

Women victim of globalisation

Over the past 200 years a large amount of different local economies around the world have opened up their foreign trade and investment. This complex process of globalisation affects various countries, regions and the people who live in these globalising places. To some, this is a positive move that will reduce poverty in developing countries. To others, it is a process with both 'winners' and 'losers' and they examined the divide between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'.¹ Even though the positive critics see a current wave of globalisation that promotes equality and reduces poverty, they have to admit that not everyone reaps the benefits of globalisation. The international economic policies are not gender-neutral in their effect. Women in particular are vulnerable in this globalised world and are the ones who suffer the most poverty.²

According to the United Nations in 1997, of the world's 1.3 billion poor people, almost 70 percent are women. In many countries, women work twice the unpaid time men do.³ They are overrepresented in sweated labour undertaken for transnational chains and are more likely to accept poor wages and conditions, perhaps to some extent because of their responsibility for their children. The implications of structural adjustment and globalisation on women have been typically negative in terms of reduced real incomes and standard of living. This goes along with a larger load of unpaid work.⁴

¹ David Dollar and Aart Kraay, 'Spreading the wealth', *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2002)

² Anup Shah, 'Women's Rights' (2010), at <http://www.globalissues.org/article/166/womens-rights>, accessed 12 August 2010

³ United Nations, 'Women at a Glance' (1997), at <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/women/women96.htm>, accessed 21 August 2010

⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 'Women and globalisation', at <http://www.unescap.org/esid/GAD/Publication/women-globalization.pdf>, accessed 21 August 2010

Even in developed countries like Australia women's total average earnings are just 66 percent of men's. This is even less than they were ten years ago.⁵

Although organisations like the United Nations and Amnesty International try to reduce women's poverty and bad place in society, policies are sometimes not changed enough or not at all. Shah even argues in her article about women rights that equality between men and women are not getting better and even get worse.⁶

The globalised world has made a change to more knowledge intensive production and has created new jobs. Nevertheless, women increasingly have to challenge with vulnerable forms of employment. The opening up of the market to foreign trade has meant a loss of the rights of the socialist state system. This system protected women in transition economies, but because of globalising this system does not protect the women anymore.

So, if globalising reduces poverty, women are the ones who are excluded from the benefits of globalisation. Opening up to foreign trade makes women more vulnerable and reduces the incomes and standard of living for women. Poverty for women means poverty for their children and their children are our future. To create a better life for women and their children in a globalising world, women should be treated equal to men.

⁵ Anne Summers, *The end of equality: work, wages and women's choices* in 2 volumes, Random House, Milson's Point N.S.W., 2003, pp. 26-259

⁶ Anup Shah, 'Women's Rights' (2010), at <http://www.globalissues.org/article/166/womens-rights>, accessed 12 August 2010

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