Globalization, Education for women and Social Justice

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ARTICLE INFO

Background: The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relation among components being globalization, education for women and social justice. To achieve that end, the mutual relation between social justice and education for women was studied utilizing the role of cultural production and reproduction and Merton's functionalist theory. Moreover, via studying two aspects of globalization - cultural and political- and the effect of justice movements, the relation between globalization and social justice was surveyed. Besides, through studying the comprising elements of education and components being-empowerment, development and conception, the mutual relation between globalization and education was scrutinized. The library research method was used in this survey. This means, through referring to books, essays, documents and major scientific sites the relations among these 3 components were studied and scrutinized. It can be inferred, form the relevant resources to this study, that the three variables: globalization, education for women and social justice are interrelated and their influencing each other is inevitable.

INTRODUCTION

Considering the development of human societies, moving from pre-industrial society (agricultural economy) to industrial society (industrial economy) has been considered for both sexes. Due to men enjoying higher status in social hierarchy, they could earlier possess the development gifts. This inequality which manifests itself in the majority of societies, specifically the developing societies has challenged the movement towards sustainable development, hence, heightening women’s awareness through educating those increases their capabilities and participation in human development [21].

Globalization, as a widespread global phenomenon, also has had various impacts on people’s life worldwide including the rich or poor and men and women. Although, in today’s globalized world, there is no distinction between men and women, it seems that women experience the result of globalization more fully and directly. Women as the deprived and secluded members of society and not having access to resources and proper opportunities have been influenced differently by globalization [38]. Moreover, the findings of studies carried out on women and education in many countries around the world have revealed that men and women do not hold similar expectations with regard to education [25].

Because of lack of research in this domain and due to the significance and necessity of the topic, researchers embark upon studying the mutual relations between globalization components and education for women, globalization and justice, and finally justice and education for women.

In this study researchers try to answer the following questions:
A) Does globalization affect education for women or it is other way around?
B) Does education for women affect social justice or it is other way around?
C) Does globalization affect social justice or it is other way around?

Theoretical Foundation:

Education and globalization:

Globalization in its historical evolution in different hosts of problems in human societies has experienced changes. Although all the various educational domains e.g. higher education particularly universities from their inception have had some aspects of globalization, nowadays this concept is more fundamental and broader [17].
Education as a social arena can both be influenced by and influence globalization. To study the effects of globalization on education as a social institution, first, education can be analyzed as a system and then each of the key elements of the system can be investigated. To name the key elements and components of education system, we can mention the goals, the guidelines, the teachers, the learners, the curriculum and the learning strategies [22].

Also, we can adapt Carney’s view to study the effect of globalization on education systems. In this approach, areas in which changes occur can be: changes in financial approach, changes in job market, changes in education, and changes in information networks [17].

Douglas North maintains that in the epoch of information boom, if the human and social institutions capacities are not developed, no change will occur spontaneously. This task is to be in most part handled by education and related bodies that through adaptability with new conditions promote active participation in the process of globalization. The relation between globalization and education in the domain of learning processes starts at home and then it spreads to broader areas. However, it recognizes special and immediate necessities. These necessities are not necessarily in relation to market demand for new trainings meaning finding job but they mean changes in the geography of knowledge, skills and insight which are continuously being influenced by information, communication and social changes. That is why the role of education in developing the global capacity in areas such as capacity, development and conception becomes prominent.

Actually, such adaptations happen under the globalization and in a sense one can call them the effects of globalization on education which happens in areas as: decentralization, technology, and development of multiple-dimensional skills, migration, and brain drain. On the other hand, women as one of the most important elements in the process of globalization play a pivotal role in the formation of a global society where changes are specifically significant [2]. Women need to access ideas and new information which not only change their awareness and self-image, but also encourage them to act [20]. Empowering women is a key strategy to change their standing in the society and increase their share of decision making in global arena. Empowering women is possible via their education [27]. The institution of education is one of the procedures of knowledge and information [35].

Therefore, capable and independent women are the principle assets of a society on which foundation of progressivism and cultural, educational, political and economic improvements are laid. Besides, without taking women into account in culture and education, social changes will not occur [2].

Furthermore, women roles in different international movements and particular attention paid to “women and development” relate them to globalization and in a sense it is its respective realization. In reality, women movement has helped the compression of the world as a whole [31].

Education and Justice:

In Rowel’s view, Justice means fairness. In his idea, the key issue about justice is removing in equalities. (KhalaftKhani, 2008). John Stewart Mill was the first person who used the term social justice in its modern sense and explicitly equated that with the concept of distributive justice. In other words, the society should treat all the individuals who are similarly apt, equally [26]. Moreover, the concept related to term justice is equality. Political philosophers discussed two types of equalities: equality of condition and equality of opportunities. The former is based on the idea that people should live in a manner which minimizes their differences, and the latter is based on the idea that all humans enjoy a fundamental value which is resultant from potential qualities from people’s birth [20].

Equal educational opportunities mean that each individual via educational system can maximize his/her chances for success and prosperity, and such opportunities should be provided for everyone who can prepare oneself for active and full participation in society without any financial, cultural and social pressure [11].

A glance at the history of civilization and culture in human society reveals that inequalities have always been unjustified reality. Among them, inequalities between men and women are the ones which have always been debated continuously in the history of human [39]. Despite, the emphasis in universal declaration of human rights that the very essence of discrimination is not acceptable and announced that all the individuals are born free and equal and they enjoy all the rights and freedom mentioned in that “Declaration” without any discrimination including gender discrimination [7], we can still witness that women are being overtly discriminated against in their attempts to access education [10].

Now, we are to discuss the two ways through which cultural circumstances affect the development and continuity of gender relations [14].

Firstly, there are cultural values and beliefs which explain the various methods via which societies strive to achieve gender equality (ibid). Richard de Kens mentioned that cultural beliefs like gene, whereby education, idea exchange etc. spread in the domain of culture [35]. Notwithstanding the fact that, culture cannot be deemed as the cause for revolutionary change in relations between two genders, cultural circumstances fundamentally affect the characteristic and continuity of progression for women standing. Cultural norms and values set out guidelines that interpret and determine the relations between men and women and that how different societies
recognize the relation of gender equalities [14]. We know that education process in modern societies is the principle mechanisms which reproduce culture and they do not function only through formal education. Reproduction fundamentally occurs through latent plans (behavioral aspects that individuals learn at school through casual methods) [35] and penetrate into the whole social system via mutual influence.

Merton in defining the latent and manifest functions and dysfunction believes that manifest function are those that are intentional while latent functions are unintentional [30]. The manifest functions of education are reading and writing, multiplication table, making sentences, reading comprehension in class and grammar. Schools, moreover, teach the children the transference of values norms, beliefs and views.

He, furthermore, notes that a structure can have dysfunction for the whole system but it continues, nonetheless. A classic example of this is the discrimination against the black, women and minority groups that although they dysfunction, they continue their existence [12].

In Board Uniz’s perspective, the major function of school is not transferring knowledge to students, but it is producing and reproducing the existing system of social inequalities [34] that in school such common social values are institutionalized via publicizing and selecting. Researches, more often do not show that education intensifies the gender inequalities [39]. For example, it is pointed out that production and reproduction of the beliefs that females do not need to be very educated because they are to be mothers and housewives and that higher education erodes their femininity. Besides, some people believe that women are less intelligent than men.

Secondly, there are the cultural conditions related to the functionality and efficiency of the governmental institutions, which affect the continuity of gender relations [14].

In debates over the role of government on justice of higher education, if people’s perspective is assumed justice-oriented, this approach will be based on providing equal educational opportunities for individuals in society and if the perspective is elitism (meritocracy) the approach is based on unfairly treating the inequalities and the desired goal will be unfairly treating the inequalities. The government is responsible to promote distributive justice [28]. If the government policy is to reduce the inequalities for access to education, then it will build schools and universities in remote areas or it will reduce the tuitions so as to bulldoze the financial barriers for those who cannot cover the registration fees. However, if reduction of inequalities for educational participation is at stake incentives should be created for those who do not register at schools and that if it is the case the government will meet more expenses [23]. The primary responsibility of the planners is to strive to achieve equal opportunities and to uproot contracts in providing opportunities and accessibilities [19].

Therefore through the types of policies formulated for, equalizing and forming elite, shattering gender stereotypes in current textbook, supporting research on reasons and barriers for girls attending school, supporting talented and poor students families, producing content commensurate to students needs and job market expectations [1] and also enacting gender equality laws and executing it, governments can provide access to educational opportunities for all people.

Globalization and social justice:

Some people named globalization freeing power and others named it as “planet plunder” and “discrimination” [15]. In the modern world which is characterized by communication and very quick transport in its process towards globalization, people are much more aware of inequalities [13].

Dorien Musg, using the concept of power geometry, studies this significant phenomenon. He recognizes the compression of time-space, the most salient characteristic of the current globalized world. This compression is resultant from spectacular advances in communication and transportation technologies. This compression may help people to be in close contact but does not reduce or remove inequalities and discrimination, in contract, it makes them increasingly complicated.

Theoreticians, such as Daniel Bell, who believe that the advances in communicative technologies in recent decades are the foundation for revolutionary changes and the formation of information-oriented society, mention the increase of inequalities in studying the characteristic and consequences of this kind of new social organization. Since, in such societies information is categorized as the most effective and efficient tools and financial inequalities and broadens its scope [13].

Since globalization comprises different aspects including social, political, cultural and economic [32] and handling all of these aspects is out of the scope of one research paper, the researchers study the two aspects being political and cultural and their effects on social justice.

From political point of view, due to the political bodies scope of competence having been broaden significant changes have happened in the power and dominance scope of national governments and the nature of international system. In other words, the domain of political decision making is spreading over national governments and towards the entire globe. United Nation, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization are among the most important political agents worldwide who have to the dominance and authorities to make decision internationally [5].

In this aspect which includes concepts such as the government-nations and the reduction in concentration of government power, we will be witnessing the increase of power of international organizations and institutions
The efficacy of human rights has taken many observers by surprise. Governments were inclined to accept that human rights entails commitments in international rights, however, majority of them were reluctant to observe human rights in practice or were reluctant to make arrangements via discussion to avoid the blatant violation [8].

Considering the role of international bodies in employing the norms, changes, and revolution [35] we have witnessed the inclination of international bodies of human rights to ignore their inadequate fulfillment of their commitments and their supervision [8].

From cultural point of view one must mention the emergence of civic societies. International, cultural and social movements are part of this society and consider the issues and problems which are beyond the capability and the vision of national government. (International civic societies as a network of organization, whose goals and ambitions do not recognize national boarders, are the full realization of transnational relations). Pointing out the role of non-governmental organizations seems necessary at this point. Their key role is to gather information which will directly or indirectly be used to influence the national government to observe the human rights and civil liberties. Some such organizations tend to deal with affairs such as the removal of discrimination against women [5].

Furthermore, it is possible that governments continue their cultural, economic and political dominance over deprived groups in a civil society in order to beat or defeat the power of globalization process. Opel (2010) emphasizes the need for social movements to fight until achieving social justice particularly in gender and educational inequalities.

Conclusion:

Regarding the discussion in this research, as the review of literature relevant to globalization education for women and social justice, the following conclusions which are certainly foundations for future research can be drawn.

The emergence of information technology has cast doubts and has questioned the circumscribed educational atmosphere. The assumptions regarding such circumscribed atmosphere such as stability of discourse, written material and teacher as a transfer of meaning have been challenged. In this way an atmosphere is developed in which learners do not only explain the meanings, but they are actively involved in creating of meaning [4]. Under such circumstances women as an important section are more or less exposed to be affected by globalization process.

Moreover, education for women can improve and empower this caste, and will help their roles in this developing process. With improving awareness, women can get their message across via international and internet TV networks and via participation in social movements and establishing non-governmental organization play their role in the process of globalization and manipulate its trend.

Since education and higher education systems have latent and manifest functions they can both produce and reproduce gender inequalities regarding opportunities and accessibilities to educational facilities and help the establishment of a just, cultural system of values and beliefs which in turn help the provision of equalities of educational systems. Government also provides the changes of public accessibility to education and higher education through announcing and executing just policies.

With studying the political and cultural aspects of globalization and its effect on educational justice, researchers can conclude that with undermining the dominance of governments and the power increase of international, non-governmental organizations and institutions, these bodies and centers will probably be able to improve the equal chances for education by means of formulating international rules and regulations and via measures taken. Moreover women will influence the social justice by social movements can oblige the government to execute the laws regarding removal of discrimination.

REFERENCES


