CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study evidently shows the impact of "globalization" on various accounts and most importantly, the study unearths the negative impacts and the extent at which it influence the women of the third world and their work force. Different scholars come up with different interpretations and view about globalization on various grounds and each has different description of globalization with positive and negative perspectives. Generally accepting "globalization" is not a new term. It is obvious that globalization does not operate in vacuum but has to contend with older and entrenched forms of operation. Globalization brings to bear upon the prevailing patriarchal system and the lineaments of gender relationships at the economic, political, social and cultural levels.

Globalization offers a model of modernity. In order to achieve this project of bringing modernity, the process of globalization gives special significance to women as they are either the subjects or the objects in the process. As proponents of modernity have to negotiate with traditionalism in a patriarchal system, the onus of upholding and preserving 'traditional' identities generally lies upon the women. Most of the paradigms of modernity have a special implication on women. It has to reach out to them so that traditions may be reformulated: whether as a strategy for cooption or to inaugurate radical breaks in them. Yet, patriarchy prevails. In earlier periods, women rulers and heroines were the forms of recognition of women's positions in traditional society. As the country became more modernized, women had to strive more and more to be recognized. Before modern period, inequality and exploitation was seen within family context. After adopting market economy and capitalistic conceptualization of development, forms of inequality and exploitation became more commercialized and trans-nationalized. Therefore the process of globalization interrupted the whole set up and system and leave women nowhere to belong except as cheap labour in private sector, owned by the inventors of globalization.
In the earlier stage of globalization it is said that globalization is about making things global. It is the process of creating languages, services and products that apply not just to an individual, neighbourhood or city or country but to the whole world. No doubt globalization has brought many changes in the world but at the cost of gender equality in society. The detrimental changes can also be seen in forms of deepening global poverty, rapidly increasing stress and workloads in both the paid and unpaid labour force. All this affected women in a major way.

The expectations of the globalization to set up a universal culture where everyone will enjoy equal freedom and benefit no longer exist. Under the roof of globalization, local products, services and cultures disappear into a global culture - a culture defined not by the global citizenry but rather by the world’s economic and political superpowers. Unfortunately, globalization is not about equal exchange. It is about concentrations of profit and power in certain parts of the world and within certain segments of people. It gives benefits to some particular country and specific institutions or groups of people in Third World countries.

**Globalization and its impact**

By the end of Cold War, with the emergence of regional organizations like APEC, PECC, ASEAN, ARF and their development initiatives in the region, people started counting the positive side of globalization. This accounts for the rapid progress of smaller countries of the Southeast Asia and it is surprising to know that 30% of the world economy is controlled by Asia. However, along with this progress, globalization and its strategies brought huge negative impacts on poor countries. Under this process, capital moves at a high speed and structured a system (quasi-governments) in the form of multinational financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund. In the name of giving equal opportunities and benefits worldwide, these institutions take advantage of the cheap labour of poor countries and discriminate them from various angles. With globalization of capital and flexible employment, labour (especially women labour) was seen as more fragmented into irregular, temporary, subcontract, informal and home-base workers. This fragmentation
impacted to a degree so as to shatter the unified identity of the working class which founded the basis for solidarity actions. We can clearly relate this fact to the Marxist-feminist proposition that, oppression of women is not a result of the single intentional act of the individual. It is a rather a product of the political, social and economic structures associated with capitalism.

Among all key policies being imposed by globalization on developing countries, three important features - a cut in subsidies, leaving distribution to the market and targeting the ‘poorest of the poor’ across the world are the mostly adopted features in every Third World countries.

One of the severe impacts of the globalization on workers especially on women due to greater bargaining strength of internationally mobile capital is the imposition of tougher conditions by both local and international capitalists. This has an impact not only in the form of low wage rates and discrimination of women workers in the work place but also the legal institutions also that are suppose to protect the workers of the country. Flexibility begins to arise in the legislation of laws that concerns labour like reduction of maternity leave, worsening safety conditions in the workplace and inadequate compensation of industrial accidents etc.

Above all, the problem of unemployment is very much linked to the policies of globalization. In a globalization process, the authority of the government is minimal and with a view to attract the foreign direct investment, government takes different measures and policies which adversely affect the work performance of the poor especially in unpaid labour, majority of which is women. This leads to the Marxist’s famous paradigm, where women as against men, are at the receiving end of a class society.

In the era of globalization, poor become poorer and it hits the women hardest, as women comprise half of world’s poor. The accessibility of women as cheap labour is an attractive proposition to globalization and hence explains the evil nature of globalization hitting the hardest on women. Globalization hence is a nightmare to the women.
Women as a marginalized state

As far as our collective memory can go in the history of humanity, whatever else the category 'women' may signify it has always been one of the marginalized categories. The status and position of women in the society gets aggravated by the process of globalization into more vulnerable ways as financial globalization is a nightmare to the women who are the poorest of the poor, the most violated and the most alienated among all throughout the universe. The process of globalization is patriarchy in character and this only adds to the burden and problems in a woman's life.

The biological and social roles of women as mothers, homemakers and careers circumscribe their ability and opportunity to function on an equal basis with men in most economic spheres. It happens in traditional occupations and sectors, loosely described as the Old Economy and is likely to persist even in the so-called Digital or New Economy. Societal roles or biological attributes do not always work against women. The patience and persistence needed for repetitive work or the ability and inclination to work in a team are the qualities that management often associates with women. This perception, real or stereotyped, partly explains the feminization of workforce in the manufacturing industries of export-processing zones, the blessing zones of globalization in the developing world.

Despite all the displays of equal opportunity for all human beings, the view of biology as destiny is still very much alive today. As such, this ongoing interest in the roles of modern women both within and outside the domestic sphere has fanned the flames of the debate on women's abilities to juggle work in both public and private spheres. Although women work alongside men outside the home, they still perform two-thirds of the world's work, earn ten percent of the world's income and own less than one percent of the world's property. The reason for this lies in the fact that women are still seen as part of the fact of the things coming under the male's governance. Consequently, women during the ages have always been a site for male imperialist ambitions.

With globalization, women are destined to work in a vulnerable and impoverished sector. The discrimination against women and poor treatment meted to them can be seen in the
form of unequal wages, no maternity benefits, sexual harassment, poor nutrition and ill health. They are widely involved in variety of invisible work and often shoulder the dual burden of paid and unpaid labour which tends to be ignored in calculations of labour. Women were the preferred labour force because the work involved in the manufacturing processes like, reparative work requiring high levels of accuracy, manual dexterity and a light touch, embodying the kinds of tasks are traditionally carried out by women. Women’s psychological make-up, passivity, docility, controllability and a capacity for hard work have also been cited as contributory factors. The predominant reason for employing women is economic since it leads to lowest cost in the production process. Along with this, owing to the specific ways in which gender relations are constructed through socio-cultural and religious processes, women are considered more likely to submit to directive discipline and to a patriarchal labour regime since they are regarded as non-political and less prone to union participation compared to men. These are regarded desirable traits in factory assembly-line production.

Despite the educational progress and contributions of women in business and professional fields, they are deprived of respectable positions in the higher strata. Women occupying decisive position in an organization are exceptional. In contrast, women have exercised increasing influence in non-governmental organizations. Though their participation in the labour force is increasing day by day in the country, they rarely account for more than 1 or 2 percent of top executive business positions. Women are well represented in the professions related to health and education but most of them still work at the bottom levels of hierarchy with respect to both their status and wage. They rather tend to be concentrated in clerical positions where supply exceeds demand and hence find it very difficult to find alternate jobs when laid off.

Women in Southeast Asia

In the history of Women in Southeast Asia, it was well known that women were frequently stereotyped. Many outside sources on women refer to their relatively high social position and link this to their economic autonomy, the veneration of fertility in indigenous religions and bilateral kinship systems in which descendant and property may
pass through both the female and male lines. We can here refer to the existence of matrilineal descent among the Minangkabau in Sumatra.

In some areas of Southeast Asia, women are actually ruled and successfully governed only by their skilful knowledge in various fields including markets and in matters of diplomacy. History of Southeast Asia is the biggest proof of it. Apart from this, in all Southeast Asian countries, we see patterns of (more or less) gender-asymmetrical marriage, domicile and inheritance, ideologies of domesticity and gender-typed reproductive responsibilities (apart from a few notable exceptions). Thus, the class of women who work and the kind of work they do are contingent on male decision-making in the family, euphemized as family decision-making or household strategy. Most Southeast Asian countries show a high plateau where extended families and traditions of women’s work have precluded the need for interrupting careers and employment upon marriage and / or child bearing. The double peak implies a temporary interruption in women’s employment, usually for care of young children.

Looking at the economic growth in the Southeast Asian countries over the past few decades, it is quite evident that many new opportunities were presented to women. However, globalization being partial to men and male institutions, women has not been able to grab those opportunities. Therefore it is not at all a process to build a global culture or to bring equality and progress to the entire world. Rather the whole process is tailored to fulfil the needs and development of only men.

Globalization hits the poor the hardest and among them, it hits women even harder. South East Asian Women are no exception to this. Above all, they carry the multiple burden which have been added by the process of globalization and they are suffering in their own country due to lack of proper maintenance in various departments which are essential for women like unequal wage system, less chance to access education, medical facilities as the governments is cutting down expenditure in these sectors.
The freedom and power women enjoy in most Southeast Asian countries are largely limited within the family but are constrained in the possibility of public activity. Outside their homes, women suffer discriminations in the labour market. Paid work are usually monotonous, always physically demanding and carries the danger of sexual harassment. In industries of many Southeast Asian countries, despite discrimination against them like lack of security, considerable gender variance in wages, long hours and deplorable work conditions, women report a positive attitude to wage employment. They have benefited, not only in areas like autonomy, self-confidence, improved conjugal lives, matrimonial relationships but also in decreased fertility and an increased age of marriage. Even where wider societal attitudes remain negative towards these women, they retain a positive self-image. Thus in some cases wage employment has led women towards some forms of 'autonomy', self-confidence, assertiveness and new values of self-worth.

It is evident that women in Southeast Asia enjoy more freedom from various angles as compared to their counterparts in other regions. However, this has changed with the entry of outsiders (Portuguese, Spanish and the Dutch) from the sixteenth century. Their strategy to drain resources from this region has brought many changes which affect the lives of both men and women of Southeast Asia. These changes include development of major urban centres, increased monetization of economy, evolution of plantation agriculture to meet the demands of the export trade, greater disparities in the sex ratio etc. The whole process brings various transformations into the lives of the Southeast Asian countries and impoverishes them further. The same process is being forwarded by globalization in every front and put women into susceptible conditions.

The entire policies and programmes aimed to attract FDI particularly hinder the development and welfare of the women community. Western influences drag the women of Southeast Asia into the marginalized status in every department and lose the status and freedom which they use to enjoy in their traditional society. Thailand is one of the Southeast Asian countries which come under this category.
Globalization and Thailand

In the global market, it is believed that women are treated at par with men in Thai society. However, the truth is quite contrary to these beliefs.

Traditionally Thai women enjoy full rights and freedom without any limitations and restrictions. There were no marked preferences of boy over girl child in the family. Freedom to get married according to her/his choice, and right to get divorce, easy sex relations, bilateral kinship and families were largely organized around women. At present, many of them enjoy a higher rate of participation in every sector of this modern world. Moreover, the active participation of Thai women in various fields especially their distinctive and strong participation in the economy of Thailand portrays their empowerment. This however led to the general perceptions that Thai women are treated equally in the society but in practice they are treated unfairly in several ways. Women have been taught about their role and duties since their childhood making them familiar with cultural environment and practices. It was even the pride of some women to make their husbands comfortable and satisfied. Moreover, they had to own all the responsibilities of household chores. This unveils the actual treatment of them as second class citizen. This situation is partly due to the social construction and their role in the society which is still widely prevalent in the Thai society.

Stemming from Hindu or Buddhist teachings, present day's local practices and rituals in Thai society still show a certain degree of male dominance or superiority. The impact of traditional religious beliefs on the local beliefs and practices of rural people is also very prominent.

During the decade from 1968 to 1996, the policy of open economy which was the main driving force that facilitated the integration of the country into the world market, has encouraged rapid economic development in terms of industrialization and committed the Thai society to the globalization process which promoted the model of global export. This model of export-oriented growth (“neo-liberal”) promoted by the World Bank, which dominated Thailand’s economic policy since the 1980s has intensified regional,
class and gender biases in the society. It has biased the economy towards production for export markets, diminished the role of government, favoured unfettered capitalist development, and privileged the urban area over the rural and promoted tourism as a source of foreign exchange. These whole processes of globalization have resulted in multinationals being able to exercise considerable influence on the local labour market. This export-led pattern of industrialization was also highly urban oriented, with the highest concentration of industry in the Bangkok metropolitan area, which accentuated the tendency for rural-urban migration, a significant proportion of which were women.

Dramatic economic growth of Thailand has provided various opportunities for women to participate in various occupations, including those occupations once dominated by men like gaining managerial positions in big companies. Today, this is dramatically changing, especially among learned and/or career women. Because of the socioeconomic changes, women are becoming aware that they must change their behaviour to facilitate adaptability in their new role- mother, career and wife. The difficulty that women face is not only the rigid sex-role stereotype that is deeply rooted in the Thai society but also the training they received since childhood to think of other’s needs, to the nurturing, giving unselfishly to children, family and boss.

As far as the positive impact of globalization in Thailand is concerned i.e. expanding economy which lifted the majority of Thai people out of poverty, it is just a face value. The reality behind the growth is that the benefits of economic growth have been uneven and there are sharp differences between the city and the countryside, particularly between the poorest region and the capital city. In the Northeast, where one-third of the Thai population lives, 45 percent of its population was in poverty in 1975, compared to eight percent among Bangkok’s population. In 1992, the disparity remained; about one in five persons in the Northeast remained in poverty, in contrast to just one in 100 persons in Bangkok. Among these women, those who migrated to cities to look after their family by working in the EPZs have to work in a most uncordial work environment.
So far, the products exported from Thailand have been based on traditionally abundant cheap labours. The private sector has tried to maintain its competitive advantage and keep the cost of labour low by relying on these cheap labours and by extending subcontracting into the informal sector. The common characteristics of labour-intensive industries are Tayloristic production lines, where cheap, docile and unorganized predominantly female workers are employed to perform monotonous and repetitive tasks, involving economies of scale and the production of standardized goods for export primarily to developed countries.

No doubt, the government of Thailand launched many programmes to improve the status of women and many laws were introduced to protect the women. However, a wide gap between theory and practice can be seen. There exists a considerable gap between the theory and practice / reality with respect to laws meant to protect the interest of the women.

Plans to enable women to better cope with their present dual roles of homemaker and career woman, or schemes to get men to help in the housework are still dependent on perpetuating the differences between the sexes and rely on the traditional mindset of ‘biology is destiny’. As an impact of globalization, the increasing interest of preserving men’s personal individualistic identity and women’s collective identities as domestic drudges led political and sociologists to return to the examination of the sexes in a bid to determine whether the ‘innate biological and psychological natures’ of human beings are gendered in order to see how they cope with their changing roles in society.

In case of Thailand, partial deconstruction of the social meaning of gender relations yield that with traditional-matriarchal-bias social system where women seems to have authority in certain domain and the concept of women power and authority in a particular space (beyond the household compound to include the market place) has been recognized. Even if it has been diminishing more and more as foreign or non-Thai influences (Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian and Western) came in, it is possible to imagine a reconstruction where similar power and authority of women and men is reinstituted.
Thailand has experienced considerable cultural impact and social transformation as a result of globalization. The most notable effects can be seen in the changes in cultural understanding by various social groups in conflicting and contradictory relationships between self, family and community on the one hand and between the state and localities on the other. The most visible is the vulnerable condition of the women workers who are suffering under many heads in various fields.

Women in Thailand

Though Thai women enjoy higher status as compared to their counterparts in other South East Asian countries, from the available sources and old saying, it is clearly apparent that women have been always treated as second class citizen. Whatever changes come in the modern Thailand, the patriarchy have never been uprooted from the society and women could never escape the perils of the system.

The treatment of women as second citizen in the society whether in the early period or in contemporary world are clearly noticeable from the government’s policies and programmes i.e. social issues in the third plan which cover only interest of women on family planning issues.

Women in Thailand, for a long time contributed to the economic well-being of their country. The process of globalization which is very much urban centred, opened several new opportunities (both in the formal and informal sectors) for women. Participation rate have increased in both urban and rural areas but a closer look at the occupational distribution and earning reveals that Thai women are still very much concentrated in few types of employment, mostly of low status and with minimal rewards. At the same time, for unskilled women with little education, the sexual service industry offers a very lucrative return. Given society’s tacit acceptance of this profession, more and more women have recently been induced to choose this alternative over low paid, unskilled jobs.
Since 1970, along with the rapid economic development, there has been a considerable progress among the Thai women resulting from comparatively equitable cultural traditions. However, certain groups of women remain at a severe disadvantage compared to men and consequently their potential to contribute to national development is often overlooked and always been ignored. Overall, the net result is that economic development process (accompanied by environmental destruction and Bangkok-centred growth) in Thailand has affected a large number of women negatively. Losing their environmental subsistence base, they migrate to Bangkok where they mostly find jobs in the informal sector or some low-paying unsafe occupations. The conditions of Thai women workers, especially unskilled women, are still worse and generally ignored by major bodies. This has also been demonstrated by the economic downturn since 1997 that they remain the most disposable workers who are often the first to be laid-off and few have access to severance or redundancy payments. Along with these, the weak social system of Thailand is incapable of supporting these women and their family. Employment for women in Thailand still remains concentrated in the unskilled or semi-skilled sectors and also in the informal agricultural sectors.

Over the past few decades, with opportunities in the service and industrial sectors expanding, the process of industrialization of the Thai economy coupled with the globalization of the international labour market results in large numbers of Thai women migrating from their homes to other centres for employment, especially in Bangkok metropolitan area. Women were preferred employees for the new jobs such as clothing and shoe manufacturing, sorting of transistors, assembly of pocket calculators and handling of microchips for computer components. Currently, female migrant-workers are placed in extremely susceptible positions as they venture forth into jobs away from their family and community support.

Thailand acceded to the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 with reservations concerning seven articles. Many reservations have been removed then, due to tremendous pressures from different directions including NGOs who are working on women issues. Women’s movement in
Thailand has been recognized only with announcement of International Women’s Year. This was followed by numerous women’s decade and activities. United Nations also make its presence felt in form of pressures on governments to force them to change policies not beneficial to women and to work towards improving the status of women within each country. After this, interest on women’s issues by policy makers became apparent as the women’s decade and Thailand Fourth National Development Plan (1977-1981) included a youth and women development program. The rationale for promoting women’s development activities in the fourth plan was to improve the economic, social and political status of women. General objectives were identified for the section on women development plan with strategies to give them opportunities to earn supplementary income. However, the plans and policies concerned to women are not being implemented in a proper manner.

The implementation of economic policies, including structural adjustment programmes, trade liberalization and the privatization of education and health services has compounded the feminization of poverty. For example, global economic trends take local form in terms of loss of livelihoods, unemployment, trafficking in women, street children and a total rupturing of the social fabric that binds communities together. Moreover, when international policies and economic transactions cause local economic crises, women are affected in different ways from men and in most cases, they suffer more.

When we look at the overall picture of economic growth in Southeast Asia, it is found that the growth is based on the economic activities of these multinationals-owned electronic companies which seem to prefer employing more women than men workers. This deliberate policy of recruiting women is closely related to the nature of the electronic industry. The industry requires workers who can perform intricate work with diligence, patience and speed. And women always fit better to men for these types of jobs. Despite this, women are the ones who suffered the most because of this growth. These multinational establishments have earned a reputation associated with terms like “footloose industries” or “runaway electronics”. This imply that when local conditions are no longer conducive to their interests, they can easily retrench their workers and
transfer their operations to other countries which can provide them with better facilities and cheaper labour. This has a severe impact on women as majority of workers are women. Thailand is one of the countries in Southeast Asia which represents maximum number of women workers especially in manufacturing sectors.

Feminization of Production and Consumption has been a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for this pattern of growth and development. The feminization of production rests ultimately on the patriarchal subordination of women in factories, commercial sex work and unpaid agricultural and household labour. This subordination has been exacerbated as a result of Thailand’s adoption of “structural adjustment” programmes in the 1980s, with its emphasis on export-oriented growth and tourism as sources of foreign exchange for industrialization. The Feminization of Consumption has meant the transformation of the lives of Thai women through the breakdown of the traditional family, the commoditization of women through the growth of Madison Avenue style advertising images and through patterns of consumption which affects women’s lives as mothers, wives and partners. Thai women have become objects of consumption through men’s clubs, tourism and the international traffic in women. Therefore, Thai women are considered as the product of the contemporary process of economic growth and the historical development of changing gender relations in Thailand.

It is noted that a rapid process of industrialization and urbanization is taking place amidst the largely agrarian population of Thailand. However, the benefits of growth are not well distributed. There are class and urban-rural inequalities in the distribution of wealth and further gender inequalities in the areas of health and education. The growth is beset not only by poverty and inequality but also by the environmental degradation, the spread of AIDS, the lack of trained human resources and urban deterioration which affects the lives of Thai women.

Among those in the modern sector (professional, administrative, clerical, transportation and communication and blue collar occupations), the proportion of women in the professional and clerical classes was comparable to men’s while it was five times less
than men’s in administrative occupations. The only occupation that was dominated by women is sales, the traditional sector where most of the activities were referred as informal – street sellers, petty traders, hawkers, domestic servants, construction workers, junk dealers and casual labourers. Here the question is how does globalization brings equality and freedom among all and promote the status of women in the society? Ironically globalization put women and their work force into more vulnerable conditions with limited options but multiple responsibilities.

Available evidence on employment of women in the modern sector of the Thailand is sufficient to conclude that the existing concentration in certain occupations and positions is due to deliberate discriminatory practice against women with the process of globalization. At the same time, society’s attitude regarding the “proper” role of women and women’s own perception of what their primary goals in life should be are important influences. The enrolment of young women in educational and training institutions is still overwhelmingly in traditionally female subjects which could be the result of women viewing work as extension of their role as wife and mother.

It is however said the whole process of development and globalization has had a contradictory impact on women. No doubt, many women are getting opportunities like new industrial jobs, liberty in many angles, money, new status, opportunity and freedom and gain knowledge to better access to health and education. But still women are engaged in jobs with low skills and they are paid quite less than average. They end up working in health hazard prone areas where they are concentrated at the bottom of employment list. Therefore, they have been kept out of the decision-making process. Despite economic growth in the country and number of women workers in several fields, there is hardly any impressive improvement in the condition of women in the area of politics, religion, law and the military. They have limited control, power and choices over many sectors. Therefore, it is said that globalization and the development process in the transformation period of Thai society negatively affects the status of women. The situation of Thailand is that persistent patriarchies combined with market influenced governance makes it a lot difficult for human rights, including women’s rights, to be upheld.
A conclusion is that, proportionately more women than men were given a secondary role in the labour market as evident from the seasonality of labour utilization. Secondly, under utilization of women power was apparent. Classification of female employment by work status indicates that in spite of high participation rates, most women workers, especially in the rural areas, virtually worked at home and thus assumed double roles of gainful employment and doing domestic work. Along with the Industrialization, globalization has further added the problems which discriminate women in the modern Thai society. Instead of providing solutions to the gender inequality, globalization had sharpened the division between the two sexes, leading to disempowerment of women. Globalization has also entrenched gendered hierarchies in the labour force as well as increased the percentages of women living below the poverty line. Besides these, globalization per se is male oriented. Its new technologies are made for male use. Hence, men become skilled labour and women unskilled. Women are therefore not fit in the higher level of payable works. Thus women have been exploited under the process of globalization. Female labour is thus increasingly integrated into global production but in a fragmented form with contradictory consequences.

It is universally accepted that there is a close linkage between law of the country and status of women. It is also true in case of Thailand that the current economic conditions and structural policies give further constraints to women’s economic opportunities. Amending laws do not effectively protect women from discrimination. It has to be implemented in a proper manner. For these reasons, governments must take concrete steps and exercise them to protect women, especially disadvantage women. Along with this, strategies must be thought of to bring gender equality in the society and maintain justice in various fronts.

**Recommendations/Suggestions**

Being in the same society as men, women are inclined to be affected by any socio-economic changes, government policies or social values but at national and international front, they are nearly non-existent. Apart from instances of raising their voices against terrorism, ethnic prejudices and rights violation, women have been ineffective in their
efforts to question about their rightful place in the society. “Feminists movements” also are not adequate enough to highlight the significant roles women can play in the society nor are they efficient in voicing the concerns of women about their status, development, security or rights.

Number of reasons could be attributed to the pathetic state of women in society. Patriarchy, which is cultural, socio-economic and political in nature, is the root cause behind it. Besides patriarchy, Globalization, in the name of bringing equality and progress in the society, also to a great extent is accountable for the deteriorating status of women. In almost every sector women are represented at the lowest rug and discriminated on various grounds. Women workers in factories are not even permitted to get involved in union activities to be a part of it. Scarcity of female workers in unions only hampers the legal reforms and its related gender issues. These necessitate discussing women issues deeply, analyze the impact of globalization, highlight gender equality issues and initiate programmes to uplift women’s position in the society.

Various measures can be taken up in the interests of Thai women to improve their status and way of living and protect them from the merciless impact of globalization. National and international government, organizations and agencies etc. can collectively strategize and play active roles to reform public opinion and action in the direction of eliminating formal and informal gender discriminations in the society. There are many areas which are pivotal to bring about a realization of gender equality and improvement of the status of women in the society.

These areas are—

Empowerment of Women:

- “Empowerment” here applies to the empowerment of women for the cause of women. No doubt, this process of empowerment can play a vital role and should be the foremost and the most important measure to advocate gender equality. Besides this step, men need to actively get involved and support this process to
help reconstruct the social meaning of gender relation – a relation where men and women are considered at par with no domination and exploitation of each other.

- It is important to bring changes at the individual, family and community level. In order to bring these changes both women and men should examine and rethink their various roles, beliefs and values. Social transformation will occur on a global scale only when it is demanded by large segments of the population, including both women and men; but the demand will come only through the empowerment of women-efforts that must occur at all levels in society.

- The ultimate challenge of the future is important to make the achievement of women’s rights not just a political project but a successful method to identify and transform hidden power and the rules of the game that stand in the way of social, cultural and economic transformation. Therefore it is important to go beyond influencing traditional power, such as courts, parliaments or CEOs’ offices, in order to change the unwritten rules upon which patriarchy flourishes.

- It is important to bring changes at the legislative front. In this process progressive women politicians can be strong allies in helping to push legislation to regulate gender relations within the home. Besides domestic violence laws and policies governing child maintenance which have already paved the way, the state should protect women in the domestic sphere and this can happen when they are pushed by women who are assertive and consistent enough in their demands. Therefore, to increase the political representation in the country in various stages is an encouraging strategy.

Effective Approaches:

- It is noted that different approaches dealing with studies of women and its issues are thought of by different organizations. They have distinct terminology, different experts, specialized methodologies, separate agencies and ultimately they target different institutional actors. Over the years, this persistent divide has resulted in unnecessary duplication of efforts as well as approaches that lack holistic understanding. In order to bring gender equality, the key for the future is
to maximize the strengths and minimize the weakness in all approaches to gender equality.

- All the policies and programmes should be gender sensitive because it is not enough to have the right laws and the institution of justice but also a change in values is necessary so that the judges and police do not act out on patriarchal biases. In order to bring new gender-sensitive policy and programme formulation, changes are required at three levels i.e. substantive - substantive changes require clearer concepts and understanding about gender issues, how development processes affect the power relations between men and women; institutional - institutional changes include establishing not only more women's organizations but local and governmental agencies that meet the needs of women and finally value oriented changes.

- The international bodies and national governments should be more sensible regarding burden of women workers as they are overburdened with work like domestic work, reproduction etc. Difficult situations that home-workers faced due to social exclusion may be eased if there are suitable social protection schemes.

- Decentralization of decision-making from national to local levels and strengthening international institutions, such as World Trade Organization are two trends that can be taken up effectively. The policies of these international bodies can be at odds with those of national governments. Hence it is essential to resolve this complicated rapport and become clearer on how to work efficiently with both outside institutions and allies on the inside. Women need to play a strong role in transforming the current crisis into democracy. Only when organizations and processes of power and decision-making are held accountable for women's rights, will equality be a reality. This means that we will first need to pay much greater attention to the influence of decision-making processes as well to accountability and transparency of governance structures at local, national and international levels.

- It is perceptible that the main factors influencing the behaviours for women and men are the traditional and cultural norms and one's intelligence, problem-solving or decision-making skills are traits not specific to male or female. No
organizational bodies or scientific research suggests that men possess genetic traits which endowed them with more intellectual, better problem-solving or decision-making skills. It is only the traditional and cultural customs that have provided them favorable learning conditions to enhance their intelligence, given them the responsibility to solve problems and make decisions in the past. Gender-based behaviour differences are myths; these stereotypical beliefs can be shattered if we just look beyond gender and examine one’s behaviour.

- Policies and instruments of international trade, investment and finance must undergo serious re-conceptualization and they must stop treating human rights issues as not an essential entity to other formulation and operation. Existing debt relief and poverty eradication measures must also be examined in detail and undertaken from a human rights perspective.

- Integration of gender-related analysis within the activities of major organizations i.e. WTO, IMF, World Bank have been quite minimal and not taken up seriously. It is indispensable to “engender” the institutional frameworks within which the processes of globalization are being elaborated. In addition, there arise an immediate requirement to carry out gender-specific analysis of the impact of globalization in its trade, investment and financial aspects.

- A reform of the institutions that presently draft the rules to govern the processes of globalization is essential. More attention must be given to the rules of international trade, investment and finance policies. Issues concerning participation and involvement, transparency in decision-making, negotiations, dispute settlement, trade and investment policy reviews must be addressed by these reforms. Special emphasis must also be given to gender sensitive issues linked with leadership, recruitment and inclusiveness.

- Various studies have made light to gender-specific policies affecting the gender wage gaps. Policies like equal opportunities laws, anti-discrimination laws, parental leave provisions and the availability of childcare are few instances of them. These wage gaps also get most probably influenced by wage setting institutions such as those governing collective bargaining and minimum wages that do not directly impinge on gender.
There is a constant need to amplify the efforts in bringing a constructive change in the functioning of organizations and on the cultural, political and other underlying power relations that act as a hindrance to equality of sexes. This implies sorting out serious problems behind gender inequality. This include addressing power head-on namely classism, racism and sexism and also issues like work-family divide and cultural traditions which have up till now been considered in the private realm. Most importantly, prior to all this, the initiative must be taken first by each individual and organizations. To make our organizations more effective both in terms of impact and sustainability, we need to re-adjust the basic planning and strategies of our organizations wisely. Our organizations need to embody the rules and norms which we are trying to put in place in our communities and countries by working from values of anti-oppression, sustainability, transparency and participation.

The young generation should be encouraged and inspired to get involved in women’s movements. New generation ideas, energy, strategies and visions will provide a must needed boost to the movements and give them more visibility.

To deal and efficiently tackle global structures and systems worldwide, feminist movement should mutually work together with a common goal. We need more feminist in decision making process to confront this global patriarchal structures obstructing women’s visibility. The criteria for taking part in the women’s movement should not just be based on biology. Rather, the criteria should centre on one’s outlook towards the power and authority of feminism. We need feminist with power. We need a feminist conceptualization of power and governance. Feminist men should also be encouraged as the main objective of the feminist movement is to bring equality in society and men standing for the cause of women would strengthen the movement immensely.

Government and non-governmental organizations at the international level and national, state, civil society organizations/corporations at the national, state and local level should make decisions and policies keeping in view the universal rights of women.
• Efforts must be initiated to educate the decision-makers at all levels about the plight of women and encouraged them to shape decisions which would help women to achieve their internationally recognized rights.

• An important strategy that can be adopted by women to counter globalization in the next few decades should be primarily achieving women’s rights and this strategy should be strongly supported by an ‘honest democracy’ with a commitment to transparency. Globally, international institutions make decisions which affect ordinary people in a non-transparency way. These decisions fuel to a reasonable extent the increasing crisis of globalization. Our strategies must challenge this status quo (i.e. almost 50% of the voting power at the world bank and IMF is held by seven countries... the USA, Japan, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, China and the Russian Federation). The rest of the countries should also have a say in these decisions as the major impact of globalization are seen only in these countries.

• Time has come for all to begin to discourage the states in their undesirable & selfish hunt for ways to avail the elusive benefits of globalization. In their hunger for these benefits, states keep tampering and violating the rights of women and poor people.

Linking of proposals of international human rights agreements such as CEDAW needs to be understood critically. Every country should also make sensible demands and raise voices against the World Bank, IMF and WTO with their choices and actions regarding economic globalization.

• Programs and orientation courses for women at workplaces in almost every sector should be organized on a regular basis. These courses can provide them awareness about their rights and benefits which they are entitled to.

Activist citizenship:

• In this era of globalization, it is widely considered that serious and scrupulous citizenship at both national and global levels is extremely crucial and should not be under-estimated. People’s knowledge of the existing democratic systems is
very much vital just as their voices. Citizen activists will envision and set up new systems where they are not fair to all or partiality runs through them. Therefore, a strong and active participation of citizens is must to bring a constructive change in the system in the form of welfare in the society and equality for all.

Economics and Financial Resources:

- Numerous economics and financial measures must be initiated to empower women with more economic control. These measures can be in the form of giving access to and increase of economic and financial resources for women; changing decision-making structures to accommodate women; training on employment skills; women’s property rights; and recognizing, improving and giving access to women’s work. With sufficient access and control over finances, women will benefit in terms of more liberty to work towards a better quality of life for both themselves and their families. It is widely accepted that sound and healthy financial condition of women will benefit society as a whole and bring upon a social transformation.

- To ensure essential set of women workers in the workplace, safety is an important issue to be taken care of in the work place. Proper hygiene i.e. toilets, place to stay etc. are needed and for workers who have young infants there should be some relaxations in the rules and regulations.

- Common problems faced by women especially in women headed families are indebtedness and poverty. Hence, to help rural women get rid of these problems and lift their pitiable conditions, gender-inclusive, gender-sensitive land reforms must be formulated and exercised.

Education and Advocacy:

- Sincere efforts in the educational domain are critical to realize equality between sexes and bring upon a social transformation – a transformation where women and men are seen at par and free from discriminations. Basically, the necessity to improve education for women and girls should be adopted as a strategy for achieving gender equality, both now and into future. Access to education is an essential ingredient for the empowerment of women. Impacts of education are
also reflected in all areas affecting women. Proper implementation of important areas of economic stability and financial control will be heavily dependant on education.

Apart from improving education for women, the endeavour to educate men about gender issues should be taken up with equal passion. Gender equality can only be realized if the opposite sex understands better women's issues and sufferings.

- Since ages, family, schools and temples have been considered the three basic institutions upon which the foundation and advocacy of social values rely on completely. Their contributions in bringing about a positive transformation in society are unquestionable. These institutions can show more potential in bringing upon gender equality. More importantly, schools should continue to impart knowledge/teachings about the gender issues and expand their activities in research. These institutions should successfully set up an environment where women are encouraged to participate and explore different fields of knowledge. This empowerment will help women showcase their potential and also acquire new skills to cope with the ever-demanding and changing roles in society.

- Education and Advocacy go hand in hand in the effort to address issues for women. While Education is a tool through which gender equality issues are addressed, advocacy supports the cause of women. The significance of advocacy cannot be underrated and it is a main strategy for empowerment of women through education.

**Strong Networking – both National and International**

- Networking provides a common platform between advocates of gender equality and women's groups to discuss and address any women issues of importance for the future. Moreover, a strong networking is extremely crucial for mass mobilization of women to formulate a global feminist movement – a movement led by capable leaders, especially from women front with immense potential to offer vital and unique contributions to anti-globalization movements.
• As with education, networking is a key element basis which gender equality can be endorsed at various levels.

• To counter the undesired impact of globalization on women, it is imperative to organize victims group (especially women) and trade unions to create more public space for any pro women collective action. This would also benefit empowerment of workers through a positive institutional transformation.

• Over the past few decades, numerous policies, programmes and government initiatives have been put into practice globally to address the problems of women. But due to differences in their plans and strategies, the outcome has been of mixed result. Consequently, smooth and regular interaction and co-operation between those involved (both Governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations) is required to settle their differences and work together earnestly in devising and implementing programmes for women. In order to guarantee a fruitful outcome, these programs need to undergo constant monitoring and evaluation together. In addition, it should be a more concentrated, holistic and joint efforts. It is indeed the time to cement new and stronger alliance with all progressive movements settling aside our differences in opinions and views and demonstrate an alternative form of global transformative leadership.

• Close relation between global and local activists would be a very interesting development and strategy to confront gender inequality better. Though functioning at different levels locally and globally, by working together in close terms, there would be uniformity in their views, plans and policies. This uniformity augurs well for women. Women protesting against vulnerable working conditions can easily connect with and learn from similar instances related to such issues faced by women of other communities. Understanding the pattern in which our problems are connected fundamentally to other women should make us identify and apply appropriate actions to tackle the problem.
Use of ICTs and the Media:

- Media is a predominant and very effective medium to convey our message to the masses and it should be intelligently used to promote the powerful image of women, an image of women devoid of existing stereotype and prejudice.
- Audio visual public programmes and documentations on women’s contributions towards social and political activities should be produced and telecast on national channels.

Mass Mobilization:

- Mass mobilization is responsible to a great extent in nurturing and producing women leaders and in bringing upon an institutional change to promote equality for all. Another form of mass mobilization is the reformation of women’s movement at various levels - local, national and global.
- It is not enough for women to just advocate inclusion of gender perspective in the agendas of powerful institutions. To bring upon a policy change, they should be pro-active enough to elaborate and mobilize to a great extent.
- Women should not remain tightlipped and should raise strong their concerns against violation, marginalization and discrimination against them. They should strongly object to government’s gender bias policies and should coerce the government, through social and political means, to justify the policies.
- Institutional reform in the policies requires changes in the underlying cultural and political norms. Likewise, the struggle for voice, resources and rights depends on changing the broader institutional norms. For instance, a woman might have authority in decision-making in local government through seat quotas but the use of the authority to bring upon a change in the condition of women will not come about until their spouses are fully supportive for it.
- Unions should encourage active women participation and involvement in their activities. This participation would provide female workers from various strata and groups a platform to speak out their problems freely and fight for their rights and benefits.
Effective governance:

- Good laws are essential in any system but what counts more is how they are being enforced. Effective and fair governance usually decides how the laws are legalized and put into force. In case of labour laws, a strong labour organization is essential. Therefore, for any working class, a very critical decision has to be in terms of how they organize and enforce the laws.

- To protect the under-privileged section of industrial workers in Thailand, labour laws need to be introduced across all sectors of the economy. Women, being the most vulnerable of this section, should be ensured pay or workers compensation.

- Government need to come up with the right priorities in enforcing the laws and policies. On topmost priority, it is imperative for government to provide the common man with the basic facilities. If tax is increased the expenditure can be increased, instead of effectively spending most of the fiscal deficit money on interest payments of old debts and on defense.

- Legal reforms should ensure equal opportunities and benefits for both sexes. The success of these reforms in achieving the country's goals and obligations are significantly dependant on how effective the administration and enforcement of existing law is.

Effective Feminist Movement:

- There has been enormous success and advancement made by global feminist movement in creating knowledge. From the negative perspective, this also led to intellectual hegemonies and hence, most of the women's voices and experiences normally have fallen into deaf ears. To make the movement a truly global feminist movement, all the voices should be paid heed to and an effort must be made to document all such experiences as women's movements considerately and regularly.

- Around the world, there has been a widely accepted stigma of feminism being too aggressive, too anti-male or a wrong perception of feminism being only about victims and their complaints. This negative image always has been an obstacle for
women in every sphere. Attracting new allies from all sectors, ages and identities is required to further expand the cause of the movement. Extra efforts must be made to market feminism to different audiences through popular culture for some, or sophisticated policy research for others. Presenting a positive brand image for feminism will augur well for promotion of the movement. A brand message similar to environmentalism, such as ‘Be a feminist: Let’s make the world a better place to live’, conveys a positive image to the masses.

- The institution of feminist movement must be sustained and developed. More research and attention must be given to feminist organizational development because it is critical to assess the implications of marrying conventional organizational development theory and practice with the experiences of feminist organizational leadership. Building and sustaining our institutions, are critical to the movement and we must not neglect this foundational aspect of our work.

- In order to reshape the world, progressive women’s organizations will need to accelerate their efforts, thereby making a strong pro-poor stance. Especially in the Third World, the work of NGOs and civil society groups is often inherently political. Yet many cast their services as apolitical because it is often dangerous to confront governments. Many a times governments fail to meet their obligations towards their citizens in terms of their basic needs. They join hands with more powerful multinational corporations and allow elites to take from official coffers while poor people suffer.

- Women’s groups will need to develop advocacy positions that document and demonstrate the effects of government inaction. This requires that feminist organizations both fill practical needs, for example providing termination of pregnancies, while also adopting aggressive positions that require policy-level actions. (the future of women’s rights global visions and strategies p. 181)

**Legal Awareness and Gender Sensitization Programmes:**

- Women’s organizations, police and social welfare representatives should review and evaluate gender sensitization training and workshops. It should also develop the training programme, action programme and time frame, training modules
geared to different needs and levels, identify and train trainers, institute and carry out a nationwide gender sensitize programme for police and social welfare workers. It should also include a monitoring and evaluation component to determine the programme’s effectiveness. Nationwide legal awareness and literacy programme such as the Legal Aid Centre, Women Studies Centre and Law Faculties at the Universities, need to be developed. Media and schools should be involved to the extent possible to gain maximum exposure for its legal literacy campaign and materials. Necessary information, materials as well as trainers should be provided to the women of indigenous communities, who are faced with major legal problems in terms of both land and labour.

- Awareness amongst the people regarding both social as well legal rights pertaining to gender issues must be brought about. It will help better serve the interests of public and private sector and unions. And, this should be undertaken through indigenous women. In order to enhance knowledge and raise consciousness about the linkages between women and social environment, extensive dissemination of information and education of the general public and specific groups, including women’s organizations must be introduced through NGOs, academe, conferences, workshops, seminars, media, schools and universities. The administrative, monitoring and enforcement role of government officers responsible for land development should be strengthened through more training and education, better technology and data collection, a greater allocation of resources and increased institutional support. They should be charged with the priority of giving better attention to native land claim applications and their processing and title registrations, as well as in gender sensitization.

- Furthermore women should be empowered by creating an economy based on equitable share of wealth and treatment, gender equality and social respect.

Legal Institution-Building, Capacity-Building, Training Activities

- Capacity building and Joint Action Group (JAG) against violence against women and women’s affairs division must be made to improve the legal status of women. Sometimes legal institutions do not adequately handle women’s issues properly.
Therefore, it may be proposed that JAG (Joint Action Group) take the lead in setting up a forum to formulate a plan of action for establishing legal aid centres for women and linking these to the proposed integrative family court. These centres would deal with family law and violence against women by undertaking to provide legal advice, information and aid; take on legal test cases; monitor the legal situation and evaluate progress in terms of existing laws and law reform; identify gaps and constraints; develop nationwide strategies and action plans; institute training and develop training modules for use at different levels of knowledge and expertise. Counseling sessions also need to be provided to women in need.

- There is a strong need for capacity building in the area of societal (environmental) law and policies. The need for the enforcement of laws is vital to both women and environment. Since most government departments lack enough qualified staff to undertake enforcement on a regular basis, government should not only increase the numbers of enforcement personnel but also increase their expertise and effectiveness. Women's organization and environmental NGOs should be consulted and involved in enforcement.

Global economic system itself is the real problem. The collapse of communism has made it increasingly difficult to imagine societies in which healthcare, education, housing and employment are guaranteed. Without a vision of a different kind of world, however, it is impossible even to speak realistically about human rights and women's rights. As feminists, we must develop this vision in order to build appropriate strategies with respect to globalization.

Though globalization gives opportunities to women but all of the works are related to works which they have been doing since ages. It is said that Southeast Asian women are flowing with the process of globalization and they are involved in the paid work. They get new opportunities to go out from home and break the chain of restrictions. But having said that, they continue to exist at the same point and stand at the same place i.e. their efforts at work are paid less without any possibility for promotion or climb to a higher
status or rank. And they are suppressed by men in different forms and names under modernization and globalization.

No doubt status of women has been improving day by day since 1970s in general and Thailand in particular. But women who are benefitted positively from this development always happen to be from the privileged group of the society. Most of the women from the lower and underprivileged section of the society are still suffering and getting suppressed from different directions.

**Indicators, Monitoring and Evaluation**

The lack of monitoring has undermined the protection of women's rights and the systematic application and enforcement of laws and regulations design to protect women and give them equality. In order to alleviate this problem it is recommended that the proposed women's legal aid centres and programmes of World bodies undertake the monitoring task systematically. Among other things this would entail collection of information and statistics from police reports, welfare cases, court cases, women's organization's files and enforcement records and proceedings; observations of the treatment of women by employees, male workers, welfare officers, hospital staffs, councilors and lawyers; analysis of the data and findings; and periodic evaluation studies to assess progress and protecting women's rights and improving their situation especially in the work place.

Women workers should be given equal opportunity in terms of training and use of advance technologies and changes of promotion etc. This must be particularly so because Thai women formed the backbone of Thai economy. They represent the maximum number of workers in economy at various sectors. The time is therefore ripe to give due weightage to various policies and programmes recommended to improve the socio-legal status and enforce legal empowerment of women. This will bring about reduction of poverty and improvement in the quality of life of the general population and women in particular. The present study recommend a number of concrete actions that can be taken by world bodies, governments, civil society groups and other assistance providers to further these goals.