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**Title : IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON DALIT AND MUSLIM
WORKERS IN LEATHER ENTERPRISES IN SELECT
DISTRICTS OF UP AND TAMIL NADU:
A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

ABSTRACT

Indian leadership in the immediate aftermath of independence was to consolidate and put in order the Indian economy and ensure political stability. The global events that ensued during the last fifty years of India's independence brought many ups and downs in the Indian Economy. The new phenomenon called "Globalization" gradually ushered in changes in the political and economic culture manifesting into transparency, accountability & democratization. These forces in turn impacted on the small and medium enterprises thereby resulting into grave socio-economic challenges for the people associated with SMEs.

Having the above background, the present thesis was undertaken to study the "Impact of Globalisation on Dalit & Muslim workers in Leather Enterprises in select Districts of UP and Tamil Nadu. This was with a view to understand the socio economic challenges that globalization has unleashed before the workers in Leather Industry particularly Dalit & Muslims.

The first Chapter of the thesis makes an attempt to evaluate the concept of SME sector in the country as an instrument of nation building process. The Chapter refers to the role and relevance of SMEs in India, contribution of SMEs in the Indian economy and SMEs scenario in the country in totality.

The second chapter deals with the process of globalization with economic liberalization, different political and economic phases and pre and post liberalization policies. The scenario for the small-scale sector changed with subsequent Industrial Policy and the advent of globalization further accelerated this problem.

The economic liberalization in India refers to ongoing economic reforms that started in 1991. Despite loud claims that the economic reforms in the Indian economy lead fiscal consolidation, increase in foreign exchange reserve and greater foreign investments, globalization had an adverse impact on the traditional indigenous work culture in the SMEs and the study vindicates the argument.

Chapter 3 Intensively deals with how globalization enhanced vulnerability of India's downtrodden by exacerbating their social exclusion, and making large segments of other social groups also vulnerable and excluded. Globalization is mostly discriminating against the unorganized sector and has pushed them further to the margin.

Although exclusion discourses in Europe have generally been concerned with social problem in the leather market through economic restructuring, nevertheless in India Euro-centric approach

and its labour market framework needs to be coupled with the caste system and India's traditional system of social ordering and control. It is with this perspective that the study has tried to understand the marginalization and exclusion of the Dalits and Muslims in the leather sector of India.

The chapter 4 of the thesis documents prevalent status of the leather industry in India, its contribution to the growth of the Indian economy, its employability and the challenges that the industry is beset with. It is evident from the chapter how the industry has evolved into a significant actor enormously contributing to foreign exchange reserves of the country.

Tamil Nadu is in the forefront in leather industry of finished leather. It has about 60% share in total finished leather production of our country and 45% share in total export from India. There are about 750 tanneries in Tamil Nadu and the raw material processed per day is 500-1000 tons. Kanpur, Unnao and Agra are among the major leather clusters in Northern India. Kanpur occupies a prominent place as it has a diversified product range and uniqueness also. It is famous for processing of buffalo leather and only centre in India manufacturing saddlery items. Agra is India's most diverse as well as most tightly knit footwear cluster. It is a prime example of an artisanally rooted, low-cost cluster with predominantly Cottage/small scale manufactures.

The Chapter five of the thesis delineates environmental hazards from the leather industry and also examines the social basis of the industry. An intriguing feature that emerged from the study is that the leather industry is pre-dominantly manned by distinct communities such as Dalit and Muslims, thereby vindicating the arguments of the thesis that excluded and marginalized communities are left for menial jobs and the forces of globalization instead of bringing a ray of hope in their forlorn lives further pushed them into the limbo of wilderness.

Chapter-6 of the thesis provides an analytical narration of government initiatives to improve upon the plight of leather industry workers to arrest the process of marginalization. The government is sensitive to the role of leather industry in promoting its economy through export. Yet nothing substantial is visible to improve the plight of the workers.

The study advocates that Dalit & Muslim workforce should not be left continuing deprived when the industry they work is one of the main contributor in the Foreign Exchange earning & economic growth of the country. The industry & the government should look for corrective policies in order to improve the pathetic condition of the workforce in this sector. Education of worker's children, health & medical schemes, environmental hazards should be attended/ taken up timely to bring them in the mainstream of the society.

When the Government of India has special considerations for farming & other communities in providing various subsidies/ financial support, why not Dalit & Muslims working in leather sector be supported by similar benefits. Another initiative which can drastically improve the conditions of Dalit & Muslim community engaged in leather industry is the contribution by the industry along with Government following Corporate Social responsibility as implemented in the CPSUs by Government of India. Some appropriate percentage may be, to begin with, 10% of the profit to be spent by the industry as a CSR on the workers & their families in the leather industry.