



## Women and Development

(زنان و توسعه)

شمس‌السادات زاهدی\*

امکان‌پذیر است. این گفته بدان معنی است که باید هم در سطح ملی و هم در عرصه بین‌المللی مسایل و مشکلات زنان در اولویت قرار بگیرد. در این مقاله چهار مسئله مهم در مورد زنان که شایسته توجه و اقدام بایسته هستند بررسی می‌شود. این چهار مسئله عبارت‌اند از: جهانی‌شدن و زنان، خشونت علیه زنان، قاچاق زنان و عدم دسترسی زنان به فناوری و ارتباطات از راه دور.

کلیدواژه: جهانی‌شدن، قاچاق زنان، استثمار جنسی، خشونت، جنایت، تجاوز، تجارت جنسی.

چکیده: چهارمین کنفرانس جهانی در مورد زنان در سال ۱۹۹۵ در پکن برگزار شد. در این کنفرانس محورهای عمده و مهم نگرانی که مستلزم اقدام دولتها بود مشخص و بر لزوم ارتقای مقام زن در این محورها تأکید شد. ده سال بعد، هنوز شکاف بزرگی میان آنچه زنان در واقع به دست آورده‌اند و آنچه در کنفرانس پکن به تصویب رسید وجود دارد. هنوز نکات بسیار مهمی است که با آنها برخورد مناسب نشده است. بر همگان روشن شده است که توسعه واقعی جهان مستلزم مشارکت همه شهروندان در فرایند توسعه است و این مسئله فقط با دخالت کامل زنان

\* استاد دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی.

## I. Globalization

**I. 1 Definition:** Globalization is a set of multi-dimensional process encompassing many arenas of ideology, economy, politics, and culture (Gills, 2002). The logic of globalization is mainly derived from the logic of capitalism i.e. to maintain and expand the process of capital accumulation and thus, economic globalization is at the forefront of the globalization process (ibid.).

In fact, globalization is the rapidly accelerating integration of many local and national economies into a single global market regulated by the World Trade Organization. These developments raise profound questions for the humanities in general and for women in particular (Jaggar, 2001).

### I. 2 Globalization Impacts on Women

The complex and contradictory impacts of globalization on women are as follows:

#### a) Positive impacts

**a.1** Globalization has enhanced some employment opportunities for women, where previously they had not existed.

**a.2** Globalization raises the number of international organizations that employ many women around the world. According to a report published by the United Nations Center on Transnational Corporations, international firms employ about two million women in the developing countries (UNCTNC, 1988). Of

course it should be noted that these firms often favor employing women because they are seen as more efficient and stable than men, and at the same time their wages are lower than those of men and it is easier to hire and lay off women (Mendenhall, 1995). This is so because women are predominantly in lower-level and lower-paid positions.

**a.3** the migration of women in search of employment opportunities has helped them ease the problem of poverty in many cases and meet the labor needs of a number of countries.

**a.4** Through globalization, women will realize that there are similar questions and challenges faced by their counterparts elsewhere around the world (Tadesse, 2004).

**a.5** The idea of women's rights as human rights allowed women across the world to forge common bonds and provides an example of 'globalization from bellow', rather than being an idea imposed from above. The idea that women's rights are human rights emerged from grassroots activism and illustrates how feminist re-conceptualization of 'universal' rights are compatible with wide local diversity in interpretation and action.

#### b) Negative impacts

**b.1** Globalization and liberalization strength patriarch structures, norms and values, and

accelerate barriers of women's economic empowerment (Marenga, 2004).

**b.2** Globalization has increased the sexualization of women and many women have been drawn into some aspect of sex work. A vastly expanded global sex trade results in millions of women being employed as sex workers outside their countries of origin.

**b.3** The traditional sexual division of labor has been furthered through new locations and forms of work with conditions of exploitation, and violation of women's rights.

**b.4** Trafficking of women and girls in a speed far more than previously had existed.

**b.5** High levels of economic and social uncertainty and exposing women to diverse mechanisms of exploitation.

Although globalization has increased the numbers of women workers, this increase is not in the core workforce. Women usually are employed into marginalized groups of workers consisting of part-time, temporary, casual, and sub-contracted labor. Gills holds that "much empirical evidence indicate that economic globalization, in particular globalization of production, brings with it further exploitation and impoverishment of women, rather than their empowerment and emancipation"(Gills, 2002).

### **Suggestion**

In order to minimize the threats and negative

impacts of globalization, the issue of women's rights should be high on the global human rights agenda. Both national and international bodies should pay more attention to women issues and commit additional budget and efforts, using a multifaceted approach to minimize the negative impacts of globalization on women.

## **II. Violence**

### **II.1 Definition**

Gender-based violence is violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman.

### **II.2 Violence typology**

Violence against women takes different shapes among those are:

- Domestic battery
- Honor killings
- Forced marriage
- Forced pregnancy
- Forced sterilization
- Forced abortion
- Rape and sexual assault
- Genital mutilation
- Trafficking into forced prostitution
- Sexual abuse in war and post war period by foreign military bases
- Torture women in custody
- Taking hostages
- Denying medical care for injuries

- Degrading treatment and humiliation
- .....
- .....

### II.3 Consequences of violence

Violence has many negative consequences among which are the followings:

- a) Physical:
  - Injuries
  - Morbidity
  - Spread of diseases (HIV/AIDS...)
  - Mortality
- b) Psychological:
  - Shame
  - Social stigma
  - Facing rejection
  - Divorce
  - Being declared unfit for marriage
- c) Economic:
  - Increasing the rate of women absenteeism at work
  - Decreasing productivity
  - Decreasing national income
- d) Social:
  - Instability
  - Raising the rate of crimes in society
  - Decreasing social capital in community

Women around the world are routinely subject to violence and unfortunately governments have not been able to handle

this problem. Domestic battery is the leading cause of injury for women in many nations of the world, but systemic violence against women has not been recognized internationally as genocide or a crime against humanity (Jaggar, 2001). Similarly, the custody rape of women in war has not been recognized as a war crime – it is simply something normal that soldiers do – just as the sexual abuse and torture of women in custody is something done normally by men in authority (ibid.). Crimes such as battery, torture, humiliation, mutilation, ... against any group other than women would be recognized as a civil and political emergency as well as a gross violation of the victims' humanity (Human Rights Quarterly, 1990). The sale of women in marriage is often recognized as slavery, and forced genital surgery on girls and women without their consent has not been seen as torture (Jaggar, 2001).

Many partners and ex-partners who abuse women, maintain that they love them. They physically abuse them because they can. When some men feel angry, frustrated, threatened, jealous, fearful, or demeaned by others, they can take out their feelings on their female partners, because men more often have the greater physical strength, financial clout, and societal power to control their partners. Women, for a variety of

reasons, hesitate to report such crimes, and, even if they do, courts are poor at protecting them (Felson & Robinson, 2004). While there are some encouraging signs of progress in the development and implementation of new legislation and procedures with respect to violence against women, states are overwhelmingly failing to uphold their international and national obligations to women (Benninger-Bude & Burke-Martignoni, 2004).

#### **Suggestions:**

- The issue of violence against women should be on the focus of the international community and the global human rights agenda, because violence against women is a serious violence of human rights.
- In order to remove the statistical shortage in violence against women, a data bank with codification of gender-based crimes should be established, keeping a record of complaints annually and easing the process of reporting for the victims.
- Endowing judicial mechanisms with a mandate to intervene and to provide protection for victims through proactive policies and effective measures in order to eradicate violence against women.
- A national secretariat should be established to monitor the indices of implementing the measures and oversee the activities of the

relevant organizations to safeguard the rights of women and improve women statistics in the country.

- Setting up some organization and some telephone numbers to help the victims of violence.
- Launching research projects about the different aspects of violence against women in each country (focusing the questions: what, why, who, when, where, and how).

### **III. Trafficking**

#### **III.1 Definition**

Trafficking is to trade women and children for sex trade and other forms of crimes outside their countries of origin.

Many women and girls are lured by false promises of well-paying jobs abroad and then coerced into prostitution, domestic servitude or other types of forced labor.

#### **III.2 Few facts**

About 700000 people, mostly women and children, are subjected to trafficking yearly and according to the World Bank, most of the women involved are poor and uneducated (World Bank Group, 2002).

In the Asia and the Pacific region, more than 30 million children, both boys and girls, have been traded over the last three

decades (UNICEF, 2003).

#### **Suggestions:**

- Judiciary systems can play a key role in fighting trafficking in person. This issue should be high on the judiciary priorities in every single country in the world.
- Governments should focus on fighting the sex trade and trafficking in women and children.
- Women should participate at the national level in policy formulation for fighting trafficking in person. This would ensure better protection of women and children against gender-based crimes.
- Gender and class locate women and children at the bottom of the human rights hierarchy and deny their survival and dignity as human beings. This provides the foundation to be lured by false promises and be subjected to different crimes. National and international cooperation, and a multi-dimensional challenge is needed to overcome this global problem.

#### **IV. Armed conflict**

During armed conflicts women play an important role to preserve social order. This role and the suffering they go through often is unrecognized.

In armed conflicts soldiers and paramilitaries

terrorize women with rape, sexual and other physical violence, and harassment. These tactics are tools of war, instruments of terror designed to hurt and punish women, wrench communities apart, and force women and girls to flee their homes (Human Rights Watch). Women in Iraq, Congo, Sierra Leon, Rwanda, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina have reported brutal rapes, sexual assaults, sexual slavery, and mutilation committed by male combatants. In some cases, perpetrators first raped then killed their victims. Those who survived the attack suffered from psychological trauma, permanent physical injuries, and health risks especially HIV/AIDS.

Often the end of war does not signal the end of violence against women. The women and children living in areas where foreign military bases are present have been and still are exposed to severe cases of rape and other forms of violence by military personnel stationed in Okinawa, Japan and in Korea ( Matsui, 2000).

The fragility of women is discarded during war-time. Should the need arise, women fulfill any of the roles required of them (Haider, 2000).

Women do heavy-duty physical labor, engage in agricultural activities, while men are in the battle front. As peace returns, women are relegated to the domestic front as men want

their jobs back.

Women, especially poor women, bear a disproportionately heavy share of the burdens imposed by war and militarism. This is partly because an ever-increasing proportion of the casualties of war is comprised of civilians rather than soldiers (Jaggar, 2001). In World War I, 20% of the casualties were civilians. In World War II, 50% , and in Vietnam War, 70% of the casualties were civilians. In today's war 90% of the casualties are civilians. The combatants in war are predominantly male, but the vulnerable civilians are predominantly women and children. According to statistics of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in the world today, there are an estimated 21.4 million refugees (UNFPA, 2004). Women and children constitute 80% of the millions of refugees dislocated by war (Jaggar, 2001).

Militarism is the world's major polluter of the environment, from which women suffer disproportionately. When tax revenues are allocated to the military spending, rather than to social services (health, sanitation, education, agriculture...), poor women suffer most (ibid.).

### **Suggestions**

Armed conflict and militarism locate women in the forefront of the casualties. Thus they deserve to participate at the decision-making process, and they should attend and present

their views at the formal peace negotiating tables.

Governments should provide the necessary foundations to ensure gender sensitive justice.

National governments and international bodies should address the specific needs and concerns of women refugees (assistance, training, and etc.).

## **V. Gender digital divide**

### **V.1 Definition**

The under-representation of women in terms of access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their low number in the computer communications technology and network.

New communication technologies, when democratically employed, constitute powerful instruments for socializing information and fuller participation of women in all spheres of activity. Nonetheless, access to these technologies is highly unequal in different geographic regions and social groups. This inequality contributes to increasing the gap between those who have access to abundant information resources and those who are deprived of this access, thus reinforcing the marginalization that already exists in terms of development and technical resources (APC, 1995).

Removing digital divide, will lead to

economic and social empowerment for vast number of young women who would have remained unemployed. Gender-sensitive ICT training programs is very important in a knowledge-based and Internet economy. This would increase females' access to career opportunities.

## V. 2 Obstacles

Women face different obstacles in using ICTs, among which are the followings:

- Language barriers
- Educational shortcomings
- Low access to training and technical assistance
- Social and cultural barriers
- Financial and technological shortages

## Suggestions

- Governments should promote the access of women to electronic networks and communication technologies through:
  - a) raising awareness among women about the advantages of these technologies
  - b) allocating the necessary funds for providing IT training to women
  - c) reducing cost barriers for women to access ICTs
  - d) offering infrastructural facilities for developing data banks, on-line information services, and Internet resources

e) offering all-female courses, preferably taught by female instructors....

- Four threshold must be overcome (Robinson, 2001)

1) Access: Creative strategies are needed to bring access to infrastructure to poor rural and under-served areas.

2) Accessibility: Women need to be ensured easy, safe and affordable access to ICTs.

3) Usability: Illiteracy presents a problem for women in using many ICTs. Three levels of literacy are often required: fundamental literacy, literacy in Internet language and computer literacy. Strong commitment by the community and state is necessary to overcome these problems.

4) Utility: The content of ICTs must be compelling and useful to women. This requires local content, targeted training programs and making sure that women are also content producers (ibid.).

- ICTs are very helpful in gathering data on trafficking, informing the public about the trafficking, rescuing the trafficked women, and rehabilitating those who returned home. ICTs could be a powerful tool for prevention, and protection of the victims, and also could help with investigations (Harendra de Silva, 2003). Governments can promote the use of IT as a means to control trafficking women and girls.



- Governments should launch an official website containing women's issues, women statistics in different aspects of women life,...and upgrade this website in short time intervals.
- UN and its agencies and aid organizations should assign budget to assist these programs in general and to promote gender-sensitive training courses and materials.
- Both national and international institutions should cooperate in solving the digital divide. This means that: Government support is very necessary, private sector can be part of this strategic intervention, and international agencies should support to bridge the gap between depressed and well off regions concerning access to ICTs.

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