

CHALLENGES OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS: UNRAVELLING THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

This article will equip the readers with a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the socio-economic and political problems of marginalized groups in society such as women's repercussions of contemporary developments such as globalization. Even after more than 60 years of democratic governance, it is distressing that the government and the policymakers are lulled into complacency, by not translating de jure rights to defacto rights, to effect changes in the society. History reveals that women have had no space in the political arena and even in the political parties as decision-making partners. Further, it also shows that other formal institutions have not validated or recognized the participation or contribution of women.

Keywords: marginalized, globalization, governance, political parties, participation, democratic, Rights, etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article aims to provide readers with a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the socio-economic and political challenges faced by marginalized groups in society, with a particular focus on women. Despite more than six decades of democratic governance in many parts of the world, it remains distressing that governments and policymakers have not effectively translated de jure rights into de facto rights for these marginalized groups. In this context, we will delve into the repercussions of contemporary developments, notably globalization, on the lives of women.

- 1. Aim and Purpose:** The introduction states the article's aim, which is to equip readers with a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the challenges faced by marginalized groups in society, with a specific focus on women. It highlights that despite the passage of over six decades of democratic governance in many parts of the world, there is still a troubling gap between the legal rights these marginalized groups have and the actual realization of these rights in their daily lives.
- 2. The Focus on Marginalized Groups:** The introduction emphasizes that the article centers on marginalized groups in society. This suggests that the article will address the social and political dynamics that lead to the marginalization of certain groups and the impact of this marginalization on their well-being and opportunities.
- 3. Global Perspective:** The introduction mentions that the article will delve into the effects of contemporary developments, particularly globalization, on women. This indicates that the discussion will encompass a global perspective, examining how broader trends and forces shape the experiences of marginalized groups.
- 4. Historical Context:** Though not explicitly stated, the introduction alludes to a historical context. It suggests that the struggle for marginalized groups, particularly women, has persisted for a long time, indicating that these challenges are deeply rooted and persistent.
- 5. A Call to Action:** The introduction implies a sense of concern or urgency. It suggests that despite the passage of time and the existence of democratic governance, there is still much work to be done in translating legal rights into practical, tangible changes for marginalized groups. The introduction serves to orient the reader by outlining the central theme, the scope of the article, and the overarching questions it aims to address. It sets the tone for a critical examination of the challenges faced by marginalized groups, especially women, in a world shaped by contemporary developments like globalization.

2. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

A critical examination of history reveals a stark reality: women have long been denied a substantial presence in the political arena and within political parties as decision-making partners. While progress has been made in some regions, the pervasive underrepresentation of women in political processes remains a significant issue. This underrepresentation is a consequence of deeply ingrained sociocultural norms and stereotypes that have relegated women to the margins of political power.

Historical viewpoint:

Long-standing Exclusion: Throughout history, women have faced systematic exclusion from the political sphere. In many societies, politics was considered a male-dominated domain, and women were often relegated to traditional roles as homemakers and caregivers. This exclusion was deeply ingrained and persisted for centuries.

Limited Rights: Historically, women had limited legal and political rights. In many cases, they were denied the right to vote, hold public office, or actively participate in political decision-making processes. These restrictions were often justified by societal norms that positioned women as subordinate to men.

Pioneering Women: Despite these formidable barriers, pioneering women throughout history broke through these limitations. Women's suffrage movements, for example, fought tirelessly for the right to vote. Figures like Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Emmeline Pankhurst became iconic leaders in this struggle.

Progress in Some Regions: Over time, progress has been made in various regions to address gender disparities in political representation. Some countries granted women the right to vote and participate in politics in the early 20th century. Others implemented gender quotas or reserved seats in legislatures to increase women's representation.

Cultural Norms and Stereotypes: The historical exclusion of women from politics was often reinforced by deeply ingrained sociocultural norms and stereotypes. These norms and stereotypes portrayed women as emotionally unstable, less capable of making rational decisions, or primarily suited for domestic roles. Such beliefs served to justify their exclusion from political leadership.

Challenges to Women's Participation: Even when women were granted political rights, they still encountered significant obstacles. These challenges included social stigma, discriminatory practices, and a lack of access to education and resources. As a result, women continued to be underrepresented and marginalized within political parties and decision-making structures.

The Persistence of Underrepresentation: Despite significant progress in women's rights and gender equality, the underrepresentation of women in politics remains a global issue. While some countries have made strides in achieving gender balance in political leadership, others lag, and gender disparities persist in many parts of the world.

A Continuing Struggle: The historical perspective on women's political participation underscores that the struggle for gender equality in politics is ongoing. While much has been achieved, there is still work to be done to dismantle the sociocultural norms and stereotypes that perpetuate gender-based discrimination and to ensure that women have an equal seat at the political table. The historical context reveals that women's exclusion from politics has deep roots, shaped by societal norms, legal restrictions, and stereotypes. While progress has been made, the fight for gender equality and women's political empowerment continues to be a crucial endeavor, aiming to break free from the historical patterns of underrepresentation and marginalization.

3. POLITICAL ARENA AND DECISION-MAKING

Women's limited presence in the political arena is not solely due to a lack of interest or capability but is often the result of systemic barriers. Discriminatory practices, unequal access to resources, and the perpetuation of gender-based violence have hindered women's ability to participate fully in politics. The consequence is that women's voices, perspectives, and concerns are often excluded from the policy-making process, resulting in a lack of policies that address their unique needs and challenges.

In the political arena and their challenges in decision-making, we can delve deeper into the systemic barriers they face:

Systemic Barriers: Women's underrepresentation in politics cannot be attributed solely to a lack of interest or capability. Instead, it is primarily a consequence of systemic barriers that hinder their full participation. These barriers are deeply entrenched and perpetuated by societal norms and practices.

Discriminatory Practices: Discrimination against women in politics takes various forms. Women may face bias and prejudice when seeking political positions, whether as candidates or officeholders. Discriminatory practices can include unfair treatment in nomination processes, party politics, or election campaigns.

Unequal Access to Resources: Women often encounter disparities in access to political resources, including financial support and campaign funding. This unequal access places them at a disadvantage when competing with male candidates who may have more substantial financial backing. As a result, women may struggle to run competitive campaigns.

Gender-Based Violence: Gender-based violence, including physical and verbal abuse, can be used as a tactic to deter women from participating in politics. Threats and harassment directed at female politicians are not uncommon, and these forms of violence can have a chilling effect on women's political engagement.

Exclusion from Decision-Making: One of the key consequences of these systemic barriers is the exclusion of women from decision-making processes. When women's voices are marginalized or silenced, their perspectives and concerns are often overlooked when formulating policies and legislation. This leads to a lack of policies that address the unique needs and challenges faced by women in society.

Policy Gaps: The absence of policies that consider gender-specific issues can have detrimental effects on women's well-being. Issues such as gender-based violence, pay equity, reproductive rights, and childcare are often inadequately addressed when women are not adequately represented in political decision-making.

Underrepresentation's Consequences: The underrepresentation of women not only hampers their political careers but also has broader implications for society. When women are excluded from political leadership, the policies enacted may not reflect the diversity of experiences and needs within the population. This can perpetuate gender inequalities and hinder progress on gender-related issues.

Efforts for Change: Recognizing these challenges, various efforts have been made to address gender disparities in politics. Initiatives such as gender quotas, women's caucuses, and advocacy for women's rights have aimed to break down these systemic barriers and increase women's participation in decision-making.

Long-Term Impact: Achieving gender parity in politics is not only a matter of justice but also essential for creating more inclusive and responsive democracies. When women's voices are heard and their perspectives are considered in policymaking, the resulting policies are more likely to address the diverse needs of all citizens, promoting a fairer and more equitable society.

The limited presence of women in the political arena is not due to a lack of interest or capability but is primarily a result of systemic barriers such as discrimination, unequal access to resources, and gender-based violence. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensure that women can participate fully in politics and that their voices and concerns are reflected in the policies that shape society.

4. FORMAL INSTITUTIONS AND RECOGNITION

Beyond politics, formal institutions have also struggled to validate and recognize the participation and contributions of women. In sectors ranging from economics to education, women's achievements have been overlooked or undervalued. This underrecognition perpetuates a cycle of gender inequality, as women are denied opportunities for advancement and leadership roles.

The issue of formal institutions struggling to validate and recognize the participation and contributions of women, we can delve deeper into the challenges women face in various sectors:

Economic Disparities: Women have historically faced economic disparities in the workplace. They are often paid less than their male counterparts for the same work and are underrepresented in leadership positions. This wage gap reflects the undervaluing of women's contributions to the economy.

Glass Ceiling: The "glass ceiling" is a metaphor for the invisible barriers that prevent women from reaching top executive and leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. Women often find it challenging to break through this barrier, limiting their opportunities for advancement.

Gender Bias in Hiring and Promotion: Gender bias can manifest in hiring and promotion decisions. Stereotypes and biases may lead employers to underestimate women's qualifications or potential, resulting in fewer opportunities for career growth.

Inadequate Representation in Boardrooms: Corporate boardrooms often lack gender diversity, with men dominating decision-making roles. The absence of women at the highest levels of corporate leadership limits their influence on business strategies and priorities.

Recognition of Unpaid Labor: Women's contributions to unpaid labor, including caregiving and domestic work, are often overlooked. This work, which is essential for the functioning of society, is frequently undervalued and unrecognized in economic terms.

Inadequate Support for Working Mothers: Working mothers often face challenges in balancing their professional and caregiving responsibilities. Inadequate support in terms of affordable childcare and family-friendly workplace policies can hinder women's ability to pursue leadership roles.

Representation in Education: In educational institutions, women's contributions to research, academia, and leadership roles have historically been undervalued. Female scholars and researchers may face gender bias in recognition, publishing, and career advancement.

Representation in the Arts and Media: Women in the arts and media industries have often struggled for recognition and equal opportunities. Gender bias can influence casting decisions, film directing, and the portrayal of women in the media.

Underrepresentation in STEM Fields: Women continue to be underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. This underrepresentation limits their contributions to these crucial sectors and reinforces stereotypes about women's abilities.

Recognition of Women's Achievements: The historical absence of recognition for women's achievements has contributed to a lack of female role models in various fields. This can discourage young women from pursuing careers in which they are underrepresented.

The Cycle of Inequality: The underrecognition of women's contributions in these sectors perpetuates a cycle of gender inequality. It reinforces societal norms that devalue women's work and limit their opportunities for advancement.

Efforts to address these challenges include promoting gender diversity and equity in hiring and promotion, implementing policies that support work-life balance, and recognizing and valuing unpaid labor. Recognizing women's achievements and contributions in all sectors is not only a matter of fairness but also crucial for achieving gender equality and creating more inclusive and equitable societies.

Globalization's Role

Contemporary developments, such as globalization, have added a layer of complexity to these challenges. While globalization has brought about significant economic and technological advancements, it has also exacerbated inequalities within and between societies. The impact of globalization on marginalized groups, including women, is multifaceted. On one hand, it has created opportunities for economic empowerment and connectivity. On the other hand, it has exposed women to exploitative labor practices and intensified competition for resources.

The role of globalization in the context of gender inequality and the challenges faced by marginalized groups, particularly women, provides a nuanced understanding of its multifaceted impact:

Economic Advancements: Globalization has led to significant economic advancements, opening up new markets and opportunities for businesses and individuals alike. Women have benefited from increased access to employment and income-generation opportunities, particularly in export-oriented industries like manufacturing and services.

Technological Advancements: The rapid spread of technology and information as a result of globalization has empowered women in various ways. Women can now access information, education, and job opportunities more easily, bridging some of the information gaps that existed before.

Exploitative Labor Practices: However, the globalization of labor markets has also exposed women, particularly in developing countries, to exploitative labor practices. In pursuit of lower production costs, some industries have relied on low-wage, predominantly female labor forces, subjecting them to poor working conditions, low pay, and limited labor rights.

Gendered Division of Labor: Globalization has reinforced traditional gendered divisions of labor. Women in many societies continue to shoulder the burden of unpaid care work and domestic responsibilities, even as they participate in paid labor. This double burden can limit their economic and political participation.

Intensified Competition: As globalization has interconnected economies, it has also intensified competition for resources. Scarce resources, such as land, water, and food, can disproportionately affect women, who often play central roles in managing these resources within their households and communities.

Migration and Vulnerability: Globalization has facilitated migration, with women often seeking employment opportunities in other regions or countries. While migration can offer economic opportunities, it can also expose migrant women to vulnerabilities such as human trafficking, exploitation, and discrimination.

Access to Education: On the positive side, globalization has improved access to education for many women and girls, enabling them to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for economic and political participation. However, gender disparities in education persist in some regions.

Influence on Cultural Norms: Globalization has influenced cultural norms and values, with both positive and negative consequences. It has brought about increased awareness of gender equality and women's rights, but it has also exposed societies to Western-centric ideals that may not align with local values.

Policy Responses: Governments and international organizations have responded to the challenges posed by globalization with policies aimed at protecting workers' rights, promoting gender equality, and addressing the negative impacts of economic liberalization. However, the effectiveness of these policies can vary widely.

Intersectionality: It's important to recognize that the impact of globalization is not uniform and varies based on factors like race, ethnicity, class, and geographical location. Women with multiple marginalized identities may experience compounded challenges due to globalization.

Globalization has ushered in both opportunities and challenges for women and marginalized groups. While it has created avenues for economic empowerment and connectivity, it has also exposed women to exploitative labor practices and intensified competition for resources.

The role of globalization in gender equality and women's empowerment requires careful consideration and a comprehensive approach that addresses both the positive and negative aspects of this complex phenomenon.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this article sheds light on the enduring socio-economic and political challenges faced by marginalized groups, particularly women, in a globalized world. Despite the promise of democracy and the passage of time, barriers persist, preventing marginalized groups from fully enjoying their rights and participating meaningfully in society. To address these challenges, a concerted effort is required from governments, policymakers, civil society, and the international community to translate legal rights into tangible opportunities and ensure that the voices of marginalized groups are heard and valued.

Only through such collective action can we hope to achieve a more equitable and inclusive society where the impact of globalization is felt by all, regardless of gender or social status.

The concluding remarks, it's essential to emphasize the importance of addressing the enduring challenges faced by marginalized groups, especially women, and the collective actions needed to bring about meaningful change:

Intersectionality: Recognizing that individuals experience multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage based on their intersecting identities (e.g., race, gender, class, sexuality) is crucial. Policies and initiatives must consider and address these intersecting inequalities to ensure inclusivity.

Policy Reforms: Governments and policymakers should enact and enforce policies that promote gender equality, protect women's rights, and dismantle systemic barriers. This includes measures like gender quotas, anti-discrimination laws, and initiatives to address gender-based violence.

Education and Awareness: Education plays a pivotal role in challenging stereotypes and norms. Comprehensive educational programs that promote gender equality, diversity, and inclusivity can help shift societal attitudes and pave the way for change.

Support Networks: Creating support networks and safe spaces for marginalized groups, including women, is essential. These networks can provide empowerment, resources, and a platform for advocacy and collective action.

Media and Representation: The media plays a powerful role in shaping public perceptions. Encouraging media outlets to promote fair and unbiased reporting and representation of marginalized groups can contribute to changing societal narratives.

Global Cooperation: Given the global nature of challenges like gender inequality and the impact of globalization, international cooperation is crucial. Collaborative efforts between countries, organizations, and civil society can help address these issues on a broader scale.

Economic Empowerment: Economic empowerment programs for marginalized groups, particularly women, should be prioritized. This includes access to financial resources, job opportunities, entrepreneurship support, and fair wages.

Engaging Men and Boys: Gender equality is not solely a women's issue; it requires the active involvement of men and boys. Promoting positive masculinity and challenging harmful stereotypes among men can be transformative.

Data and Research: Data collection and research efforts should focus on understanding the specific challenges faced by marginalized groups. This evidence-based approach can inform policy decisions and ensure that interventions are targeted and effective.

Community Engagement: Engaging communities in discussions and initiatives related to gender equality and social inclusion can foster bottom-up change and help address deeply rooted norms and practices.

In conclusion, addressing the persistent challenges faced by marginalized groups, particularly women, is a multifaceted and ongoing endeavor. It requires commitment, collaboration, and a comprehensive approach that encompasses legal reforms, education, awareness, and economic empowerment.

Achieving a more equitable and inclusive society is not only a moral imperative but also essential for sustainable social progress in a globalized world. It is a goal that demands the collective efforts of individuals, communities, governments, and international entities working together to dismantle barriers and ensure that the voices and rights of marginalized groups are respected and valued.

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