

**IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON WOMEN  
IN BANGLADESH:  
*AN EXPLORATORY STUDY***

**Abul Barkat  
AKM Maksud**

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE (HDRC)**

**BANGLADESH NARI PROGATI SANGHA (BNPS)**  
House 255, Road 19 (Old), Dhanmondi - 1209, Dhaka

**June 11, 2001**

**IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON WOMEN  
IN BANGLADESH:  
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

Abul Barkat<sup>1></sup>  
AKM Maksud<sup>2></sup>

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE (HDRC)**

**BANGLADESH NARI PROGATI SANGHA (BNPS)**  
House 255, Road 19 (Old), Dhanmondi - 1209, Dhaka

**June 11, 2001**

---

1> *Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Chief Advisor (Hon.),  
Human Development Research Centre, Dhaka*

2> *Consultant, Human Development Research Centre*

# CONTENTS

SL. #	Title	Page #
<b>CHAPTER I</b>	<b>BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Objectives of the study	2
1.3	Methodology	2
<b>CHAPTER II</b>	<b>IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON WOMEN</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	State's Control on Policy, Trade and Production	4
2.2	Changes in traditional life patterns of women	6
2.3	Degradation of women's dignity: women as commodity in advertising media	7
2.4	Cultural Transformation and Dependency	7
2.5	Trafficking and prostitution	9
2.6	Agriculture: Trading with Hunger and Poverty	10
2.7	Withdrawal of Subsidies in Agricultural and Marginalization of the Peasant Society	10
2.8	Seed Marketing and Loss of Biodiversity	11
2.9	Hybrid and HYV	12
2.10	Agro-chemical	12
2.11	Food security	13
2.12	Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering: Unknown Threat and Ethical Concern	13
2.13	Intellectual Property Right: An Unpredictable Crisis for the Humanity	14
2.14	Women in Export Oriented Industries	14
2.15	Foreign investment and employment generation for women	15
2.16	Labour Rights Violation in Export Oriented Industries	15
2.17	Competitiveness in Ready Made Garment (RMG) Sector	16
2.18	Low wages and low productivity	17
2.19	Crisis in RMG sector	18
2.20	Backward Linkage Industries and Prospects of RMG sector	19
2.21	Market Access Problems: Consumer Ethics and Standards	19
2.22	Opportunities in Electronics Industry	21
2.23	Women in Informal Sector	21
2.24	Service Sector: Production for Fancies of Affluents but not for Mass Consumption	22
2.25	Handicrafts and cottage industry	22
2.26	Retrenchment of workers and poverty	23
2.27	Denationalization of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs)	23
2.28	Information Technology and Women	24
2.29	Trans National Corporations (TNC): Unfair Trade for Free Trade	24

2.30	Health Hazards, Risks and Abuse of the Women in Export Oriented Industries	26
2.31	Commercialisation and Privatisation of the Social Sector:	29
2.32	Environmental Degradation and Ecological Justice	30
2.33	Globalisation: An Annihilating Process of Indigenous and Tribal Community	31
2.34	Globalisation and conflict	32
2.35	Urbanization and Migration	33
2.36	Gender relations	33
2.37	Financial and share market crisis and women	35
2.38	Growth and globalisation	35
<b>CHAPTER III CONCLUSION</b>		
	Reference	43
	Glossary	44

## CHAPTER I

### BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

#### 1.1 Background

Globalisation generally implies the meaning of freeing the forces of competition that help to channel the energies of people and the resources of countries into activities where they are likely to be most productive. Some proponents think that as a consequence of “Globalisation” the trend towards freer movement of goods, service, capital and technology is being strengthened. Many other people see globalisation as threatening. They see it as accelerating the pace of change to which they must adapt, and over which they seem to have less and less control. Governments also see it as undermining their policy sovereignty, not only vis-a-vis other governments but also vis-a-vis the market. It is a different kind of political economy that the globe experienced ever. The process is the new form of capitalisation that has been launched after and legitimised by the Uruguay Round talks and became operational with the start of the WTO. The process of globalisation needs to be understood on the light of the relationship between the North and South, - sometimes within the same country—the rural-urban relationship.

The following excerpts from UN secretary general, Kofi Annan’s speech conveys the essence of globalisation, “We live in an era of realignment ..... As is true of all transitional periods, very different expressions of the human predicament coexist in uneasy tension today: globalisation envelops the world even as fragmentation and the assertion of differences are on the rise; zones of peace expand while outbursts of horrific violence intensify unprecedented wealth is being created but large pockets of poverty remain endemic; the will of the people and their integral rights are both celebrated and violated; science and technology enhance human life at the same time as their by-products threaten planetary life-support systems. It is not beyond the powers of political volition to tip the scale in this transition, towards a more secure and predictable peace, greater economic well-being, social justice and environmental sustainability. No country can achieve these global public goods on its own, however, just as none is exempt from the risks and costs of doing without them.” (Renewal Amid Transition: Annual Report on the Work of the Organization, 3 September 1997 A/52/1)

Women in Bangladesh experienced a long history of exploitation being a member of a society based on caste, colour and gender discrimination. Rural women especially the agricultural force who were nourishing the seed bank selecting from the best varieties are losing their strengths as the commercialisation of the terminator seeds has taken place holding slogan of the ‘development’. Many of the rural women have migrated to the cities especially in Dhaka and working for garment and other industries for a minimum wage. Women as a social category had a limited scope of economic movement in a society like Bangladesh. The NGO initiatives in the rural areas and rapid increase of capital flow in the country industrialisation have changed the scenario. But the reality is as industrial worker women are being paid less than the men are. This is because of the socio-political structure, which is governed by the patriarchal ideology. Unskilled cheap labour is a great attraction for the foreign investors that made possible the huge number of garment factories setup in Bangladesh. And unaware /uninformed members of the NGOs (especially the

women folk) are the main target of the hybrid seed sellers. The major manifestations of globalisation in the recent times are basically these two in Bangladesh. The intention is basically the commercialisation of everything and to make South dependent on the North. The question of safety net is obscure especially to the women.

There are enough evidences that the unleashed free market is destroying the economic stability and undermining social cohesion, sweeping away the family, proletarianising the middle classes, weakening social institution and associations, and contributing to “an astonishing growth of economic inequalities of all kinds”.

Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS) as an agency for empowerment of women in Bangladesh is apprehensive to the current trend of globalisation in Bangladesh. Because the process has an exploitative nature which is extreme to the women folk of the society. This has prompting to undertake a small exploratory study aiming at identifying the nature of globalisation from a gender perspective.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

The principal objective of this study was to identify all major dimensions and issues of globalisation and attempt to explain those, to the extent possible, from gender perspective. The specific objectives set were as follows:

- To assess the effect and impact of the process of globalisation on the life and livelihood of women, especially women in Bangladesh.
- To shed light on the life of working women of Bangladesh and analyse the impact of globalization on this largest group of woman.
- To explore the opportunities and hazards of globalisation in the life and livelihood of women as an oppressed social category.
- To identify some major areas of further studies on the subject and to suggest issues of advocacy in favour of women to protect them from the negative or unavoidable factors of globalisation.

## **1.3 Methodology**

Data were collected through a combination of document review and discussion with knowledgeable persons. By design, this study was an exploratory type of study. Globalization's impact associated with 38 areas (mentioned in the following section) has been analysed based on relevant materials available in the literature.

Participatory approach was applied in this study for assessing the impact of globalization on women. Discussion meetings were held with some relevant academics, political and NGO leaders, representatives from the beneficiary and probable victim groups of globalization.

Data analysis was done keeping in mind that the objectives of the study is not to test hypotheses, but to explore the underlying problems, social dynamics, potentials, prospects of globalisation. Finally, the exploratory study sets the basis for further research on the impact of globalisation on women in Bangladesh, and on facilitating ours understanding of globalisation from gender perspective.

## CHAPTER II

### IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON WOMEN

Identification of the social, political and economic agents of globalisation is important in understanding the impact of globalisation on women in Bangladesh. Considering women's contribution in family, society, and national development an attempt has been made to identify and analyse the factors associated with the possible impact of globalisation on Bangladeshi women. The impact of globalisation on women has been analysed keeping in mind the different spheres and issues which are related to life and livelihood of women in Bangladesh.

Globalisation affects global labour markets and labour relations, migration, the use and control of resources, human rights, democracy, cultures and traditions and gender relations. Globalization is manifested in changes in production, technology, trade partners, international investment and finance, and the transmission of cultural values. Globalisation has historically been linked to the concentration and centralisation of capital, wealth and power. The driving force of globalisation has been the co-operation and competition of the imperialist powers. Global trade and investment policies, agreements and institutions that undermine democratic process while ignoring labour, consumer, environmental, human rights, small business and local community development concerns. Advance of globalisation means a relative loss of autonomy for the individual states.

Globalisation has a way of rearranging the economy of a country, which leads to a growth pattern that also perpetuates inequality, employment and poverty. Liberalization and globalization appear to have been associated with rising levels of unemployment and underemployment, income inequality, and poverty in Bangladesh. The driving forces are centered in the hands of imperial states and the multi-national corporations and banks, backed by the international financial institutions. The technological changes; especially in communications (computer, fax, Internet etc.) have been a prime factor in shaping the high velocity of movement of capital.

Globalisation is removing all obstacles to the rule of the global elite and their corporations. The process keeps the majority of the world in poverty while allowing unsustainable consumption for the global elite and its allies. More than \$US 400 billion annually flows from the poorer to the richer nations while health, housing, education and welfare budgets are cut for the marginalised within the rich as well as poor countries.

“Globalisation” refer to the more rapacious and rapid process of economic restructuring, take-over and control over production resources by transnational corporations associated with the neo-liberal policies of privatization, deregulation and liberalization. The global crisis has burst the bubble of globalization. The issues have become more urgent, have become the life and death struggle of millions of people all over the world who have lost their jobs, homes, communities, livelihood and have been pushed to poverty and starvation by this crisis caused by the rapacity of transnational corporations, by the inhumane greed of our local elites and the active, open collusion of our governments.

It would be appropriate here to mention that the presentation of the outcome of this study follows a straightforward method: all the materials analysed were grouped into 38 issues, and then similar type of issues (e.g. women in agriculture sector and globalisation) were arranged in a logical sequence and presented issue-by-issue so to keep the materials under a broad issues closely:

## **2.1 State's Control on Policy, Trade and Production**

Globalisation argues for a universal incorporation to the world marketplace and the distribution of benefits among the wealthy creditors as well as the bankrupt debtors; super-rich speculators and impoverished unemployed workers; imperial states that direct international financial institutions and subordinate states which are to their dictates. But WTO guided globalisation has introduced a new morality where the god is the dollar and a failure to maximize profit is a moral sin. Concepts of love, fairness, equality and social justice are given no value by the new morality.

Some of the key aspects, which characterize today's globalisation, are the following:<sup>1</sup>

- a. The breaking down of national economic barriers, resulting in an acceleration of the international integration of finance, trade, and investments.
- b. Government must be failed to properly implement the national women development policies if some of those policies contradict with the WTO policies
- c. The internationalisation of production by transnational corporations and the unprecedented growth and concentration of the power of Trans National Corporations (TNCs).
- d. The development and spread of technology which facilitates financial and economic globalisation.
- e. The spread of production and consumption patterns, and consumer and product preferences, lifestyles, and cultural identities associated with the north.
- f. Erosion of national policy making and appropriation of this process by international agencies (IMF, WTO, WB, TNCs etc.), resulting to the drastic reduction of the power, authority, and status of the state, political leaders, parliamentarians and bureaucrats
- g. The emergence of informal and formal global networks, alliance, and campaigns of people's organizations, citizens groups, and NGOs.

It would be very difficult, for a developing country member to change the WTO rules, or to avoid compliance of obligations. The disciplines of the WTO are legally binding on present and future governments. Once the WTO agreements come into force, it would be difficult for a present government to have economic policies relating to foreign trade, investment,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Martin Khor, "Some Critical Aspects of Globalisation", Third World Network Briefing Paper, 1997*

sectoral policies in services and agriculture or technology policy (vis-a-vis intellectual property rights) that are in violation of WTO rules. Moreover, the rules are binding on future governments as well. Thus, should a present opposition party have a different economic programme, it would find it difficult or impossible to implement it (should it come to power if this were to contradict the WTO rules).

The main instrument of neoliberal globalisation has been the structural adjustment program of the IMF and the development and restructuring programs of the World Bank. These have been redesigned by the “Washington consensus” to include neo-liberal prescriptions in their fiscal management programs. The WTO strengthened this process of trade liberalization through various agreements that ensured the opening of markets and provided unparalleled advantages and benefits for transnational corporations and developed countries. To complete the process is the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) which would have implemented maximum investment liberalization.

The prescription of globalization is to open up economies through trade and investment liberalization, deregulation and privatization. In order for monopoly capital to survive its crisis and in order for globalisation to succeed, it must continue to push for liberalization of markets to

allow it to take over economies. Not unlike old imperialist plunder of colonial territories, TNCs simply intensify accumulation not through cheap resources, labor, environment and other costs, but also plunder through manipulation of financial markets. The direct result is the devastation of economies, displacement of livelihood and employment, and the destruction of productive forces the world over.

The most important “new issue” being promoted by Northern countries in the international arena is investment policy. The agreement is termed the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) in the OECD and the Multilateral Investment Agreement (MIA) in the WTO context. For the proponents, the desired content of both is basically similar.

MIA is primarily an issue with great economic, social and political significance, as it will have such an important bearing on economic sovereignty; ownership patterns; the survival of local enterprises, business and farms, employment prospects, as well as social and cultural life.

The acceptance of such a MAI or MIA would have the most profound effects on the behavior, operations and effects of foreign investments worldwide, and on each country. Transnational companies would have the greatest freedom and rights to conduct business all over the world, free from the many government regulations they now face. On the reverse side, it would mean that governments would no longer have the right or the power to draw up their own basic policies or laws regulating the entry, behavior and operations of foreign enterprises in their economies. Existing national laws and policies that now place restrictions on foreigners would have to be cancelled or altered to fit the new multilateral investment treaty.

In fact these treaty would abolish the power and legitimate right of states and people to regulate the entry, conditions, behavior and operations of foreign companies and foreigners

in their country. This is a prime and fundamental sovereign right, which is essential for any country to determine its own economic and social policies. This is a prestigious right, which is especially vital for developing countries to protect. This is because the domestic sector (comprising local firms, local farms and the public sector) has been weakened through colonialism and still requires a longer period of capacity building.

## **2.2 Changes in traditional life patterns of women**

In Bangladesh women came to the forefront of international attention in the form of cheap and docile labour. The traditional patriarchal households, which had previously kept their women at home, were quick to release their hold to allow the women to work in factories. Young Bangladeshi women left home by the thousands and moved into squatter dwellings, company boarding houses or congested rooms in the Dhaka and Chittagong cities and free Trade Zones.

They were in a position for perhaps the first time in their lives to make decisions for themselves. They are able to decide how to spend their money, how to marry, where to work and so on.

The women become wage earners almost overnight and support their families and the building of new townships near the Industrial Zones. Their contributions to National Incomes increased at staggering rates. Now women are the major contributors in national export earnings. In Bangladesh, 75 per cent of the foreign earnings comes from the Ready Made Garment (RMG) sector and around 80 per cent of the workers in this sector are women.

The study findings, presented below, give ample scopes to conclude that women's contribution in the economy is substantial. To cite few examples: conventional GDP estimate 98 per cent of men's production but only 47 per cent of women's production; if non-market work is included in national income estimates women's contribution is 41 per cent and men's 59 per cent; women's contribution to market work 25 per cent and to non-market work 97 per cent; of the total time spent on work in rural areas women contribute 53 per cent and men 47 per cent; of the total time spent on non-market work women contribute 89 per cent and men 11 per cent<sup>2</sup>.

Globalisation has also caused women to take up paid work without attempting to share the domestic burden of women. Thus women work longer hours and earn low wages. In Asia, women contribute 36 per cent of all market hours, with fairly even shares in industry, service and agriculture.

Increased female participation in the labour market empowered the women and consequently increased the women's bargaining power at the household level. It is also contributing to poverty alleviation by generating extra earnings for poor households.

---

<sup>2</sup> Hamid. A. "Non-market Work and National Income: The Case of Bangladesh" (1994), in S. Amin (Ed) *Special Issue on Women, Development and Change, The Bangladesh Development Studies, Vol. XXII, June-Sept. 1994, Number-2*

There is an apparent change in the status of women in the recent years in Bangladesh. Their public appearance and mobility has increased tremendously due to establishment of export oriented industry in the urban areas and microcredit programs in the rural areas. They have entered into non-traditional occupations to a large extent.

Globalisation has also caused the price of essential goods and services to increase. Owing to the de-regulatory processes in Bangladesh economy food, healthcare, water, electricity and fuel have become more expensive. Now working women especially in the urban area bear a major share of these family burdens. It is to be mentioned here that a large portion of the female workers or RMG live alone and defray their expenditure own self.

### **2.3 Degradation of Women's Dignity: Women as Commodity in advertising media**

The entertainment and culture industry in general converts the women and her body into a commodity quite openly and nakedly.

Contemporary capitalism treats women in two ways. They are de-feminised as producers and decision-makers. On the other hand their sexuality and femininity is glorified from the mind and personhood as far as their use in advertisements is concerned.

The advertisement industry has taken the use of sexuality to a new and unprecedented height. There is a distorted exhibition of the female body for the sake of commerce. This is achieved also through various carnivals and spectacles. There is something more that is done. A sexual image was earlier used to sell a commodity. Now the sexual image is inextricably linked to a commodity so that the commodity by itself can invoke the sexuality. The commodity itself becomes sexualised. There has perhaps not been a cruder exploitation of human sexuality ever before. It is then no surprise that the leisure and hospitality industry caters to all sexual whims and fancies of its consumers. The TNCs e.g. Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Virgin, Liver Brothers, ACI, Berger Paints, Novartis, John Player etc. are the pioneering agents of utilizing women in advertisements.

### **2.4 Cultural Transformation and Dependency**

Culture is another area that exhibits tremendous changes in the age of globalisation. Some are quite visible and obvious. The impact of globalisation on cultures is complex and ambiguous.

While on the one hand, globalisation has opened up new possibilities and opportunities (world-wide communication, exchanges among people, etc.), on the other hand, it has created a lot of pressure on various cultures, including trends towards the homogenisation of lifestyles as in consumption patterns; consumerist values; communication pattern; styles of urbanisation; and the total extinction or loss of some cultural systems. Homogenisation does not exclude domination by centralised culture and the possibilities for abuse and manipulation of cultural identities for political purposes. Indeed, such manipulation seems to be increasing.

The information and communications revolution of the past few years has made the world 'smaller' to an extent. People from different parts of the world, and not just scholars or

specialist but common citizens, know each other far more than they did ever before in human history. They know of the existence of other people, their environment, their life styles, their belief systems, their modes of behavior, and even their problems. The expansion of the print media began the transmission of this information. The explosion of the electronic media, including satellite television, has taken the dissemination to unprecedented levels. It is interesting to remember that the original purpose of the communications revolution was to serve military objectives of the US across the world. The use then extended to business deals and production control. It has now become general.

The advances in communications technology, the spread of the electronic media across the globe, the disproportionate increase in the trades and services sector, internationalisation of production and search for eternal perishables provide the basis for this vast commercialisation of culture. Certain commonality in the life styles of the upper and middle classes in many countries, some similarity in the availability of goods across the world, rise in incomes of some sections of the societies, greater importance given to leisure, the creation of a market for 'cultural goods' have made the business a reality.

A culture industry thus now exists. It not only makes a business out of culture but also alters cultural practices, modes of cultural expressions, forms of cultural activities and ultimately the content of culture.

Literature, music and cinema are now truly world products. The satellite television systems and dubbing technologies have made the access common place. Life styles, ideas, modes of behavior, dress styles and fashions also now become global.

This represents a march towards the development of a world community, a universal humanity. The results are at times peculiar. The middle classes in a country of serving millions then get hooked on to beauty contests. Digitised, computerized special effects are used in the service of the superstitious. Calls for sectarian violence are disseminated over the Internet. Computers are used to match horoscopes for marriages.

The cultural human potentialities of the information and communications revolution are tremendous. In the given circumstances they do not lead to any developments of commonalities except in a very superficial manner. This is not the emergence of a composite, syncretic, universal culture but an uneasy, violent grafting. What emerge are grotesque missing links rather than an evolved universal human being. The cultural transformation of the age, in one form and aspect, presents for the poor, developing nations a re-colonisation of the mind. It also makes the divide between the brown sahibs and the mass of toilers wider and hideous.

Global capital not only internationalises culture but also turns it into a global economic activities. Not merely some cultural expression, the work of art or even the artists, but culture itself converts into a commodity. The production, distribution and marketing of culture become aspects of international big business. Investment is also sought for these practices. Culture continues not only to enjoy its role, function and importance in the ideological and political arenas but also becomes a field for major accumulation.

The common citizen is invariably a passive spectator or consumer of cultural carnivals and not really participant in them with the rights and capacities to modify the occurrences.

The 'creator' in the culture/entertainment industry is today above all an entrepreneur and salesperson and at best an artisan but never an artist. All cultural activities begin to acquire the form of bashes or extravagances. Standards are set for it by the business world.

The culture industry is big business today. Media are vehicles for its propagation and activity. It includes entertainment, leisure, sports, promotion, hospitality, travel, tourism, image, event and titillation enterprises. The industry as a whole draw in massive investment, utilises the latest innovations in technology, employs a number of personnel, generates enormous revenues and earns immense profits.

It does not, however, sell only the products it manufactures. The scope of its activities exceeds any such limits. It disseminates stances and generates attitudes. The advertising industry, for example, has shown tremendous growth in the recent years. It accounts for large investments, skilled employment, turnover and profits. The size, activities, image, sells its own activities like campaigns to the clients and the products of the clients to the consumers in general but it also communicates much more. It propagates images, dreams, life styles, illusions of possibilities and beliefs in the rationality of the system. The culture industry as a whole performs this function. It plays a vital role in the creation of hegemony of the ruling class. It sells images of appearance, of life styles, of standards of living, of mode of behaviour. It thus sells attitudes towards personal behavior, social perspective, ethics, political stances. It sells the system. It sells the logic of globalisation.

The ultimate aim is not to promote the consumption a particular commodity but a culture of consumerism. The height of the consumerist dream 'a taste of paradise on earth' is provided with alcohol, promiscuity, controlled use of designer drugs and commercialised socially legitimised sexual deviations. The effort is to create a predictable, controlled and controllable, essential homogenised, faceless mass of consumers (and producers).

These are the well known, visible, obvious cultural aspects of globalisation in Bangladesh perspective. It is needless to say that in all the above mentioned respect women are the worst victims of cultural transformation and dependency.

## **2.5 Trafficking and prostitution**

The commercial sexual exploitation of women has in recent years become an issue of concern in global perspective and the indications are that it is on the rise. Women are increasingly being bought and sold across national borders by organized networks. Bangladeshi women are sold to Dubai, Pakistan, India, America etc. According to different UN, international and media reports it has been found that thousands of women of Bangladesh are getting victims of sex trade in the form of sale of women, prostitution and pornography etc. The increase in the sex trade with the Bangladeshi women is no doubt largely due to the internationalization of sex tourism. Studies of the sex workers (CSWs)

whose customers represent all segments of the society. Female CSWs have an average of 2-5 clients a day, making the number – half a million men a day<sup>3</sup>.

According to estimates by human right activists, 200 to 400 young women and children are smuggled every month, particularly from Bangladesh into Pakistan, and the number has been on the rise since the mid-1980s<sup>4</sup>. Statistics show that in 1995 135 children and 93 women were rescued while they were being smuggled out of the country<sup>5</sup>. In the UNICEF report “Progress of Nations”, 1995, it has been reported that around 40,000 Bangladesh children are engaged in prostitution in Pakistan. Another 10,000-12,000 is forced into prostitution in Bombay and West Bengal.

## **2.6 Agriculture: Trading with Hunger and Poverty**

Those that defend globalisation do it expecting more production with better efficiency, so offering best prices and not leaving space for protectionism of any kind. However, ground experiences have shown differently because great dissimilarities between countries, in terms, for example, of production conditions, location and distances, environment, population and community profile, etc. This makes impossible the ideal globalisation, not only the economic one but also the social, toward population equity, to benefit poorer communities and states throughout the world.

In Bangladesh, one can't trade with food for maximizing profit because still around 60 million Bangladeshis cannot afford even 1,805 calories per day less than the prescribed daily minimum calorie intake. Because of obvious reason Bangladeshi women eat less and least, and they are much more malnourished than men. In addition, to ensure food for all the people of Bangladesh is a constitutional right of the citizens.

TNCs is using the image of the poor and hungry of Bangladesh to push a technology that is neither safe, environmentally friendly, or economically beneficial to us.

Local food means not only better health and less wasteful packing and transportation, it means money staying in the community, and increase in biological diversity and the revitalisation of rural life.

## **2.7 Withdrawal of Subsidies in Agricultural and Marginalization of the Peasant Society**

Globalisation has everywhere marginalised the peasant sector. The marginalisation has been intensified by the agribusiness TNC's domination of world agriculture facilitated by the “Green Revolution”; by the unequal liberalization of agricultural trade, including especially European Union and United States subsidy policies; by corporate monopoly of

---

<sup>3</sup> Chowdhury MR, N Islam, C Jenkins, TA Azim (2000). *The sero-surveillance and Behavioral Surveillance on STD and AIDS in Bangladesh 1998-99, AIDS/STD Control Programme, DGHS, June 2000.*

<sup>4</sup> Shamim, Ishrat (1995). *Trafficking and Sale of Women and Children; Bangladesh Perspective*

<sup>5</sup> Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh(CCHRB). *State of Human Rights in Bangladesh (p.71)*

biotechnology; and by the withdrawal of government supports for agriculture and bias towards the industrial sector.

Moreover, this marginalisation is aided by governments' lack of political will to carry out genuine agrarian reform. The overall effects of these processes are the following: landlessness and joblessness, unviability of farms; poverty, indebtedness and destitution of peasants; loss or erosion of land rights, loss of on-farm decision-making, over-exploitation of natural resources; depletion of genetic resources; water scarcity, and soil erosion.

Withdrawal of input subsidies and increasing imports have acted in concert to depress agricultural prices, raise costs of production, reduce profitability, and hence discourage investment in agriculture. The resultant stagnation of agricultural production has constrained labour absorption, leading to an increase in unemployment, underemployment, and poverty in this sector. Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation's activities had been weakened as a consequence of withdrawing subsidy in agricultural sector. Seed, fertilizer, pesticide and irrigation facilities had been privatised. Moreover it is noted that per capita consumption strongly indicates a fall in real income of the poor in the 1990s. This suggests a shift in income distribution away from the poorest groups. As a consequence of low consumption around 70 per cent of the Bangladeshi women are still suffering from malnutrition. Malnutrition causes numerous diseases and death, and the burden falls mainly on the women and children of poor families.

## **2.8 Seed Marketing and Loss of Biodiversity**

Many farmers and environmentalists are concerned that in the end Third World farmers will be disallowed the traditional practice of saving seed for the next season's plantation (if the seed used is under the intellectual protection of a company but forced to purchase the seeds. TNCs would like to abolish the right of seed preservation by the farmers especially by the rural women. Because if this right to preserve seeds continues in the hand of villages then it will hamper to fulfil the greed of the TNCs of making endless profit in seed business sector.

Wetzel<sup>6</sup> (1998), points out that the first consequence of the economic globalisation among the national seed companies of Brazil was the elimination of about 377 seed producers (34.6% of the total) classified as very small or small. Brazilian seed industry seems not to be prepared to enter in the new and difficult world of globalisation, observe Wetzel (1998). Obviously Hybrid and HYV seed marketing by the giant TNCs or native organization in collaboration with the TNC then the national inherited seed preservation systems as well as thousands of indigenous seed producers would disappear soon.

Marketing of Hybrid and HYV seeds through BRAC, the world's largest NGO with microcredit and/or as a precondition of receiving microcredit would inevitably loss a considerable number of species of paddy in Bangladesh. Similarly HYV seed marketing of maize, millet, sunflower, pumpkin would cause loss of biodiversity. These initiatives would certainly destroy the seed stock of the indigenous Bangladeshi farmers and make these people dependent on ACI marketed Hybrid and HYV seed. BRAC, ACI, Novartis etc. would

---

<sup>6</sup> Wetzel, C. T. – *Personal communication, Brasilia, October, 1998*

obviously be able to make billion dollar's profit if a country like Bangladesh with a population of 130 million depend on these companies for seeds. It should be mentioned that women of Bangladesh like other parts of the world still perform the responsibility to preserve seeds for the next season. Due to this women's effort farmers never had to pay anything to TNCs for seed.

A new technique, nicknamed "Terminator Technology", that renders seeds sterile after one planting season is claimed by environmentalists that it would end the age-old practice of saving seeds. "Terminator Technology" self destructs after a period of time, stopping the 12,000 year tradition of farmers keeping seeds for their own use<sup>7</sup>. Playing God is unnatural. Such genetic engineering is not only unnatural, but it presents unknown risks – it is unsafe, it is unnecessary and it is certainly irreversible. Opportunities of genetically engineered foods say sterile seeds are inconsistent with Monsanto's 'feed the world' philosophy and would unfairly burden Third world farmers.

Developed by Delta and Pine Land Co., a firm of Monsanto has developed the technique's patent. In Bangladesh BRAC is marketing the same sort of seeds which will result no seeds.

## **2.9 Hybrid and HYV**

The main objective of introducing HYBRID is to destroy the seed preservation system of the indigenous farmers and to make these millions of indigenous farmers to the TNCs for satisfying their greed of making unimagined profit. Within the last two decades the TNCs captured all the seeds. They introduced HYBRID and HYV in the name of global revolution. The TNCs are gradually capturing the seed market. If the TNCs be able to replace the indigenous seeds by the Hybrid and HYV seed then the farmers will be dependent on the seeds marketed by the TNCs. To make the TNCs mission in Bangladesh BRAC has been chosen as their collaborator i.e. to market the Hybrids in the name of a very popular Banglail name 'Shuphala' (A good yielding seed). BRAC has been chosen as local partner by the TNCs (ACI) because if the wretched poor of the rural areas of Bangladesh don't have required money to purchase seed then BRAC can make it possible through their microcredit program. It is known that poor and illiterate people are the victims of induced purchasing by the microcredit institutions.

## **2.10 Agro-chemical**

One of the major reasons of death of the human beings as well as other living beings is agrochemicals. It has been accredited that women are the worst victims of agrochemicals. Women work in agriculture throughout the world and are subject to occupational hazards such as exposure to biological and chemical agents. They can be found mixing, loading and applying pesticides, fertilizers, or herbicides, some of which are highly toxic and potentially carcinogenic. Pesticides exposure poses a considerable risks of cancer, neuropathy, neuro-behavioral effects, immune system abnormality, destruction of endocrine, hormone reproductive and nervous systems. It is also injurious to heart and kidneys.

---

<sup>7</sup> Rowell, Andrew, *Globalisation and the Struggle for the Environment* (1998). Paper Presented at the International Conference on "Alternative to Globalisation", organized by IBON and BAYAN, Philippines.

## **2.11 Food Security**

The future food security should not lie with the biotech industry that is dominated by just six companies that is declaratively interested in “feeding the world”, but in reality interested in maximizing profit. For example in the last three years, Monsanto has bought up at least ten independent companies, worth nearly 5 billion pound sterling.

The agro-food industry operates in response to global markets not through the notion of basic human need for food. The relevant outcomes here are: the transformation of the agro-food system has broken into and disrupted the ‘natural’ cycle of renewal (resilience) which ties agriculture to the environment and create major environmental problems. Local consumption, principally in the developed world, is dependent on the global operation of business, which is oriented to profit not general or individual country welfare. In both these senses the trade in food can be seen as promoting and extending inequality and illustrates the need for policy based on social justice.

The availability and distribution of food has historically been a national security consideration but under the process of global restructuring and industrialisation, the control has moved to global multinational industry. In the near future it is assumed that the agro-food companies may also start their operation for profit in Bangladesh. Such profit making approach would hamper to sustain the vulnerable groups in Bangladesh. Since 60 per cent of the Bangladeshi population only getting 80 per cent of their daily calorie requirement so it can be assumed that the purchase capacity of the people is at a very low level. In this respect food production for profit rather than subsistence may entail more hunger in our country.

Third world countries as well as Bangladesh will also have to reduce domestic subsidies to farmers and remove non-tariff controls on agricultural products, converting these to tariffs and then progressively reducing these tariffs. This will impose uneven competition on the domestic farm sector. Farmers unable to compete with cheaper imports may not survive. Agricultural liberalization will also raise world food prices, which may benefit food exporters but about 100 Third World food importer countries will face a higher food import bill and are likely to be among the biggest losers. The fact remains “free market is never poor-friendly”.

## **2.12 Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering: Unknown Threat and Ethical Concern**

The agricultural area in which the globalisation has been present vigorously is in the high technology tract such as biotechnology, genetic engineering and information technology.

The advance of biotechnology and genetic engineering together with the population growth, contribute to increased agriculture production, also accelerate the rates of unemployment principally in the countries where population is increasing at substantial rates.

On the other hand, the promises and perils of biotechnology have developed a mystique of their own, and as expressed by Serageldin<sup>8</sup> (1998), the world was soon buffed by conflicting

---

<sup>8</sup> Serageldin I. – *Development Challenges and Opportunities in the Global Village*, 1998

stories on possible benefits of scientifically created superabundance and possible disasters that raised fears from Frankenstein's monster to Jurassic Park. More thoughtful concerns were expressed about the possible health or environmental effects of genetically modified organisms (GMS), in addition to the ethical concerns of tinkering with nature.

The process, called genetic engineering, allows scientists to transfer a single gene from any organism – plant, animal or microbe – into a food crop so it can withstand insects in herbicides, as well as last longer.

Genetically engineered, or transgenic crops look and taste the same as conventional crops, and are not required to be labeled in the United States, unless they contain known allergens. There are more than 20 varieties of genetically altered foods already in the market, including one-third of all US soybeans.

Chemical giants like Monsanto and Du Pont are betting the farm that biotechnology will change the face of world's agriculture. But critics question the basic need for the product. Greenpeace says that 'Roundup Ready' soybeans bring no benefit to the consumer. 'They are not cheaper, tastier, or healthier'.

Biotechnology research and application will likely accelerate biodiversity loss and could threaten natural ecosystem.

### **2.13 Intellectual Property Right: An Unpredictable Crisis for the Humanity**

TNCs based primarily in U.S., Canada, Europe and Japan are creating "trade related intellectual property rights" in the indigenous wisdom and resources of people who have lived sustainably for thousands of years. TNCs are expropriating native gene pools of plants, animals and even human beings for private gain, depriving local people of the right to maintain even a subsistence level existence. Many communities now face having to pay northern TNCs for the right to use resources and knowledge that local people previously developed and used freely. Some have described this as a new form of colonialism in the guise of global market capitalism and transnational corporate "property rights". Locally, we may not see the direct social, economic, environmental and cultural impact of biotechnology, but by uncritically promoting it, we are aiding the destruction and dislocation of distant communities and ecosystems.

### **2.14 Women in Export Oriented Industries**

Bangladesh is the twelfth largest apparel exporters in the world. This industry currently brings in about 76 per cent of the country's total export earnings. The garment industry currently employs about 1.5 million workers, 90 per cent of whom are females.

The twin processes of liberalization and globalization can be expected to unleash the forces of economic growth primarily through increased levels of exports, enhanced volume of foreign direct investment inflow, technology transfer, and higher levels of savings and investment.

But globalization is not an unmixed blessing. While it provides opportunities for accelerating growth, it also exposes domestic industries to the challenges of intense competition from imports. The downside of globalization, unless domestic procedures can become more efficient quickly enough, is that the very existence of many local industries may be threatened by an onslaught of highly competitive imports and withdrawal of quota. Attainment of higher levels of productive efficiency in a country like Bangladesh, however, is constrained not only by economic factors such as shortage of skilled workers, weak physical infrastructure, low level of technology, but also by the various structural weaknesses, corruption, and weak governance.

## **2.15 Foreign Investment and Employment Generation for Women**

Foreign investment in manufacturing enterprises has led to the creation of employment and an increase in export earnings. The zones have been particularly successful in generating employment for women.

Export Processing Zones are at the cutting edge of globalization, and are the mechanisms through which global production chains are elaborated<sup>9</sup>. Bangladesh has sought to benefit from the globalization of production by attracting foreign investors to its EPZs.

One incentive offered was the assurance that the foreign investors would operate in a trade union-free environment. Foreign investors faced with the possibility that trade unions would be permitted in the EPZs are threatening to withdraw their investments. If the threat is a real, and Bangladesh does introduce trade unions in the EPZs, foreign direct investment could evaporate, and employment and exports would evaporate with it.

## **2.16 Labour Rights Violation in Export Oriented Industries**

The suspension of labour laws in EPZs has been a matter of considerable concern to the USA, which is a major market for Bangladesh exports. First, the suspension represents a violation of workers' rights, which the US seeks to promote in its trading relations. The Trade Act of 1974 (amended in 1984) sought the adoption of international fair labour standards, and defined internationally recognized worker rights including<sup>10</sup>:

- ❑ the right of association;
- ❑ the right to organize and bargain collectively;
- ❑ no use of forced labour;
- ❑ respect for the minimum age of employment of children; and
- ❑ acceptable provisions relating to minimum wages, hours and occupational safety and health

---

<sup>9</sup> Van-Heerden, Auret. 1998. *Export processing zones: The cutting edge of globalization?* (Geneva, International Institute of Labour Studies)

<sup>10</sup> See Rahman, Reshidan Islam, *Skill Development in Bangladesh: Responses to Globalisation* (2001). *Social Impact of Globalisation and Role of Policy* (ILO/UNDP SPPD Project)

Besides this legal barriers there are some non-legal barriers, however-e.g. intimidation, blacklisting of workers, victimization, unjustified dismissal, and refusal of entry into zones-are often used to dissuade workers from organizing.

Second, and more importantly, the suspension reflects the fear of the US labour movement of competition from low wages in countries such as Bangladesh. In an increasingly integrated world market, the US labour movement seeks to ensure a level playing field with other countries by ensuring that workers in all countries enjoy the same rights as do those in the US. If freedom of association is not restored to the EPZs. Bangladesh exports will lose preferential access to the US market granted under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

Thus, industrial relations have become a significant and complicated issue. The Government has an obligation to guarantee constitutional rights, but it has suspended the right of association of workers in the EPZs to protect investment and employment. On the other hand, the US government and labour movement seek to guarantee a “level playing field”, and thus wants to see that trade union rights are ensured in EPZs. Finally, the multinational corporations are threatening to relocate their production to countries having a trade union-free environment. In this context, an in-depth investigation on industrial relations in EPZs is needed to suggest appropriate policy options to achieve a balance between foreign investment and employment in EPZs, export markets, and workers’ rights.

## **2.17 Competitiveness in Ready Made Garment (RMG) Sector**

Participation in globalization requires competitiveness. Major changes, which will affect the garment sector in Bangladesh, include<sup>10</sup>:

- the withdrawal of the Multi Fibre Agreement (MFA);
- changes in European Union Generalized System of Preference (EU-GSP) benefits;
- changes in competition due to preferential access for other countries e.g. the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); and
- access to the World Trade Organization (WTO) for countries, especially China, which did not previously have such access.

At present, the USA and Canada provide markets for 60 per cent of Ready Made Garment (RMG) exports from Bangladesh, imposing quota restrictions on a number of items. Quota utilization by Bangladesh has averaged 85 and 65 per cent to the USA and Canada, respectively.

Bangladesh RMG sector obtains the raw materials (fabrics) from China, India and Thailand, all of whom are competitors in the US and Canadian markets for the same products. When the MFA is withdrawn (withdrawal of items relevant for Bangladesh will be implemented in the year 2004), raw materials exporting countries will attempt to substitute the export of fabrics to garment exporting countries like Bangladesh with RMG exports to the markets served by Bangladesh. **To remain competitive in the quota-free context, therefore Bangladesh must be more competitive in the backward linkage sectors, and diversify into skill-intensive RMG items. Survival in the quota free situation would only can**

**protect the garment industries as well as more than one million women garment workers from joblessness and poverty.**

Other changes in the international environment will have similar impacts. For example, under NAFTA, Mexico has zero-tariff access to the US and Canadian markets. The extension of such privileges to other Latin American countries will lead to further market displacement with negative implications for South Asian exporters, including Bangladesh. The impact on Bangladesh's export possibilities of China's possible inclusion in the WTO remains uncertain.

According to World Bank, the current competitiveness of the apparel sector in Bangladesh hinges on low wages, which compensates for very low levels of productivity (World Bank, 1996). Imparting skill training and ensuring better labour standard can only prepare our women garment workers to survive in the upcoming international competitive environment of the apparel sector.

Success within the process of globalization requires the harmonization of four basic factors – trade, production, capital and economic institutions – all of which have far-reaching implications for labour processes. The pattern of world trade is currently being dictated not so much by traditional comparative advantage based on factor endowments and cheap labour, but by competitive advantage determined by product quality, speed of delivery, and presentation. The essential ingredients of competitive advantage are:

- ❑ technological innovation;
- ❑ training for systematic updating of human resources;
- ❑ management techniques compatible with the global economy;
- ❑ adaptive flexibility within the ever-changing world marketplace; and
- ❑ creativity of the workplace.

The biggest challenge posed by the global market today are the simultaneous demands for high productivity and high flexibility from the firm. New technological opportunities require a paradigm shift, integrating the product and process innovations along with new patterns of organizational design. Such a shift involves wide-ranging changes in the areas of skills and work culture for total quality improvement.

## **2.18 Low Wages and Low Productivity**

**Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) wage data for 1995 show that the average monthly wage of skilled workers in the garment industry is 1.4 to 2 times lower than that of similar workers in textile and other industries. Compared internationally, the wage level in Bangladesh's garment industry's wage level remains very low, with the average hourly wage only 42 per cent, 50 per cent and 33 per cent of that in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka respectively.**

Lower wages, however, do not necessarily imply low per unit production cost. Since labour productivity is also relatively low in Bangladesh, the per unit production cost tends to be on the high side in spite of low wages. A recent technical evaluation shows that the person-minutes required per basic production in Bangladesh's garment sector is 25.0 compared to

14.0 in USA, 20.7 in the Republic of Korea, 24.0 in Sri Lanka, and 19.7 in Hong Kong, China<sup>11</sup>.

Once the MFA comes to an end, and the quota system is abolished, the impact of globalization on the industrial relations in the export-oriented garments industry may be severe. Jobs and working conditions among garment workers are likely to worsen when competitive pressures arising from globalisation force entrepreneurs to cut costs, including employment at stake, conditions for those continuing to work are not expected to improve. Under these circumstances, it is imperative that certain proactive measures are taken to improve industrial relations, thereby improving productivity, competitiveness, and job quality in the garment industry.

## **2.19 Crisis in RMG Sector**

The US government asked its Bangladesh counterpart to introduce trade unions in EPZs, failing which the latter would run the risk of losing GSP benefits and thus a decline in exports and employment. Bangladesh, which seeks to gain benefit from the globalization of production, assured foreign investors of a union-free environment. Foreign investors faced with the possibility of the introduction of trade unions in EPZs threatened to withdraw their footloose investment.

In the worst scenario, a failure to maintain competitiveness will lead to enterprise closures and increased sub-contracting from larger to smaller units. This will obviously lead to unemployment among the mostly women workers, a reverse trend of rural-urban migration, and a reduction in the household earnings of workers. A greater degree of subcontracting may also adversely affect job quality, since working conditions and job quality have been found to be inversely related to the size of RMG units.

**The nature of this kind of employment in the garment industry is making women vulnerable to fluctuating global demand. The “footloose” nature of export-oriented manufacturing enterprises thus affords less job security for women.**

**Most of the retrenched workers have kin in the rural area because most of them migrated from the rural areas before starting to work in garment industries, once they loss the job, it is likely that they will go back to their family in rural areas.**

Training should be organized immediately after retrenchment. A general concern prevailing in the country is that RMG workers will face large-scale unemployment after withdrawal of MFA.

Even if the RMG units do not close down on a lower scale, to remain competitive they may have to increase their capital intensity. Even if 20 per cent of the female garment workers face retrenchment, the total number will be around 300,000 (at present 1,500,000 women are employed). If a plan for redeployment of half of them is implemented, and between Tk.5,000 to Tk.10,000 is required for each worker, then a Tk.750 million to Tk.1,500 million special workers fund (SWF) will be required.

---

<sup>11</sup> See *Technical Evaluation of the ILO/UNDP Project No.BGD/85/153*

## 2.20 Backward Linkage Industries and Prospects of RMG sector

The garment industry is currently heavily dependent on imported raw materials. Roughly 90 per cent of woven fabrics and 60 per cent of knitted fabrics are imported. Bangladesh may face a shortage of needed fabrics as current suppliers themselves move to the production and export of garment. **Dependence on imported fabrics has also adversely affected competitiveness by increasing lead time and production costs. The lead time from the date of order to the date of shipment, for Bangladesh, is 120-150 days, compared to 19-45 days for India and Sri Lanka. Massive investment is urgently needed for the development of backward linkage industries in the textile and garment sector in Bangladesh.**

## 2.21 Market Access Problems: Consumer Ethics and Standards

Consumers in importing countries have become much more conscious of quality, health, labor and environmental standards. Competitiveness in the global market demands that these requirements be met. International consumers are similarly concerned with working conditions, including safety and health, issues such as child labour.

If access to the markets of developed countries is restricted, all efforts to enhance the export supply capacity of Bangladesh through undertaking reforms of various policies will founder. The recently enacted US trade development Act would indirectly threaten market access for Bangladesh's garment exports to the USA. There are some other more direct market access problems, stemming from the operation of the WTO, which Bangladesh is already facing or will be confronted with in the near future. Some of these market access problems are discussed below<sup>12</sup>.

- **Labour Standards and EPZs:** Many developed countries, notably the USA, have argued that there is a link between labour regulation and international competitiveness, which justifies the inclusion of a "social clause" in the WTO agreements. Non-compliance with the social clause would lead to the imposition of trade sanctions on the infringing country. Despite the lack of an international agreement, developed countries, particularly the USA, have been taking unilateral action against countries where fulfillment of core labour standards is perceived to be absent or weak.

The US has been putting pressure on Bangladesh to ensure the satisfaction of core labour standards in the manufacturing export sector. On the other hand, Section II-A of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) Act, under which the two EPZs in Chittagong and Dhaka are operated, prohibits the organizing and bargaining rights of workers. Two distinctly different issues are involved here. First, there is evidence of violation of workers' rights, particularly those of female workers employed in EPZ garment factories. The other perspective is that the USA—which is insisting on the introduction of trade unions in the EPZs—and Japan and Korea—which have threatened to withdraw investment if unions are allowed in the zones – are all OECD members.

---

<sup>12</sup> Rashid, Mohammad Ali, *Globalisation, Growth, and Employment*, (2001). *Social Impact of Globalisation: Role of Policy (ILO/UNDP SPPD Project)*

- **Product Standards:** The Uruguay Round Agreements on Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) defines rules for setting national standards and regulations with the objective of ensuring product quality and food safety. Bangladesh has already suffered due to application of SPS Agreement provisions by the EU. In July 1997, the European Commission imposed a ban on import of frozen shrimp from Bangladesh on the grounds of non-compliance with the importer's hygienic regulations. In February, the EU lifted the ban on imports from six shrimp processing units, and from another 11 enterprises in July 1998. Subsequently, the EU ban has gradually been lifted from a large number of shrimp exporting enterprises. Given that the EU is the single largest buyer of Bangladesh's shrimps, the ban spelled disaster for the industry. **Nearly 80 per cent of the shrimp processing plants were shut down where a large portion of the workers are women.**

The TBT Agreement requires the fulfillment of international product standards such as ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 to gain entry into the markets of the developed countries. Bangladesh's exports have found it difficult to satisfy these product standards.

- **Anti-dumping and countervailing action:** The WTO Agreement on Anti-dumping (AD) seeks to protect domestic producers from unfair trade practices adopted by foreign suppliers. WTO rules permit a country to levy anti-dumping duties, not exceeding the margin of dumping, on dumped imports. The rules define dumping as occurring either when price at which a firm is selling the product for export is lower than the price at which it is selling a product in its domestic market, or when is selling it below cost of production. The agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM) permits importing countries to levy countervailing duties where the exporting firm is able to charge lower prices as a result of subsidies granted by its government. Detailed procedures have been laid down in the two Agreements on how to impose anti-dumping and countervailing duties.

The USA recently imposed an anti-dumping duty, subsequently replacing it with a countervailing duty on terry towels imported from Bangladesh. Exporters of terry towels thought they believed that Bangladesh's exports were neither dumped nor subsidized, but they were unable to convince the US trade authorities of this. Further, high litigation costs discouraged Bangladesh's terry towel exporters from processing towards dispute settlement under the WTO.

- **Rules of origin:** Bangladesh enjoy preferential access in EU markets under the Generalized System of Preference (GSP) scheme. This provides zero-tariff access to EU markets for Bangladesh's garment exports. The competitive edge, which the EU GSP scheme confers, on Bangladesh's garment exports has been a major factor behind their impressive growth. Recent market access problems faced by Bangladesh in the EU, however, indicate that such facilities may not be expected to continue on a guaranteed basis. Access to the EU GSP facilities is subject to compliance with stringent Rules of Origin (RO) requirements.

The EU RO requires a two-stage convention (yarn to fabric, fabric to garments) in case of woven garments and a three stage transformation (cotton to yarn, yarn to fabric and fabric to garments) in the case of knit garments. Since Bangladesh's indigenous

capacity in spinning and weaving is still limited, at present it is hardly possible for the country to comply with the EU's RO. The EU has agreed to a temporary derogation of the RO requirements for Bangladesh, but this favourable treatment may be withdrawn at any time.

- **Duty – free access:** Bangladesh, as the LDC spokesperson in the WTO, has been persistently tabling at various international forums, including the WTO, the demand for according quota-free and duty-free market access to LDC exports. The competitive advantage that Bangladesh's exports would gain, if and when this preferential treatment is awarded, would enable the country to increase its existing exports as well as develop new exports. Such preferential treatment may be extended by the developed countries under the special and differential provisions of the WTO Agreement. Bangladesh, along with the other LDCs, should continue to press for quota-free and duty-free market access at the WTO.

## **2.22 Opportunities in Electronics Industry**

Bangladesh has made progress with expanding an export-oriented electronics industries based on subcontracting for foreign companies and multinationals. This development faces competition from other countries with more skilled manpower. Many South-east Asian countries are better placed in this respect, and skills will provide the cutting edge in competing for foreign direct investment.

## **2.23 Women in Informal Sector**

Government and labour rights organizations try to pay attention on the labour conditions mainly of the formal labour sector of export-oriented industries (garments, leather, toys, etc.). But the broad informal sector receives very little attention, although the problems in this sector are often bigger compared to the formal labour market. Labour inspection and trade unions have in most cases no access to the workers, which are in many cases women (homework, domestic services, etc.). ILO employment report 1998/99 says, the majority of new jobs in developing countries are being created in the informal sector, which according to ILO estimates employs about 500 million workers.

Manufacturing industries and agricultural sub-sectors catering primarily to the domestic markets and operating on the basis of traditional and outmoded technology are generally swamped by the flood of cheaper industrial and agricultural products that now enter national markets with facility because of trade liberalization. The winners are usually those successful in finding niches in global market based on more sophisticated technology or those with tie-ups in the global production chain of transnational corporations.

In Bangladesh some of the biggest losers are agricultural sub-sectors such as the grains industry and poultry, livestock industry, which are being clobbered by the high-tech offensive of American, European and neighboring countries. Bangladeshi women are the worst victims because a large majority of the women in Bangladesh are involved in the informal sector.

## **2.24 Service Sector: Production for Fancies of Affluents but not for Mass Consumption**

In Bangladesh, the service sector is relatively shielded and local enterprises in banking, insurance, trade, the media and professional services have been able to develop. It is feared that under the pressures of liberalization, the Northern TNCs involved in services will make further inroads and in some countries may come to dominate some of the services.

About 60 per cent of the total employment in developed countries is now provided by the services sector. The same trend is seen in the developing countries too. According to an estimate, the travel and tourism industry today is generating more than US \$ 3,500 billion or about 6 per cent of world GDP<sup>13</sup>. The travel and tourism industry in the mid-nineties was estimated to generate more than 6 per cent of the world GDP and employ one of the every 15 persons in the world. In other words, instead of providing food, clothes, shelter, etc., to the millions and millions of the hungry, naked and roofless population of the world, the economy is getting increasingly geared to catering to the fancies of the affluent.

The entertainment, tourism, travel and hospitality and image industries attract most investment, generate great profits and provide significant employment. The fashion industry was considered at the same time to be the largest enterprise in New York in terms of investment, employment and profits with chain effects across the world. It is also a common experience that the new investment produces not mass consumption goods but luxury items that cater only to the fancies of the affluents.

Women are largely used in service sectors in Bangladesh. Any crisis in service industry would cause thousands of women's joblessness and further impoverishment.

## **2.25 Handicrafts and Cottage Industry**

Bangladeshi handicrafts has a market in western countries. Due to the growing demand of handicrafts a large number of women has been engaged in handicrafts production. Thus the traditional unpaid women of the rural and urban areas have turned into paid labourers i.e. the traditional production relation has been changed.

Traditionally the rural people used to use pottery and cane or bamboo made household products (handicrafts) but due to substitute production of household products in imported modern plastic industries the hand made household products lost their markets and numerous artisan become unemployed or had compelled to change their professions.

BRAC advertise for Aarong with the slogan that Aarong is "The World of Rural Artisans". The question is whether it is really a house of rural artisan, does the rural artisan really own the equitable production share. Rural artisans' products are selling at a high price in the home and abroad but do these artisans getting their reasonable share of production. Though a considerable number of rural women have been able to earn cash involving

---

<sup>13</sup> Roy, Ajit, *Civil Society and Nation State in Context of Globalisation, Economic and Political Weekly, August, 5-12, 1995*

themselves in the export oriented handicrafts industry but this process have consequently strengthened the “Metropolis and Satellite Relationship”.

## **2.26 Retrenchment of Workers and Poverty**

Retrenchment of workers due to either privatization of large-scale closure of units in a particular industry may have serious repercussions for the battle against poverty. The effects could be more serious for retrenchment in sectors, which employ a large proportion of unskilled workers with low wages who come from poor families. The profile of the garment sector workers shows that more than half of them come from poor households, and their fate will be uncertain if RMG units are subject to widespread closure.

## **2.27 Denationalization of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs)**

Bangladesh initiated Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) at the beginning of the 1980s. These scheme envisaged a market-oriented, export-led growth strategy, and covered areas such as trade liberalization, privatization of state-owned enterprises, rationalization of public expenditure, increased domestic resource mobilization, withdrawal of subsidies on foodgrains and agricultural inputs, financial sector reforms, and policies promoting private investment. The impact of structural adjustment policies varied over time and across sectors, as evidenced by differential sectoral growth rates. The most proactive reform measures have been undertaken since 1992.

As a result of reform measures embracing virtually every sectors of the economy, especially the agriculture, trade, industrial, and financial sectors, the economy has become more market and more outward oriented. While success in achieving desirable adjustments is critical in accelerating growth, reducing poverty and improving the general quality of life, global and regional developments and their impacts can frustrate gains in the domestic economy. The declining pace of economic performance, structural rigidities and imbalances, and increasing unemployment - all demand strengthening both formal and informal sector welfare programmes.

Globalization is affecting enterprises and various groups in the workforce differently. Some are winners, some are losers. Economies can benefit from effective participation in global processes of trade and investment but, as the recent South-east Asian experience shows, they must also brace themselves against possible downturns and crisis. Globalization also requires continuous economic and firm restructuring, often entailing substantial retrenchment of workers.

Since establishment of the Privatization Board (PB) in 1993, 33 public enterprises have been privatised. Of which only 16 have been handed over to the private sector and 87 more have been enlisted for privatization. Inadequate political commitment, bureaucratic complexities, and resistance from the trade unions are among the major constraints on privatization.

Most SOEs employ surplus workers. The immediate impact of privatization of these enterprises is the retrenchment of a sizable number of workers - 90,000 as of June 1997. It is estimated that an additional 96,628 workers employed in 60 out of 87 enterprises planned

for privatization will also face retrenchment in the immediate future<sup>14</sup>. Most of these workers are at their old or middle age so they have a very little chance to employ himself or herself into a new jobs. In Bangladesh no private enterprise would like to bear the burden of a old or mid aged person and these retrenched workers were unable to apply again for a government job because of age barrier. A very few government employees or worker succeed in business in their decline age. So retrenchment could only bring miseries and frustration to the family members of these retrenched workers. Such miseries will be more pronounced in case of retrenched women workers.

## **2.28 Information Technology and Women**

Globalization will involve the adoption of improved technology together with associated risks of labour redundancy. New workers who will participate in thrust sectors such as information technology (IT) is yet to be developed.

The international market for computer-related services will expand at an unprecedented rate, and will include areas impossible to predict at present. So far, the software, data-entry, medical transcription industries have been most in demand; and, even if new activities and services do emerge, total demand in these areas is expected to boom. Proper utilization of these opportunities will certainly create job scopes for the women.

Development of information technology have already enhanced the investment and business of pornography and sex. Satellite TV channels are supplementing in these business. This business helps to transform the women into commodity rather than establishing dignity of the women.

Increased use of Internet not only developing world business, knowledge and education among the people but also helping to establish crime network, trafficking of women, drug and arms business etc.

## **2.29 Trans National Corporations (TNC): Unfair Trade for Free Trade**

The MAI is not a real threat to national sovereignty but intensified attacks on workers. There will be no requirement to use local product or support local industry, there will be no limits on capital transfers and foreign investors will have the same rights, as any other investors in privatisation deals. The result will be to turn Bangladesh into a merely an export processing zone. This treaty will strip most worker's unions rights while the MAI will do away with local economic control and the workers ability to have any significant impact on economic policy and TNC actions. This is the current face of globalisation for New Zealand workers. It surrenders the workers of New Zealand lives to international capital and the faceless multinationals.

The effects of the free trade policies in New Zealand have all but destroyed the manufacturing sector. An example of this can be seen in the footwear industry. In the last decade, with the reduction of tariffs in this industry, local manufacturing of footwear has

---

<sup>14</sup> *International Labour Office, 1999a. Retaining and Redeploying of Workers Affected by Privatisation in Bangladesh, Draft (Geneva, ILO)*

dropped from 10 million pair per year to 2 million pairs. The number of workers in the industry has dropped from 7000 to 1000 over the same period. Similar consequences are also expected for Bangladeshi women due to this unfair trade environment.

“Internationalization of production” is not so much the real internationalisation of production but the expansion of the operations and the system of TNC subcontracting that is limited to certain industries and certain aspects of production. These take advantage of differentials in labor costs among countries, utilize special economic zones and cheaper transportation and communications expenses. In the process, they are able to “back” the crisis and make superprofits by selling the products at higher prices in their home countries as well as all over the world. They are also able to reduce the costs and increase profits by subcontracting the reprocessing or part of production to their affiliates in the countries where they sell these products.

The most effective instrument of globalization are the transnational corporations themselves in their incessant drive for super profits. TNCs have found a new freedom to engage in even bigger monopoly operations, dictate prices, determine production, exploit natural resources, and manipulate and take advantage of labour and price differentials including in the financial markets.

This is illustrated in the macro level by the financial speculations, which have acted in unison in attacking currency, stock and other financial markets to their short-term benefit but resulting in financial and economic ruin for the host countries. They are the new vampires that suck in the blood from the economies of these countries, and because of deregulation, leave as fast as they come in to search of new willing hosts. The internationalization is simply the investment of excess capital looking for super profits, and increasingly, because of financial deregulation, this is capital looking for a quick buck in a global casino. During the disaster in Bangladesh share market, 1996 a large number of housewives as well as working women lost their long term savings in the share market.

The issue of the national sovereignty to the transnational companies today is much more complex since the transnational companies have not only grown in power but have also managed to manipulate the policies of national states in order to pursue their narrow corporate interests. Some states have made efforts, in varying degrees, against the undesirable effects of globalisation. The adverse social and economic impacts of globalisation push people’s movements both in the North and the South, to resist and struggle for positive social, political and economic changes over a broad range of regions and issues. Globalisation is not a unilinear, monolithic process but a multifaceted and highly contradictory one.

The *Economists*, in a special survey of TNCs in March 1993 noted that from 1983 to 1990 foreign investment had grown four times faster than the world output and three times faster than world trade.

TNCs have dramatically increased their number from a few thousand in the 80s to about 45,000 parent firms with 280,000 foreign affiliates today. The largest 100 TNCs control one-fifth of global foreign assets., an increase of 30% from 1993. According to one estimate the

turnover of Royal Dutch –Shell is larger than the GDPs of Chile, Syria and Singapore put together. The TNCs direct foreign investment (FDI) today amounts to US\$ 2 trillion.

There is a certain special character to this capital. It is not productive capital. The investment is also not stable. It is pure investment capital with speculation as its aim. The new developments have brought about a split between the real or production based economy and the money or finance economy. The interest of the finance capital is not in a long term, tedious investment but in quick profit. It takes advantages of the differences in interest rates, currency rates and share market fluctuations in different countries and engages in quick buy and sell operations.

It therefore travels from country to country very rapidly in search of the most advantageous situation. The differentials are necessarily transitory and hence the stay of the capital in a particular country is also highly temporary. Hundreds of billions of dollars, many times the volume of international trade and more so of world GDP cross international boundaries in this manner. The advances in information and communication technology have made these national transfers easier and faster than ever before. The much touted foreign capital inflow into India over the past few years is also estimated to be in the nature of investment (read speculative) capital at least to the tune of two-thirds of the total amount.

Such capital bitten by the travel bug is called “hot money” due to its tendency to pull out from a country at a moment’s notice. The capitalism has also been termed foot-loose capitalism or casino capitalism.

India has been under pressure to allow free access to American insurance companies and other financial institutions. France has been pressured to give freedom of operation to the American entertainment industry. Because of unjustified pressure by the TNCs and vested interest of the national politicians Bangladesh has given lease almost all its gas fields to the TNCs e.g. Shell, Unocal, Cairn, etc. Now these TNCs are engaged to compel the Bangladeshi government to export gas for their profit.

### **2.30 Health Hazards, Risks and Abuse of the Women in Export Oriented Industries**

The women’s bodies under globalisation come under a severe and determined invasion under the regime of global capital. The population control policies seek to tamper with the functions and achieve control over the biological rhythm. The women from the poorer sections in the poorer countries in particular are treated as sources of problems and “managed”. In this respect, the issue of reproductive rights violation is sometimes pronounced in Bangladesh.

The fashion industry of the US and Europe gets its mass line apparel stitched in sweat shops in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and other countries wherein the workers are forced by nature and conditions of work into premature old age, deformity of death. Such establishments often employ young persons, many times women, for their nimble and flexible fingers. The beautiful gems that adorn designer jewellery in the fashionable haunts of the West are cut and polished in workshops of death in India. Legal protection, safety conditions, health measures, hygienic conditions are unheard of in such work-places. The conditions of employment are reminiscent of bondage.

In Bangladesh, most export-oriented industries, particularly the garment industry, started manufacturing without adequate prior planning. Global demand did not allow enough time to construct dedicated factory buildings. In 1990, about 90 per cent of garment factories started production in rented buildings, which were not designed for factory purposes. Most of the adverse working conditions in the garment industry arose from unplanned and hasty growth, impelled by the forces of globalization. (Occupational hazards resulting from violation of factory rules and labor laws).

New global opportunities have spurred a rapid but unplanned growth of the garment industry in Bangladesh. The mushroom growth of factories in the capital city of Dhaka, for example has occurred in rented, not purpose-designed or built premises. This has affected both working environment and job quality. Safety standards have rarely been met, leading to fire hazards and even deaths.

Several Studies were conducted on the garment workers since 1980s. Health consequences of the women workers due to working in the export oriented industries are depicted elaborately in the study reports conducted by Pratima Poul Majumder. Some of the important findings are as follows<sup>15</sup>:

In most cases, Factory Rules (1979) regulating occupational safety are not implemented in the garment industry. Both the 1990 and 1997 surveys showed that most garment factory buildings were overcrowded, congested and poorly ventilated, despite the fact there are explicit factory rules regulating these conditions. This results in a variety of occupational hazards. Garment workers, particularly the women, are exposed to toxic substances and dust, since they hold jobs where these hazards are greatest. Raw materials used in the garment industry include fabrics such as cotton, synthetics, and wool, which contain dust and fiber particles. Clouds of thread particles hang in the air. Dye emitted from colored cloth produces a toxic substance that spreads throughout the workroom. The workers, particularly the operators and sewing helpers, who are mostly women, constantly inhale these substances. Congested and overcrowded working conditions without proper ventilation also result in temperature hazards. The 1997 survey found that due to high temperatures, about 3 per cent of the sample women workers, as opposed to less than 1 per cent of their male counterparts, had fainted during the summer months. It was further found that most garment factories do not have adequate fire prevention measures. It has been found from the recent statistics that during the last 10 years around 300 garment workers (most of them are women) died from fire accident in the factory e.g. in 1990, 32 women died from fire accident in Saraka Garment factory; in 1991 at Pallabi of Dhaka 5 garment workers died; in 1993, 12 person died in a factory in paltan; in 1997, 13 women died and most recently 12 women garment workers die from fire accident in Globe Knitting factory.

**The most perceptible adverse effect of employment in the garment industry is that on women's health. A large number of women workers suffer from illness after starting work in the garment industry in spite of the fact that, due to employment in the same industry, they can afford to buy better food and better medical treatment, which should have a positive impact on health. The 1997 survey data, when compared with**

<sup>15</sup> Majumdar, Pratima Poul. *Organizing Women Garment Workers: A means to Address the Challenges of Integration of the Bangladesh Garment Industry in the Global Market. Social Impact of Globalisation and Role of Policy (ILO/UNDP SPPD Project)*

available information from other industries, revealed that some of the illness/diseases such as cold and coughs, breathing problems, headache, backache, waist pain, arm and leg pain, fever, and weakness appeared to be more prevalent among garment workers. Eye problems, ear pain, urinary tract infections, and sexually transmitted diseases were also prevalent among the garment workers, with a higher percentage among the women workers than their male counterpart.

Employment in non-garment industries does not affect workers' health so badly. The 1993 survey showed that about 31 per cent of the total women workers employed in non-garment industries, as opposed to only 10 per cent of their counterparts in the garment industry, enjoyed good health even after undertaking these jobs.

Violence against garment workers often captures headlines in the national news media, whereas not a single incidence of violence against women workers in the non-export industries has been reported in the newspapers during the last five years.

The 1990 and 1997 survey collected information from workers regarding sexual harassment, ranging from insults directed at a person's gender, suggestive comments, and demeaning remarks to unwelcome touching and grabbing and other physical assaults on to and including rape. But these type of sexual harassment were largely under-reported, since the women workers were shy about disclosing any information on this subject. Moreover, unmarried workers were afraid of disclosing any information on sexual harassment, since to do so would decrease their chance of marriage. Therefore, the workers were asked about the type of sexual harassment and mishaps encountered by colleagues. Findings reveal that female garment workers become the victims of violence in the workplace, on the street while commuting to and from the workplace, and at their residence.

The 1997 survey indicated that only 5 per cent of women workers in the workplace encountered sexual harassment ranging from insults directed at a person's gender, suggestive comments or language, and demeaning remarks to unwelcome touching and grabbing and other physical assaults. But more than 9 per cent reported that their colleagues faced these kinds of harassment in the workplace. Generally no incidence of rape takes place within the factory campus but beating by a supervisor is the major form of abuse against women in the garment industry, particularly among helpers and operators, who are mostly women.

Migrant women workers in the garment industry take shelter in slums and squatter settlements, relatives' houses, or in *messes* and hostels. All of these living arrangements are insecure for women. Workers living in slums and squatter settlements report that they are always afraid of local touts who regularly collect *Chanda* (subscriptions) from them. Women garment workers face a significant possibility of being raped by local touts, since slums and squatter settlements have no law enforcement authority. There are a number of prostitution dens, while liquor and drug trading is also widespread in slums and squatter settlements. Most workers living in relatives' houses reported that they were afraid of male relatives, who try to have affairs with them.

Both the 1990 and 1997 survey showed that, on average, a female garment worker was asked to work about 12 hours a day, although a male worker's hours decreased a little over

the last few years. Women work for 12 hours with a lunch break of only 45 minutes, although, according to the Factory Act of 1965, no workers are to be compelled to work for 6 hours at a stretch without an hour's break or two half-hours breaks.

Research has shown that, the longer the working hours, the more susceptible a worker becomes. Only 23 per cent of the women workers who worked 8/9 hours or less daily reported that they had headaches, while the corresponding figure for the group working more than 12 hours was about 76 per cent.

### **2.31 Commercialisation and Privatisation of the Social Sector:**

The impact of commercialisation and privatisation of the social sector have deeper consequences on social and economic spheres of life. The more the country relies on the market, the more social protection for workers is required. In fact, social protection of the workers is a prerequisite to confronting the social insecurity caused by economic liberalization and globalization. Social insecurity risks inspiring a backlash against liberalization. The inability of workers to utilize their mental and physical capacities leads to psychological frustration, leaving them vulnerable to appeals for serious dislocation of the social structure. We can hardly hope for enduring economic, social, and political stability in any society charged with such undercurrents of deprivation, dislocation, and frustration.

Crime and domestic violence are on the rise in Bangladesh. Street muggings, hijackings, drug trafficking, extortion, and bribery have become rampant. Extortion has become so prevalent that businessmen and investors consider it a great constraint on business and investment.

Violence on women, both domestic and social, has been increasing. Domestic violence often results from failure to provide a dowry for the husband. Social violence in forms such as rape, *fatwa*, acid throwing, and trafficking in women and children has also been rising.

Trade liberalization and privatization have aggravated unemployment and under-employment. Social protection is needed to contain the consequent social security. In addition, the globalization of trade has rendered restrictions on trade union affiliation at the sectoral level all the more disturbing. Recent attempts to link trade to labour standards by the industrialized nations amounts to displacing workers from the traditional sectors in the country undergoing structural change, and eventually acerbating industrial relations.

The inequality has been built into the system in more ways as well. Reduction of employment forces the women into the job market. The jobs if any available to them are those of low skill and low pay, often taxing, hazardous, demeaning and dehumanising. The withdrawal of the social welfare and security net also forces the women into an even more subjugated and deprived position. Their nutrition, education and health become special casualties of the logic of globalisation.

Today, access to health care, education, police protection and other collective goods is largely neglected/regulated by the state. Rights of the poor must be respected and economic and social rights will have to acquire institutional protection in an economic order.

An entry into the knowledge industry requires specialised high level education. Persons who do not have such specialised education and knowledge occupy a secondary status in the society permanently. Then can only form parts of the large pools of low skilled low paid insecure employees.

NGOs who are working for the rural and urban poor are trying to implement a cost-recovery approach for all the people. Public health and education facilities is limited and on the other hand, private services for health and education is beyond the reach of the poor and middle class. **So a decrease of public expenditure in social sector would inevitably increase the vulnerability of the poor especially the poor women.**

### **2.32 Environmental Degradation and Ecological Justice**

Shell and Monsanto are the two massive oil and food companies that are the driving force behind globalisation. Shell, which is a Dutch/British company to make billions of dollars extracting oil in Africa and Asia. It is also planning to extract oil in Bangladesh, whilst destroying the livelihoods and environment of the local people. There is a bright instance of environmental degradation by one of the most powerful oil company in Bangladesh i.e. wide spread fire in Magurchara while exploring for gas/oil by the Unocal, one of the largest oil companies in the world. This widespread fire caused destruction of hundreds of trees, households, people's means of livelihood etc. TNCs are using the technologies, which are neither safe, environmentally friendly, nor economically beneficial to us. When the Unocal activities set fire throughout the villages of Magurchara then obviously the helpless women who always stay home were the worst sufferer.

The industry predicts that by the year 2020, demand for oil will increase by two-thirds and demand for gas will double. So the demand for Bangladeshi gas will increase considerably and as a consequence of gas exploration/extraction the surrounding environment of the gas field will deteriorate significantly. Since according to the contract between the Bangladesh Government and the Trans National Oil companies around 80 per cent of the gas production will enjoy the Trans National Oil companies and if we intend to buy our own gas then we have to buy it with foreign currencies i.e. US dollars so the terms of conditions of the contract don't seem to be congenial for the interest of the people.

Every year oil company spends \$150 billion seeking new reserves of oil and gas. So to what extent they destroy the ecosystem, environment, habitat and livelihood of indigenous people is easily assumable. On land, as we well known, many frontier areas around the world are the last remaining habitats of the eatened indigenous and tribal peoples. It is here that oil and gas operations will have a devastating social, ethical and cultural impact.

But it is not the oil industry's cultural impact that threatens its future. It is impact on the climate. It is now an established scientific fact that oil and gas exploration is changing the world's climate and the burning of fossil fuels is largely to blame. According to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, who are the world's leading climate scientists, if we continue on a business as usual scenario-exploring for more oil and gas – then we risk at least a 2-3 degree Celsius rise in temperature.

Since 80 per cent of oil revenue now goes to service the debt and nothing else. Not only has the country got a higher national debt, but it is also a huge ecological debt, with millions of hectares of forests and thousands of indigenous people adversely affected.

Exploration and extraction of gas and oil in the gas blocks in the Bay of Bengal and Sundarban will not only destabilize the ecosystem but also have a chance of disastrous accident like in Magurchara.

If the ecological debt is calculated that the Northern oil companies owe Southern countries for exploiting their resources, for polluting their lands and their people, the case for oil extraction becomes terminal. From an ecological, cultural and economic perspective we should be disinvesting now.

To generate more investments and jobs, Bangladeshi government markets the “comparative advantages” to the foreign investors, advantages that usually mean cheap labor and natural resources. This naturally has dire implications on the welfare situation of workers and on the environment.

The new technology is highly capital intensive. It is also highly resource intensive. The production establishments that are set up in Bangladesh, in particular, are interested in, along with the local markets and labour pools, precious and critical resources. Water, fossil fuels, mineral and forest wealth are utilized by these enterprises in a profligate manner. They have no concern for the rational use or conservatism or a regeneration of these resources. The technology touted as state of the art and brought into the country through collaborations and deals with global capital is rarely, if ever, the latest. It is usually suspect or down-right prohibited in the Western countries on ecological grounds.

Globalisation normally converts the developing countries into dumping grounds for highly polluting, ecologically disastrous, resource destructive production processes, materials and products. The Bhopal tragedy is as yet quite fresh in our minds. Chemical dependent agricultural practices, depleting crops and seeds, pose a real danger to the permanence of agriculture. Pollution and degradation of land and water sources threatens lives, health, future productivity of land. The river and sea resources have come under a similar threat.

**Shrimp export is expanding in the cost to destroying the coastal forest and agriculture and ultimately evicting the indigenous farmers from their own agricultural land. Shrimp cultivation in the agricultural land not only negatively influence the environment but also reduces indigenous people food production and generate unemployment and generate poverty. It has given rise to a women labourers of a cheap labour.**

### **2.33 Globalisation: An Annihilating Process of Indigenous and Tribal Community**

The drive for mineral or forest wealth leads to a vital confiscation of common property resources. The people are denied access to such resources i.e. to their own resources. It also means a displacement of large sections of the people from their traditional habitats. The ‘relocations’ are notorious failures. The real result is a dislocation of lives.

The commercialisation of gene pools denies access to local communities to traditional resources critical for livelihood and survival.

The indigenous people generally occupy areas that are home to rich mineral or forest resources or are necessary to harness and harvest other natural resources – water, land and power, for example. To keep pace with the global development “Kaptai Hydroelectric Station” was constructed at the cost of evicting thousands of “*Chakmas*” from their habitats and cultivable lands. In 2000, now we need to evict thousands of “*Khasias*” to establish the “Eco-Park”. Environmentalists claim that the Eco-Part will attract numerous tourists and earn foreign currencies for the country but such steps will cause the loss of 500,000 species of plants and animals.

The intensified economic activity requires a great exploitation of these resources. The indigenous peoples are then evicted from their traditional and historical habitats, sometimes repeatedly and often with brutal force. The exploration and extraction of oil and gas would certainly effect devastatingly on the indigenous people.

The displacement of the indigenous peoples is quite different from the eviction and re-location of even the urban slum dwellers. The indigenous people links to his habitat. The indigenous people relates not only to individual patches of land on which houses are build or agriculture practised but to the entire territory and the eco-system. The existence of the indigenous people is dependent on the territory. Displacement of such people then actually means a total dislocation of lives. They cannot be relocated elsewhere, even in ‘model villages’ with grants of some land or compensation. They are usually unable to survive there. **So globalisation must negatively influence the matrimonial system as well as the women headed family system of the tribal areas if they are compelled to be evicted from their own land and have to live with the patrimonial system of Bangali community.**

The indigenous people thus face a threat of annihilation in the age of globalisation.

### **2.34 Globalisation and Conflict**

Globalisation not only provokes more poverty, inequality, and disintegration of states, it also promotes strong tensions and conflicts between nationalities, ethnic groups or religious communities.

Social conflict is not inherently a bad thing: civil strife can produce opportunities for beneficial change in order to promote human rights, redistribution of land and wealth, good governance, justice and sustainable forms of peace. Competition for resources, political participation, cultural identity and freedom of religion are entirely legitimate. Indeed, poor societies suffering from shortage of water, forests and fertile land are particularly affected by the imbalances in the allocation of resources and environmental scarcity because of the social crisis and scarcities. Situation of ethnic minorities in Bangladesh is the appropriate instance in this respect.

The point is, however, that the *roots of conflicts* are not in factors that can be controlled, such as scarcity of resources, political failure, but in deeper factors like humiliation,

unchosen inequalities, the prospect of exclusion and fragility. Indeed, efforts of people to preserve, protect or stabilise their particular identities are an understandable response to the pressures of globalising economics and politics, especially when their identities appear to become negated, revitalised and marginalised in processes of global change. Nowadays, people are more concerned with identity and community: they challenge political institutions and national boundaries more than economic process and outcomes. Deprivation, humiliation and negligence of the ethnic minority women by the oppressors are the major reasons of being violent and rebel against existing situation. It is well known that once the ethnic minority women of hill tracts used to assault by the military maniacs.

### **2.35 Urbanization and Migration**

Employment of women has led to significant rural-urban migration, as most women are migrants from rural areas. Both wage and non-wage factors - low opportunity cost of female labour, on the one hand, and docility and amenability to repetitive process functions on the other - account for entrepreneurs' explicitly preference for employing young, mostly unmarried women in the garment industry.

Globalisation has meant internationalisation of capital, of investment, of production, of trade, of consumption and of accumulation. There has, however, been no corresponding internationalisation of labour. There is near total freedom of international mobility for capital, technologies, information, goods, services and profits. On the mobility of labour, however, there are severe restrictions.

The globalization and urbanization pattern directly degrades and destroys ecosystems and natural resources, as rural land-based economies and communities are uprooted by the forces of expanded industrial production, large-scale agribusiness, forest clear-cutting, extractive mineral mining and other activities designed to produce goods and services for global market.

The feminization of migration is a direct offshoot of the crisis in agriculture and the abject lack of jobs in the rural areas. This can only be seen in the phenomenon of rising internal and external migration, particularly of women.

Bangladeshi migrant workers also faced threat in Malaysia and Korea during recession. They are dismissed in the first place from where they are hired, as the employers make best use of the situation. The government of those countries were also trying to make use of the mass unemployment situation to systematically expel them from their countries. All these meant massive unemployment, social frustration, falling of living stability, poverty, increase of homeless, criminals and suicides. In addition, most of the Bangladeshi women migrant workers face sexual harassment while working in the Arabian countries.

### **2.36 Gender Relations**

Women also become particular subject of the policies of world-wide population control. The state or other agencies invade and seek to control their bodies. Needless to say that the women from the toiling sections would be the guineapigs for dubious technologies.

**As one moves up the employment hierarchy in garment industry, the proportion of female employees declines gradually, becoming insignificant in the officer-technical category. Thus female employees fill more of the low-skill, low wage category jobs, while male employees get more of the more skilled, higher-wage jobs.**

Within the RMG factories, gender discrepancy in wage levels for comparable jobs is small, especially when accounting for factors such as age, education, and experience. In the production process, however, female workers are mainly concentrated in “less skilled” operations, and thus are low paid. In the RMG industry, most women work either as operators (where almost all workers are female) or as helpers (40-60 per cent of the total work force in this category are female).

In the RMG sector, about 70 per cent employees are women. Moreover, it is likely that a relatively larger proportion of female workers will face retrenchment due to probable crisis in this sector. This is because women have less bargaining power and receive less compensation when retrenched.

The increase rate of unemployment in Korea is 7 times higher for women than for men, as they are forced to leave labor market or turn to part-time or temporary jobs. Because 60 per cent of women workforce work in small companies with less than 5 employees, they are victimized in the first place by bankruptcy and mass layoff since the IMF intervention. More than 100 small business a day have to close down till August 1998.

What happens in reality that part-time work and temporary contracts go hand in hand, and that women accept them because of other responsibilities while men go for the better paid, fixed contract full-time jobs.

Women workers suffer far more from the negative effects of globalisation in the garment industry than men. Moreover, certain problems such as gender differentials in wage rates, leisure deprivation, night work, and sexual harassment are unique to women workers. Unlike their male counterparts, furthermore, women workers suffer from reproductive health problems due to occupational hazards.

**Patriarchy has permeated all aspects of the lives of women and gender discrimination has intensified in the age of globalisation, as women have become increasingly absorbed into world-wide economic process. While these processes may sometimes have opened up new economic possibilities for women they have also almost invariably lead to new and serious problems. These include such gender-specific forms of exploitation as trafficking in women, forced prostitution; feminisation of labour; feminisation of cheap labour, feminisation of poverty, and feminisation of migration.**

Women in particular are disadvantaged the world over and work in low-paid, insecure and segregated jobs as machinists, assembly-line workers, packers and clerical workers. Dawn-till-dusk unpaid domestic responsibilities are accompanied by low paid, low status jobs with no entitlements. Women face restricted access to the labour market and have less labour mobility.

In EU the number of women workers in industry has sharply declined, from 30 per cent to 17 per cent in 1994. The increase of female jobs in the service sector, over 70 per cent of all the female jobs are by now in the service sector. In the EU in 1995, 83 per cent of the part-time workers were women, and 50 per cent of the workers with a temporary contract. Companies has increased their use of subcontracting outsourcing, transferring, work into the 'informal' or 'underground economy'. A company such as Nike has may be 5000 direct employees but 500,000 workers are somewhere involved in making shoes and clothes. The lack of nearness is accentuating lack of responsibility. In Bangladesh BRAC's Aarong do the same thing. The ILO estimates that the 'informal' economy world-wide has to encompass 93 per cent of all newcomers on the labour market. Bangladeshi women are poorer than Bangladeshi men.

### **2.37 Financial and Share Market Crisis and Women**

Over five-year period from 1989 and to 1994 the manager of money poured US\$99 billion into Mexico alone. Almost three-quarters of this amount went into short-term "portfolio investment" that is, purchased of bonds and non-controlling shares. The mania of speculative investment in Mexico ended with the crisis of December 1994. Mexico was powerless to stop his hemorrhage as the maniacs took their money and ran. One reason why Mexico could not use capital controls to stem the tide was because NAFTA leaves Mexico without the tools it needs to confront volatile, fly-by-night capital. Under NAFTA Mexico cannot impose capital controls like those recently adopted by Malaysia. NAFTA prohibits all kinds of restrictions on cross boarder financial flows including profits, interests, dividends and fees. During the 19 months recession that followed the peso crisis more than 15,800 small and medium sized Mexican firms went bankrupt, 269 state owned companies were privatized and privatized companies typically reorganized production and shed approximately 400,000 workers from their payrolls.

Fly-by-night behavior by money traders who recklessly pour money into countries only so long as the returns are high but then abandon them at lightening speed at the first sign of trouble. In **1996 Bangladesh also faced a manipulation in share market which made numerous working women as well as housewives pauper or caused considerable economic loss. Female/male wage ratio is 0.5 in the informal sector; 0.6 in the non-agriculture sector; and 0.66 in the agriculture sector. Men have more leisure than women**<sup>16</sup>.

### **2.38 Growth and Globalisation**

The era of globalisation has seen an expansion of economic activities. Investment, production, productivity, trade, incomes of certain sections, growth rates of economies have all registered increases. The one area where no growth has been registered is that of employment. There has been on the contrary a decline in employment and an increase in

---

<sup>16</sup> Hamid. A. (1994) "Non-market Work and National Income: The Case of Bangladesh", in S. Amin (Ed) *Special Issue on Women, Development and Change, The Bangladesh Development Studies, Vol. XXII, June-Sept. 1994, Number 2.*

the numbers of the employers. The reasons for this development are integral to the nature of globalisation.

The UNDP reports that the wealthiest 20 per cent of the world population receives 82.7 per cent of the total world income. This means that 1 billion people live on \$ 1 a day and another 3 billion live on \$ 2 a day for sure, this situation has worsened several times over now.

The 1996 Human Development Report also showed that over the past three decades only 15 countries enjoyed high growth whilst 89 per cent countries were worse off than they were ten years ago. With the global depression there will be even fewer countries enjoying growth. This report identified five types of growth, which are the following:

- jobless growth (overall economy grows but no job)
- ruthless growth (economy grows but rich get richer and poor get nothing)
- voiceless growth (economy grows but democracy and empowerment of the majority does not keep pace)
- rootless growth (cultural identity is submerged or outlawed)
- futureless growth (present generations squander the resources needed by the future generations)

In Bangladesh perspective all these sort of growth cause joblessness, poverty, resourceless and voiceless to the women.

## CHAPTER III

### CONCLUSION

WTO-guided globalisation has introduced a new morality where the god is the dollar and a failure to maximize profit is a moral sin. Globalisation is removing all obstacles to the rule of the global elite and their corporations. The process keeps the majority of the world in poverty while allowing unsustainable consumption for the global elite and its allies. More than \$US 400 billion annually flows from the poorer to the richer nations while health, housing, education and welfare budgets are cut for the marginalised within the rich as well as poor countries.

Once the WTO agreements come into force, it would be difficult for a developing country government to pursue economic policies relating to foreign trade, investment, sectoral policies in women development, services and agriculture or technology policy that are in violation of WTO rules. Moreover, such rules will be binding upon the future governments.

Due to establishment of export oriented industry in the urban areas and microcredit programs in the rural areas the public appearance and mobility of the women has increased tremendously. They have entered into non-traditional occupations to a large extent. Increased female participation in the labour market empowered the women and consequently increased the women's bargaining power at the household level. It is also contributing to poverty alleviation by generating extra earnings for poor households.

Globalisation has everywhere marginalised the peasant sector. The marginalisation has been intensified by the TNC's dominated agribusiness of world agriculture facilitated by the "Green Revolution"; by the unequal liberalization of agricultural trade, including especially European Union and United States subsidy policies; by corporate monopoly of biotechnology; and by the withdrawal of government supports for agriculture and bias towards the industrial sector of the third world countries like Bangladesh. Withdrawal of input subsidies and increasing imports have acted in concert to depress agricultural prices, raise costs of production, reduce profitability, and hence discourage investment in agriculture. The resultant stagnation of agricultural production has constrained labour absorption, leading to an increase in unemployment, underemployment, and poverty in this sector. Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation's activities had been weakened as a consequence of withdrawing subsidy in agricultural sector. Seed, fertilizer, pesticide and irrigation facilities had been privatised. Moreover it is noted that per capita consumption strongly indicates a fall in real income of the poor in the 1990s. This suggests a shift in income distribution away from the poorest groups. The overall effects of these processes are the following: landlessness and joblessness, unviability of farms; poverty, indebtedness and destitution of peasants; loss or erosion of land rights, loss of on-farm decision-making, over-exploitation of natural resources; depletion of genetic resources; water scarcity, and soil erosion. As a consequence of low consumption around 70 per cent of the Bangladeshi women are still suffering from malnutrition. Malnutrition causes numerous diseases and death, and the burden falls mainly on the women and children of poor families.

Many farmers and environmentalists are concerned that in the end Third World farmers will be disallowed the traditional practice of saving seed for the next season's plantation (if the seed used is under the intellectual protection of a company and forced to purchase the seeds). TNCs would like to abolish the right of seed preservation by the farmers especially by the rural women. Because if this right to preserve seeds continues in the hand of villages then it will hamper to fulfil the greed of the TNCs of making endless profit in seed business sector.

Marketing of Hybrid and HYV seeds through BRAC, the world's largest NGO with microcredit and/or as a precondition of receiving microcredit would inevitably loss a considerable number of species of paddy in Bangladesh. Similarly HYV seed marketing of maize, millet, sunflower, pumpkin would cause loss of biodiversity. These initiatives would certainly destroy the seed stock of the indigenous Bangladeshi farmers and make these people dependent on ACI and other TNC marketed Hybrid and HYV seed. BRAC, ACI, Novartis etc. would obviously be able to make billion dollar's profit if a country like Bangladesh with a population of 130 million depend on these companies for seeds. Such profit making approach would hamper to sustain the vulnerable groups in Bangladesh. Since 60 per cent of the Bangladeshi population are getting 80 per cent of their daily calorie requirement so it can be assumed that the purchase capacity of the people is at a very low level. In this respect food production for profit rather than subsistence may entail more hunger in our country. Moreover, if the "Terminator Technology", that renders seeds sterile after one planting season would destroy the 12,000 year tradition of farmers keeping seeds for their own use.

Agricultural production with HYV and Hybrids requires more use of agrochemicals. It has been found that women are the worst victims of agrochemicals. Women work in agriculture throughout the year and are subject to occupational hazards due to exposure to biological and chemical agents.

TNCs based primarily in U.S., Canada, Europe and Japan are creating "trade related intellectual property rights" in the indigenous wisdom and resources of people who have lived sustainable for thousands of years. TNCs are expropriating native gene pools of plants, animals and even human beings for private gain, depriving local people of the right to maintain even a subsistence level existence. Locally, we may not see the direct social, economic, environmental and cultural impact of biotechnology, but by uncritically promoting it, we are aiding the destruction and dislocation of distant communities and ecosystems.

In Bangladesh existence of many local industries may be threatened by an onslaught of highly competitive imports and withdrawal of quota. Attainment of higher levels of productive efficiency in a country like Bangladesh, however, is constrained not only by economic factors such as shortage of skilled workers, weak physical infrastructure, low level of technology, but also by the various structural weaknesses, corruption, and weak governance.

Now Bangladeshi women are the major contributors in national export earnings. In Bangladesh, 75 per cent of the foreign earnings comes from the Ready Made Garment (RMG) sector and around 80 per cent of the workers in this sector is women. Because of their opportunity to work as a wage labourer they are in a position perhaps for the first time

in their lives to make decisions for themselves, to decide how to spend their money, how to marry, where to work and so on.

With the progress of WTO rules i.e. withdrawal of Multi Fibre Agreement and Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) by the USA and EU i.e. withdrawal of quota system Bangladesh will lose preferential access to the US as well as EU garment market which is presently granted under GSP.

To remain competitive in the quota-free context, therefore Bangladesh must be more competitive in the backward linkage sectors, and diversify into skill-intensive RMG items. Survival in the quota free situation would only can protect the garment industries as well as more than one million women garment workers from joblessness and poverty. In the changing situation training should be organized immediately after retrenchment for the women who will loss their job so that they can have new jobs in some other sectors.

Most of the retrenched workers have kin in the rural area because most of them migrated from the rural areas before starting to work in garment industries, once they loss the job, it is likely that they will either go back to their family in rural areas or will have no option but to adopt herself as a commercial sex worker (CSW).

To reap the advantages of globalization, densely populated countries such as Bangladesh must embark upon an aggressive policy of skill development. In this respect, Bangladesh has to complete with other Asian countries, and only skill development and labour standard development can provide that opportunity.

As part of the process of capitalist globalisaiton Bangladesh has to privatize different SOEs. As a consequence of privatization thousands of employees and workers have lost their jobs. Most of these workers are at their old or middle age so they have a very little chance to employ himself or herself into a new jobs. So retrenchment could only bring miseries and frustration to the family members of these retrenched workers. Such miseries will be more pronounced in case of retrenched women workers.

Bangladeshi handicrafts has a market in western countries. Due to the growing demand of handicrafts a large number of women has been engaged in handicrafts production. Thus the traditional unpaid women of the rural and urban areas have turned into paid labourers i.e. the traditional production relation has been changed.

Information technology has reached a level, which no one could have predicted a few decade ago. Globalization is offering the prospect of participation in this path of progress. The international market for computer-related services will expand at an unprecedented rate, and will include areas impossible to predict at present. So far, the software, data-entry, medical transcription industries have been most in demand; and, even if new activities and services do emerge, total demand in these areas is expected to boom. Proper utilization of these opportunities will certainly create job scopes for the women. Bangladesh can expect to participate in this global endeavour only if suitable policies are adopted to enhance the skill and productivity of labour.

Development of information technology have already enhanced the investment and business of pornography and sex. Satellite TV channels are supplementing in these business. This business helps to transform the women into commodity rather than establishing dignity of the women.

The internationalization is simply the investment of excess capital looking for super profits, and increasingly, because of financial deregulation, this capital is looking for a quick buck in a global casino. During the disaster in Bangladesh share market, 1996 a large number of housewives as well as working women lost their long term savings in the share market.

The working environment of the garment factories are not safe and hygienic. Most of the buildings were overcrowded, congested and poorly ventilated. It has been found from the recent statistics that during the last 10 years around 300 garment workers (most of them are women) died from fire accident in the factory.

The most perceptible adverse effect of employment in the garment industry is that on women's health. Garment workers, particularly the women, are exposed to toxic substances and dust, since they hold jobs where these hazards are greatest. The workers, particularly the operators and sewing helpers constantly inhale these substances. Illnesses or diseases further engrave because of long hours workload without any rest and entertainment and without any holidays. Most of the women garment workers work usually 12 hours a day and without any holiday.

The impact of commercialisation and privatisation of the social sector have deeper consequences on social and economic spheres of life. The inability of workers to utilize their mental and physical capacities leads to psychological frustration, leaving them vulnerable to appeals for serious dislocation of the social structure. We can hardly hope for enduring economic, social, and political stability in any society charged with such undercurrents of deprivation, dislocation, and frustration. Public health and education facilities is limited and on the other hand, private services for health and education is beyond the reach of the poor and middle class. So a decrease of public expenditure in social sector would inevitably increase the vulnerability of the poor especially the poor women.

There is a bright instance of environmental degradation by one of the most powerful oil company in Bangladesh i.e. wide spread fire in Magurchara while exploring for gas/oil by the Unocal. Oil industry predicts that by the year 2020, demand for oil will increase by two-thirds and demand for gas will double. So the demand for Bangladeshi gas will increase considerably and as a consequence of gas exploration/extraction the surrounding environment of the gas field will deteriorate significantly. Since according to the contract between the Bangladesh Government and the Trans National Oil companies around 80 per cent of the gas production will enjoy the Trans National Oil companies e.g. Shell, Unocal etc. and if we intend to buy our own gas then we have to buy it with foreign currencies i.e. US dollars. So the terms of conditions of the contract don't seem to be congenial for the interest of the people.

Every year oil company spends \$150 billion seeking new reserves of oil and gas. So to what extent they destroy the ecosystem, environment, habitat and livelihood of indigenous people is easily assumable. It is now an established scientific fact that oil and gas exploration is

changing the world's climate and the burning of fossil fuels is largely to blame. According to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, who are the world's leading climate scientists, if we continue on a business as usual scenario-exploring for more oil and gas – then we risk at least a 2-3 degree Celsius rise in temperature. So, an increase in temperature will massively destroy the environment and economy of Bangladesh. Exploration and extraction of gas and oil in the gas blocks in the Bay of Bengal and Sundarban will not only destabilize the ecosystem but also have a chance of disastrous accident like in Magurchara.

Shrimp export is expanding at the cost of destroying the coastal forest and agriculture and ultimately evicting the indigenous farmers from their own agricultural land. Shrimp cultivation in the agricultural land not only negatively influence the environment but also reduces indigenous people food production and generate unemployment and generate poverty. It has given rise to an army of a cheap women labour.

Due to global changes and demand in 2000 Bangladesh government need to evict thousands of “*Khasias*” to establish the “Eco-Park”. Environmentalists claim that the Eco-Park will attract numerous tourists and earn foreign currencies for the country but such steps will cause the loss of 500,000 species of plants and animals and eviction of thousands of indigenous people. Displacement of such people then actually means a total dislocation of lives. They cannot be relocated elsewhere, even in ‘model villages’ with grants of some land or compensation. They will be unable to survive there. So globalisation must negatively influence the matrimonial system as well as the women headed family system of the tribal areas if they are compelled to be evicted from their own land and have to live with the patrimonial system of Bangali community.

Bangladeshi migrant workers also faced threat in Malaysia and Korea during recession. All these meant massive unemployment, social frustration, falling of living stability, poverty, increase of homeless, criminals and suicides. In addition, most of the Bangladeshi women migrant workers face sexual harassment while working in the Arabian countries.

Gender discrimination is widening in the age of globalisation. For example, as one moves up the employment hierarchy in garment industry, the proportion of female employees declines gradually, becoming insignificant in the officer-technical category. Thus female employees fill more of the low-skill, low wage category jobs, while male employees get more of the more skilled, higher-wage jobs. Moreover, it is likely that a relatively larger proportion of female workers will face retrenchment due to probable crisis in this sector. This is because women have less bargaining power and receive less compensation when retrenched. In the informal sector, women are also deprived at a higher degree. Female/male wage ratio is 0.5 in the informal sector; 0.6 in the non-agriculture sector; and 0.66 in the agriculture sector. Men have more leisure than women.

The entertainment and culture industry in general converts the women and her body into a commodity quite openly and nakedly. The TNCs e.g. Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Virgin, Liver Brothers, ACI, Berger Paints, Novertis, John Player etc. are the pioneering agents of utilizing women in such advertisements.

According to different UN, international and media reports it has been found that thousands of women of Bangladesh are getting victims of sex trade in the form of sale of women, prostitution and pornography etc. The increase in the sex trade with the Bangladeshi women is no doubt largely due to the internationalization of sex tourism. According to estimates by human right activists, 200 to 400 young women and children are smuggled every month. In the UNICEF report "Progress of Nations", 1995, it has been reported that around 40,000 Bangladesh children are engaged in prostitution in Pakistan.

Globalisation will not solve the problem of inequality. Not will it feed, clothe, educate, and empower the majority of the world's people. On the contrary it has been a major factor in rendering increasing numbers of the world's people of hungry, homeless, destitute, illiterate and powerless in all areas of their life. What will empower people is their resistance to these processes and their participation in building viable political and economic alternatives. Massive reforms are needed on people's welfare and basic needs rather than on policies favoring international capital.

The findings of this exploratory study imply an urgent need for a knowledge-based action and advocacy on the issues involved. In order to expand our knowledge base on multidimensional aspects of gender perspective of globalisation and especially on impact of globalisation on women in Bangladesh it is of urgent necessity to conduct some studies (quantitative and qualitative) on priority basis. Such studies will contribute to our native knowledge industry so that the people and politicians may empower themselves with the knowledge generated for precaution and preparedness to face the evil effects of globalisation and to reap the advantages from the new global situation. Some of the studies to be conducted on priority basis are the following: Impact of industrial farming on women; health and environmental consequences of agro-chemicals use in agriculture; risk of introduction of intellectual property rights and use of HYV and Hybrid seed; situation analysis of the women for withdrawal of subsidies and government's negligence in social and agricultural sector; crisis coping national strategy for the women working in export oriented industries; health consequences of the women working for market oriented production; impact of globalisation on household food security and on household consumption pattern (especially of poor households); factors responsible for transforming the women into a commodity in the new global era etc.

We need to replace global imperialism with global democratic governance of the people of the world with social justice and social control of means of production. The foundation of our strategy is democratic empowerment. Just as globalization disempowers the people, our responsibility is to harness these displaced productive forces and empower the people to take matters into their hands.

## REFERENCE

- Martin Khor, "Some Critical Aspects of Globalisation", Third World Network Briefing Paper, 1997
- Hamid. A. "Non-market Work and National Income: The Case of Bangladesh" (1994), in S. Amin (Ed) Special Issue on Women, Development and Change, The Bangladesh Development Studies, Vol. XXII, June-Sept. 1994, Number-2
- Chowdhury MR, N Islam, C Jenkins, TA Azim (2000). The sero-surveillance and Behavioral Surveillance on STD and AIDS in Bangladesh 1998-99, AIDS/STD Control Programme, DGHS, June 2000.
- Shamim, Ishrat (1995). Trafficking and Sale of Women and Children; Bangladesh Perspective
- Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB). State of Human Rights in Bangladesh
- Wetzel, C.T. – *Personal communication, Brasilia, October, 1998*
- Rowell, Andrew, Globalisation and the Struggle for the Environment (1998). Paper Presented at the International Conference on "Alternative to Globalisation", organized by IBON and BAYAN, Philippines.
- Serageldin I. – *Development Challenges and Opportunities in the Global Village, 1998*
- Van-Heerden, Auret. 1998. *Export processing zones: The cutting edge of globalization?* (Geneva, International Institute of Labour Studies)
- See Rahman, Reshidan Islam, Skill Development in Bangladesh: Responses to Globalisation (2001). Social Impact of Globalisation and Role of Policy (ILO/UNDP SPPD Project)
- See Technical Evaluation of the ILO/UNDP Project No.BGD/85/153
- Rashid, Mohammad Ali, Globalisation, Growth, and Employment, (2001). Social Impact of Globalisation: Role of Policy (ILO/UNDP SPPD Project)
- Roy, Ajit, Civil Society and Nation State in Context of Globalisation, Economic and Political Weekly, August, 5-12, 1995
- International Labour Office, 1999a. Retaining and Redeploying of Workers Affected by Privatisation in Bangladesh, Draft (Geneva, ILO)
- Majumdar, Pratima Poul. Organizing Women Garment Workers: A means to Address the Challenges of Integration of the Bangladesh Garment Industry in the Global Market. Social Impact of Globalisation and Role of Policy (ILO/UNDP SPPD Project)
- Child Labour: Targeting the intolerable, International Labour Organization

## GLOSSARY

<b>AD:</b>	Anti-dumping
<b>BBS:</b>	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
<b>BEPZA:</b>	Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority
<b>BNPS:</b>	Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha
<b>GDP:</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>BRAC:</b>	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
<b>CCHRB:</b>	Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh
<b>CSW:</b>	Commercial Sex Workers
<b>EPZ:</b>	Export Processing Zone
<b>EU:</b>	European Union
<b>GSP:</b>	Generalized System of Preferences
<b>HYV:</b>	High Yielding Variety
<b>ILO:</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMF:</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IT:</b>	Information Technology
<b>MAI:</b>	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
<b>MFA:</b>	Multi Fibre Agreement
<b>MIA:</b>	Multilateral Investment Agreement
<b>NAFTA:</b>	North American Free Trade Agreement
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>OECD:</b>	Overseas Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PB:</b>	Privatization Board
<b>RMG:</b>	Ready Made Garment
<b>RO:</b>	Rules of Origin
<b>SAP:</b>	Structural Adjustment Programmes
<b>SCM:</b>	Subsidies and Countervailing Measures
<b>SOE:</b>	State Owned Enterprises
<b>SPS:</b>	Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Measures
<b>TBT:</b>	Technical Barriers to Trade
<b>TNCs:</b>	Trans National Corporations
<b>UNDP:</b>	United Nations Development Fund
<b>UNICEF:</b>	United Nations Children Fund
<b>WB:</b>	World Bank
<b>WTO:</b>	World Trade Organization