

The Paradox of Globalization: Exploitation or Empowerment of Women?

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Abstract

This study analyzes the Paradox of Globalisation. We investigate if Globalisation leads to empowerment or to exploitations of women. Research show globalization contributes to higher incomes for less developed economies, democratizes institutions, cultivates cultural richness and develops employment for women. Additionally, there are negative effects of globalization if the cultural context of people is not considered and globalization is controversial. We view the paradox of globalization as twofold having consequences on women empowerment and exploitation. It is assumed gender equality can improve women conditions and opportunities, advances their careers and enhances participation in democratic decision-making, by giving freedom of speech to all about problems in factory work. Based on a study from Bangladesh garment industry we analyze the influence of globalization on women empowerment. We conducted a qualitative study and structured interviews with 39 women workers in six factories and use a grounded theory approach to analyse the data. Preliminary results of the study show contextual factors affect the working conditions of women in the factories negatively. Female workers are not satisfied with the salaries they get, they are not allowed to use the money they earn by themselves and they do not have the possibility to participate in decision-making and advance in careers. The paradox is female workers still can support their families and their children and got the possibility to buy more and healthier food. The study suggests if institutional factors are considered, globalization can make a positive contribution by empowering women and improving the quality of decision-making.

Key words: Empowerment, exploitation, paradox, female workers, garment industry, globalization.