizes that women can be empowered through collective reflection and decision making. The parameters of empowerment are:

- Building a positive self-image and self-confidence.
- Developing the ability to think critically.
- Building group cohesion and fostering decision making.
- Providing the wherewith all for economic independence.
- Ensuring equal participation in the process of bringing social change.
- Encouraging group action ([National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988](#)).

There has been a progressive increase in the plan outlays over the last six decades of planned development to meet the needs of women and children. The outlay of Rs. 4 crores in the First Plan (1951-1956) has increased to Rs.7,810.42 crores in the Ninth Five Year Plan, and Rs.13,780 crores in the Tenth Five Year Plan. There has been a shift from "welfare" oriented approach in the First Five Year Plan to "development" and "empowerment" of women in the consecutive Five Year Plan. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) undertook a number of welfare measures through the voluntary sector. The programmes of women were implemented through the National Extension Service Programmes through Community Development Blocks. Second Five Year Plan (1956-1961) – efforts were geared to organize "Mahila Mandals" (women's groups) at grass-root levels to ensure the better implementation of welfare schemes. Third, Fourth, Fifth and other interim Plans (1961-1974) gave high priority to

women's education. Measures to improve maternal and child health services, and supplementary feeding for children, nursing and expectant mothers were also introduced. It was the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-1985), which adopted a multidisciplinary approach with a three-pronged thrust on health, education and employment of women. In the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990), the Developmental Programmes for women was continued, with the objective of raising their economic and social status to bring them in to the main stream of national development. A very significant step there in was to identify and promote "beneficiary-oriented Programmes" which extended direct benefits to women.

It was the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997), which brought a shift from 'development' to empowerment'. Special programmes were implemented to complement the general development programmes. The flow of benefits to women in the three core sectors of education, health and employment monitored vigorously. Women were enabled to function as equal partners and participants in the developmental process with reservation in the membership of local bodies. Some major initiatives undertaken during the Eighth plan for women included, setting up of the National Commission for Women to work towards safeguarding the rights and interest of women, setting up of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh to meet the micro credit needs of poor and asset less women. Other initiatives included the adoption of National Nutrition Policy in conformity with the Constitutional commitment to ensure adequate nutritional standard of the people, launching of the Mahila Samridhi Yojana to promote thrift activities amongst women and the launching of Indira Mahila Yojana basically for awareness generation and the economic empowerment through self-help groups. The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), envisaged: Empowerment of women and socially disadvantaged groups such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes and Minorities as agents of socio-economic change and development. Promoting and developing people's participatory institutions like Panchayathi Raj institutions, co-operatives and self-help groups were also taken up. The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) was formulated to ensure requisite access of women to information, resources and services, and advance gender equality goals. The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) proposed to undertake special measures for gender empowerment and equity. The Ministry of Women and Child Development would make synergistic use of gender budget and gender mainstreaming process.

Hence we see that there is no lack of initiative or policy decisions as far as women are concerned. Yet the reality is something very different and we have still not seen the empowerment of women in the real sense and women continue to bear the brunt of patriarchy. There are several constraints that check the process of women empowerment in India. Social norms and family

structure in the developing countries like India, manifest and perpetuate the subordinate status of women. One of the norms is to give preference to son over the birth of a girl child which is present in almost all societies and communities. The society is more biased in favor of male child in respect of education, nutrition and other opportunities. The root cause of this type of attitude lies in the belief that male child inherits the clan in India with an exception of Meghalaya. Women often internalize the traditional concept of their role as natural thus inflicting an injustice upon them. Poverty is the reality of life for the vast majority women in India. It is another factor that poses challenge in realizing women's empowerment (Shettar, 2015).

The concept of 'empowerment' of women is the product of the post 1975 women's movement. However, despite its frequent use in policy documents, and by women activists and women's studies, there is a considerable confusion over its meaning and interpretation. The dictionary defines the word, 'to give power to person/group to give them capacity to perform some-physical or mental activity, to delegate authority, to give legal rights'. This definition does not seem to provide the subtle nuances, throbbing dynamism and the features inherent in the word 'empowerment' as it is used in the current women's movement. Similarly, the definition also fails to reveal the extreme nature of prevailing inequalities between sexes, the powerlessness of women, and the oppressive burden of inherited social system on grass-root women for the removal of which the women's movement prescribes and uses the term 'empowerment'. Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept which can be described as the feeling that activates the psychological energy to accomplish one's goals. Towards Equality (1974) the first major attempt was to review and evaluate not only the data on various aspects of women's status but also the changes in women's roles, rights and opportunities due to planned development. It concludes that the process of change moved in a direction opposite to the goals of our society and its plans for development, triggered off a series of initiatives.

According to the Government of India Report, Empowerment, means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power. The possibility of empowerment depends on the two things namely, power can change and power can expand. Decision-making in the field of financial, child related and social issues, access to or control over resources and freedom of movement are the three most vital indicators of women empowerment. There are various impediments to development. This paper focuses on three significant Gs. There are various attitudes towards, Girl child, Gender violence and Globalization.

## 2 ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE GIRL CHILD

Women's status in any society is an indicator of its development and progress. Indian culture idolizes boys

and dreads the birth of girls. She is breast fed for a shorter time and dawn out of school to take care of siblings. The cycle of deprivation and disadvantage is further compounded by early marriage, premature pregnancies and attended risks. The girl child must be empowered to enter into the main stream of economic and social activity. Today we have realized that to improve the position of women one needs to look at the girlchild who is a woman of tomorrow. Only when we visualize a female child with high self-esteem not merely in recipient roles but in active productive roles with a concern for human dignity then only we will have a strong and empowered woman. The ultimate goal is to have an active, healthy and confident female child unfettered by socio-cultural patterns and traditional roles with equal access to knowledge information and opportunities.

The Indian culture, which idolizes sons and dreads the birth of a daughter, to be born female comes perilously close to being born less than human. The girl's discrimination begins even before birth. Our statistics clearly point out some facts that abortion of female fetuses is on rise. The ratio of female to male is declining. There is reluctance to seek medical aid for ailing daughters. Girls are breast fed for a shorter duration than boys and girls are easily withdrawn from school to look after their young siblings. Regardless of the economic background the status of the female child has never been the same as that of the male at any level (Pande, 2010).

Gender roles are conceived, taught and enacted in a complex set of relationships within family and society at large. Needless to say, the Media reinforces the same stereotyped gender roles. The girl child grows up with a low self-esteem. She grows up with a notion of temporary membership in her natal home to be disposed off with assets and dowry. A tradition saying sums it up thus, a daughter is like ghee (clarified butter)-both are good upto a point. If you do not dispose them off they start stinking her productive role is to continue the household drudgery added to which is her reproductive role.

Even as a reproductive machine, woman's life is worth only if she produces a son. Tradition and scriptures reinforce social biases against the girl thus, "the birth of a girl grant it elsewhere, here grant us a son". Sophisticated medical technology now strengthens societal biases against girls in the form of prenatal sex determination tests which have resulted in female feticides. Education, global exposure and affluence, all of which translates into easier access to expensive technology have made it easier to select the sex of the child. If there is a choice it is always for the male child. Despite a stringent law, doctors and patients manage to evade it. Hence, there has been a decline in female ratio (Table 1).

Few decades earlier, doctors used to openly advertise for sex selection tests for male heirs. Dr.

Aniruddha Malpani of Malpani clinic in upmarket Colaba became associated with infertility treatment. Her web site advertised on how one could choose the gender

**Table 1.** Male-female sex ratio

| Year | Females / 1000 Males |
|------|----------------------|
| 1901 | 972                  |
| 1911 | 964                  |
| 1921 | 955                  |
| 1931 | 950                  |
| 1941 | 945                  |
| 1951 | 946                  |
| 1961 | 941                  |
| 1971 | 930                  |
| 1981 | 933                  |
| 1991 | 945                  |
| 2001 | 927                  |
| 2011 | 914                  |

**Source:** *Census*, Government of India

of one's child, claiming to be one of the few in the world to pre select embryos to guarantee a son. Today Malpani is facing criminal charges for misusing pre-implantation diagnostic techniques like FISH for sex selection. Dr. Aniruddha defends this stating that in a democracy, people should be allowed to make decisions and ask how many can afford the pre-implantation technique, suggesting that only the rich can go for such a costly test (*India Today*, 2003).

The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Amendment Act was framed in 1994. Renamed the pre-conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique (Prohibition of sex selection) Act, it came into force in 2003. The Act prohibits sex selection before or after conception. It regulates, but does not ban the use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques like ultra sound for detecting genetic abnormalities or other disorders. Any nursing home, registered medical practitioner or hospital that does the ultra sound test is required to state that it does not do sex determination. The State Medical Council can cancel a registration to a doctor, guilty of violating the law. Under the Act any person who seeks sex selection can face a three year imprisonment (on first conviction) and fined Rs. 50, 000.

The implementation of laws is just one facet of the war against female feticide. However, in India there is a big gap between the law on paper and its implementation and of every law there are hundreds of ways in which it is bypassed. Meanwhile, in a society that ideologues the boy being born a female is to be born less than human. All across India the birth of a son is announced triumphantly with the beat of a brass *thali* (plate) and the distribution of sweets and money while that of a girl is met with silence and dejection, if not condolence. In North India dowries are much bigger and

dowry deaths more common. In many states marrying a daughter can reduce parents to penury.

The girl child cannot be looked in isolation. Her status is a product of general societal attitudes towards women at large. Women face higher risks of malnutrition, disease, disability, retardation of growth and development. They have no access of control over resources. Their work is invisible and hence undervalued. Their disabilities are powerfully reinforced through our culture, media, education and socialization process. A look at some of the proverbs and saying in local languages throughout India sums up these attitudes. A popular Telugu saying from Andhra is, "Bringing up a daughter is like watering a plant in another's courtyard". Another states, "If you tell lies you will get a female child". Another states, "It is better to be born as a tree in a jungle than to be born a girl". "It is easier to perform an Asvamedha Yagya (Horse sacrifice which the kings would perform in the past) than to perform a daughter's wedding." As a result of the cultural milieu women's self-image as well as societies image of her is negative. She has no value as an individual, who contributes to the nation's development. In this social context it is not surprising that the girl child like any other women has no value and her work is invisible and unrecognized (Pande, 2004).

The cycle of deprivation and disadvantage is further compounded by early marriage, premature pregnancies and its attendant risks. The dedication of girls as Devadasis, Jogins and Basavis in some regions of Andhra is singularly reprehensible violation of human rights as it makes young and innocent girls available for sexual abuse in the name of religion. The young Jogin does not marry and becomes the common property of the village and an object of sexual exploitation. According to a recent district wise survey there are 16,287 Devdasis, Jogins, Basavis in Andhra Pradesh, 80% belong to the Schedule Castes.

Girl children are entitled to have equal access of all resources of society. This entitlement is frequently denied. Discrimination that begins at the girl's birth has a cumulative effect on inequality, producing despair and powerlessness. The beginnings must be made with the girl child herself. Unless the girl internalizes the concept and experience of equity, as an adult she may tolerate and even perpetuate gender disparity. At present the girl child is denied the very acquisition of an identity. The right to personhood is a primary right and must be extended to the girl child. Also her rights to dignity, health, education are not visibly supported by the family or society. There must be concrete action on this count.

A large number of girls don't even attend school and among those who attend school the dropout rate is very high. This is because girls have to engage in domestic and child care activities when parents are at work. Nearly 80% of girls drop out from I to V class. Out of 100 girls who enroll in class 1 only 42 reach class V. Among Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes,

many of those who live below poverty line out of the 100 girls only 19 reach class V. Many of these girls work in unorganized sectors such as the beedi industry, agarbatti industry and garment making to name a few. Two characteristics of unorganized workers stand out: one, their being largely home-based, and the other the predominance of women and girl children. The unorganized sector represents gender division of labour because most of the women along with girls sitting at home do the works like beedi making, bangle making, agarbatti making, garments making and boys are not involved in it. In spite of this work most of the work of the girl child remains invisible (Pande, 2008).

### 3 GENDER VIOLENCE

Another major issue that haunts the process of development and empowerment is the issue of gender violence. The many forms of violence against women and children are to be understood as gender violence. Only when we look at violence not as a private issue but a developmental and human rights issue, that will be able to see the question in its totality. Violence has an economic, social and political cost to society and is not a private affair. Gender violence is rooted in the theory that the cause of domestic violence is one person's arbitrary belief in the right to exert power over another person, interpersonal interactions or interpersonal relations and is situated in the socio-economic and political content of power relations (Kelkar, 1991). In Indian families, most of the working-class women, even while facing violence, also face trivialization of reality in their lives. Middle class women face another kind of censoring of the violence that they face within homes. The public private divide which operates very strongly in many middle-class women's lives do not allow them to speak about the humiliation and violence they undergo. Both these trivializing as well as silencing are political acts which support a structure of oppression of women (Pande et al. 2008). Girls, who observe domestic violence, are more likely to tolerate abusive partners as adults, thus subjecting another generation to the same sad dynamics. The wife's tolerance is explained in terms of traditional socialization or learned helplessness (Agnes, 1980; Ahuja, 1987 and Mahajan, 1990). Women tend to be the peacemakers in relationships, the ones responsible for making the marriage work.

One of the major problems of recent times is the alarming proportion of trafficking of women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In today's world hundreds of women and children are trafficked in the name of jobs, domestic work, films role or marriage. Today trafficking generates more money than even arms trade or drugs trade. Trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation is one of the worst forms of human rights violation. Adolescent girls from marginalized families are the most vulnerable. Our girls are our wealth and the future women who should be nurtured and need protection. Hence we need to wake up to this issue and take it with all seriousness it deserves. Trafficking of women and children has

severely negative consequences for women and societies involved. It is an issue that involves both gender and basic human rights abuses. The problem is complex, deep, insidious, corrupt and multifaceted involving criminal enforcement challenges at the dark realm of human race. It is the vilest form of crime since it consists of using persons as merchandise that becomes the source of gain for both the trafficker, the one who sells the person and the one who buys her in order to profit from the prostitution. The nature of this work is such that there are chains of people who live out of the sexual exploitation of a single woman or girl. Trafficking is prevalent at various levels, local, inter-district, inter-state and cross-border. It is estimated that there are at least 8 million women and children in prostitution. About 25% or some 2 million of them are children. More chilling is the fact that not only is child trafficking on the increase, but also that the age at which they are victimized is also fast declining. Today trafficking in women has emerged as the most important issue on women's agenda-violence against women (Pande, 2016).

### 4 GLOBALISATION AND WOMEN

Most of the economies of the developing world are now in the process of restructuring from an inward looking and state directed policy regime to an outward looking economy in the direction of free market and liberalization. India had adopted the New Economic Policy in 1991 in the wake of debt crisis, as an essential part of the structural Adjustment Policy urged by the IMF and the World Bank. It was believed that this would make India to overcome its foreign exchange deficits, encourage foreign investments and strengthen the balance of payments. The World Bank gave substantial loans to tide over the crisis. The globalization of trade and commerce was part of this package. Though, these reforms focused mainly on industrial, fiscal, financial and external sectors, it was anticipated that a market determined exchange rate regime, reduction of protection to the industry and removal of restrictions on agricultural exports would benefit the agricultural sector. It was also expected that the new multilateral trading regime would enable India to increase its share in world exports of agricultural and agro based products.

In the global system, marked with widening income disparities, economic growth disparities, human capital disparities (life expectancy, nutrition, infant and child mortality, adult literacy, enrolment ratio, etc.) disparities in the distribution of global economic resources and opportunities, the disturbing question arises as to protect the interests of the poor and under privileged. The dominance of rich nations, multinational corporations and international capital over markets, resources and labour in the developing countries through trade, aid and technology transfer has greatly weakened the capacity of nation states and governments to promote human development and offer protection to the poor people. If the global opportunities continue to be

unevenly distributed, the consequences of the most pressing problem, poverty, would increasingly overflow national frontiers (UNDP, 1995).

Globalization has been described as the gradual elimination of economic borders and concomitant increase in international exchange and transnational interaction (Dolan, 1993). Globalization has been identified with economic reforms, structural adjustment programs, New World trade order and the opening up of the commercial markets and the global communication village and the world increasingly becoming similar and smaller. In the context of women this would mean a better social and economic status. But it has a growing interdependence and interconnectedness, necessarily lead to women's development but a lot of statistics in India, shows that it is not necessarily.

Globalization gets manifested in many ways. These include increased collaboration between companies in production and research, greater use of international financial markets, spatial spread of production activities to utilize local factors, cost advantage and gain access to new markets, increased intra-firm trade and trade in semi-finished parts, increased merger and acquisitions and greater use of international labor market for specialized and senior management staff (Gibson, 1994). It is necessary to look at globalization in terms of its impact on the entire economy and society but with a perspective that is sensitive to women's needs and conditions because women comprise about half the sub-continent's population. Gender has been increasingly acknowledged as a critical variable in analysis and development planning. Gender is an expression of power in social relationship between men and women. Gender as a power relation derives from institutional arrangements which provide men of a given social group, with greater capacity than women from that social group to mobilize institutional rules and resources to promote and defend their own interests (Kabeer, 1994). The analytic concept of gender is meant to challenge the essentialist and universal dictum that, "biology is destiny" (Stolcke, 1993).

In every form of activity be it agriculture or allied activities, domestication of animals, fishing, weaving, garment making, women contribute substantially to the value addition of the final product and yet their work is perceived by all as subsidiary, unskilled and often as skill only of domestic value. These women are burdened twice with double burden of work and are vulnerable to exploitation. Though, not a homogeneous group by way of caste, class or economic activity, deprivation and discrimination is common to all the workers in this area. They suffer from lack of opportunity to work, low and discriminatory wages and exploitative conditions resulting in casualization. They lack social security, face occupational health hazards, and do not have access to new technologies, skills and knowledge (Shramshakti, 1988).

Globalization has created a vast divide between the haves and the have-nots. There is strong evidence to show that the contemporary process of globalization with emphasis on technical change in agriculture associated with higher capital intensity, greater mechanization of production and postharvest operations, the development of crop and livestock with varied characteristics geared to the requirement of commercial commodity production has been accompanied by changes which women experience in a unique ways. This includes the loss of knowledge, skills and production contributions (Jigging, 1986)

With the process of commercialization women's traditional land rights are eroded. Land reform programs as well as the tendency towards the breakup of communal land holding especially ideas of tribal and customary tenures have led to the transfer of exclusive land rights to males as head of households. The 'head of the family' concept which is used as the basis for land redistribution, has historically ignored both the existence of the female headed households and the rights of the married women to a joint share in land. The ecological decline in common report resources and the decline in access to what remains due to force of privatization has meant that women work harder and are less able to fulfill their multiple roles in the maintenance and care of the farming system and the farm household. Thus a growing imbalance exists between women's access to land, labor capital, services and facilities on the one hand and demands of production on the other.

The rhetoric of globalization promises to remove backwardness through a worldwide exchange of information and skills in order to establish a truly cosmopolitan culture. There is an underlying belief that mutual cooperation and concern for social justice is automatically cared under this system. In actual practice since the global order is based on unequal power relations these concerns are put in hold. Globalization creates ghettoization of the weaker nations and the weak among them. Globalization seems to increase choices as trade but only for those with money and access to the market. Due to the existing difference between women and men's access to knowledge, skills, responsibilities and concerns and control over resources they are affected widely by the global process. Since women in many sectors have none but to continue to bear the brunt of gender and class inequalities, experience increasing marginalization and pauperization.

These growth-oriented policies have taken away whatever control women had over traditional occupations and denied them better avenues of employment. In the shift from welfare development to economic development the worst hit has been women, because a large number of women are in an informal sector. Globalization has only widened the gender disparity and increased feminization of poverty.

Globalization has also decreased the control of women over resources. It has led to displacement and

when both men and women land up in urban slums it affects the women more due to lack of sanitation and increase of violence. In this process, the knowledge of traditional medicines, herbs and plants have been destroyed. Hence we need a holistic approach to development and empowerment approach based on equality, love and respect and starts from the family rather than an approach which is based on power and privilege of men and boys and weakness and subservience prescribed for women and girls.

Today there is an irreversibility of the reform process. The logic of global economy as well as India's interests dictate that India become proactive in its liberalization policies. India must liberalize not because it has no choice but because it is the best choice. Moreover, this can alone make the country rich and prosperous and create any hope of conquering poverty. (Desai, 1999). The realities of the transitional period and the costs to vulnerable sections of society have to be recognized by the policy makers and some social safety nets to be created. The agricultural reforms must be sensitive to gender needs. The existing policy package consists of Minimum Support Price for selected agricultural products and procurement of few food products and the supply of food grains and a few essential items through the public distribution system (PDS) need to be reviewed. The ideas of a minimum support price and crop insurance to reduce production risks will go a long way in helping the farmers. The PDS should target the poor and the people living below poverty line. Direct market interventions in the form of purchase, storage and distribution by government agencies must be avoided and increase the farmers especially women's access to the market via better roads and transport facilities, storage, packing and agro processing facilities. The goal must be sustainable agricultural development. It is imperative for the government to prioritize food security. It is very important to develop safety nets to minimize the adverse distributional consequences of globalization. Legal frameworks should be altered to ease women's access to and control of resources. The granting of land rights to women, rectifying the discriminatory inheritance laws, labour market legislations and laws to protect common property will go a long way in altering the social conditioning of gender.

Sustainable human development must be at the top of the priority agenda. There is a need to look at development with a human face. The most important goals must include universal access to basic education, primary health care for all, elimination of serious malnutrition and provision of safe drinking water. Women's concerns need to be explicitly incorporated as integral elements of the objectives, content, monitoring and international support for structural adjustment. There is a need to take into account women's special needs in the contribution to economic production, such as household management, child rearing, and community organization in addition to their contribution

to agriculture. We need to view human beings as having intrinsic value and not just an instrumental value. The right to a life of dignity is a basic human right. Hence there is a need to change the total perspective. Development and Empowerment will have no real meaning till we focus on the issue of the Girl Child, Gender violence and Globalization.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author confirms that the content in this article has no conflicts of interest.

## REFERENCES

- Agnes, F., 1980. *Violence in the Family: Wife beating*, Bombay, SNDT, Women's Centre.
- Ahuja, R., 1987. *Crime against Women*, Jaipur, Rawat Publications.
- Census, 1981, 1991. Government of India.
- Desai, M., 1999. *What should be India's economic priorities in a globalized world?* Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, New Delhi.
- Dolan, M., 1993. Global economic transformation and less developed countries. in *Global Transformation and the Third world*, (eds) Robert O. Slater, Barry M. Schutz and Steven R. Dorr, Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc. Boulder, Colorado.
- Gibson, A., 1994. Fortress or easy street: The impact of emerging Trade structures on globalization and developing countries. in S. Neelamegham (Ed), *Competing Globally*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi.
- India Today, 2003. Shafalee Vasudev, Missing Girl Child, Nov. 10,19.
- Jigging, J., 1986. *Gender Related Impacts and the Work of the International Agricultural Center, CGIAR*.
- Kabeer, N., 1994. *Reversed Realities*, Verso, London.
- Kelkar, G., 1991. *Violence against Women in India- Perspective and Strategies*. Bangkok, Asian Institute of Technology.
- Mahajan, A., 1990. Instigators of wife battering. In Sooshma Sood (Ed), *Violence against women*, Jaipur. Arihant Publishers.
- National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988. Report of the Core Group Set Up by the Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- Pande, R., 2001. The Social Costs of Globalization: Restructuring Developing World Economies, *Journal of Asian Women's Studies*, Kitakyushu Forum on Asian women, Japan, 10, 1-14.
- Pande, R., 2004. The girl child in India, in *Review of Women's Studies*, 14(2), 149-173.
- Pande, R., 2008. *Women and Children Workers in the Old City of Hyderabad, India, Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, 17.
- Pande, R., Bindu, K.C., Mumtaz F. and Nuzhath K., 2008. Narratives of domestic violence, Reconstructing masculinities and Feminities. in Singh, Manjit and D.P. Singh (ed), *Violence -impact and intervention*, New Delhi, Atlantic publishers and Distributors, 121-140.
- Pande, R., 2010. Gender issues in South Asia, with special reference to India, Challenges in the new Millennium. *Family in Development, Hopes and Challenges*, (Eds), Simon Polinder, Evert Jan Brouwer and Hank

- Jochesen, Just development Series, Prisma, Shaker Publishing, Netherlands, 47-58.
- Pande, R., 2016. *Sex Trafficking in South Asia with a Special Focus on India*, Kalpaz Publication, Gyan Books, New Delhi.
- Shettar, R. M., 2015. A Study on Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment in India. *International organisation of Scientific Research, Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 17(4), 13-19.
- Shramshakti, 1988. Report of the National commission on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector, Publication Division, Government of India, Patiala House, New Delhi.
- Stolcke, V., 1993. Is sex to gender what race is to ethnicity, in Teresa del Valle (ed): *Gendered Anthropology*, Routledge.
- Towards Equality, 1974. Report on the status of women, Government of India, New Delhi.
- UNDP, 1995. Human Development Report, New York, Oxford University Press.

\*\*\*\*\*