

The Impact of New Economic Policy on Women's Livelihoods – A Case Study from Indian Scenario

Zubeeda Banu

*Clinical Epidemiological Unit, Chennai Medical University, Chennai 600 003, Tamil Nadu,
India*

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ABSTRACT In developed countries while policies have been formulated to integrate women into the mainstream of development on equal terms with men both as agents and beneficiaries, in the developing countries the policies on women are yet to be formulated. As a result economic adjustment programmes have failed to solve the problem of poverty in third world countries making women suffer the most particularly in rural and in tribal areas where the response of macro policies to environmental degradation is very diverse in turn creating a negative impact on women. Moreover, in India economic adjustment programmes adversely affect women as the Indian society being largely patriarchal, the property rights are vested in men and do not accommodate women as owners of land. This has resulted in invisibility of the labour made by women which in turn creates a negative impact on other aspects of their lives for example, their access to education, new skill and technology, health and health related services etc. Policy makers, planners and particularly the economists have ignored the social and family structures that is, the social context in which the development is to take place. This has a greater impact on those households particularly headed by females both in rural, tribal and in urban areas. Moreover, development planning whether national or international has traditionally been gender blind and this as a backdrop, a study is being undertaken to analyze how the macropolicies formulated on the basis of changing global economic environment are having an impact on the women and on their livelihoods among the Malayali, a tribe practicing subsistence agriculture in Kolli hills, in Tamil Nadu.