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**Table 2: Selected Macroeconomic Indicators: 1980-2004**

	Unit	1980	1990	2000	2004
Sectoral composition of GDP					
Agriculture	% of GDP	27.5	26.3	20.1	17.9
Industry	% of GDP	28.6	24.7	26.3	26.5
Services	% of GDP	43.8	48.9	53.6	55.7
Employment by industry					
Agriculture	% of total	45.2	46.8	36.0	34.1
Industry	% of total	14.1	14.8	23.9	21.4
Services	% of total	40.6	34.5	40.8	44.5
Exports					
Total exports	% of GDP	26.4	24.7	33.4	28.7
Agricultural exports	% of exports	61.8	36.3	18.1	18.5
Industrial exports	% of exports	33.0	52.2	77.5	78.2
Textile and garments	% of exports	14.3	31.6	54.0	48.8
Imports					
Total imports	% of GDP	51.0	33.5	44.2	40.0
Consumer goods	% of imports	29.9	26.4	19.0	20.2
Intermediate goods	% of imports	45.7	51.8	51.8	58.0
Investment goods	% of imports	24.0	21.7	23.6	20.9

Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka, *Annual Report*, various issues.

## Gender and Globalisation in South Asia<sup>1</sup>

*Dr Karin Astrid Siegmann*

### 1. Economic Integration, Stagnating Gender Equality?

During the high-level meeting in Hong Kong, WTO member countries discussed issues ranging from abolishing agricultural export subsidies and industrial tariff reduction, and market access for foreign banks and telecom providers. The human face of trade and investment flows, however, is often hidden behind economic statistics and legal formulations. This human face is gendered: Globalisation has meant different things for women and men.

'Globalisation' refers to a process of progressive integration of economies and societies, driven by new economic relationships, international policies such as the WTO, and transnational corporations are economic relationships. from actors outside the stabilisation and programmes (SAPs) International Financial the beginning of the catalysts of 2002). These policies

technologies, new and national and (World Commission on Globalization, 2003). The transnational entities, also the rise in operations of private examples of such new Policies implemented national realm, such as structural adjustment implemented by Institutions (IFIs) since 1990s were further globalisation (Benería, were relevant for several South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh who speeded up their integration with the world economy since the beginning of the 1990s (MHHDC, 2002; Khan, 1999).

The notion of 'gender' refers to socially constructed roles and socially learned behaviours and expectations associated with females and males. Gender equality as a universal goal is enshrined in various international declarations. The Millenium Development Declaration (2000) reaffirmed the primacy of gender equality as development goal.

Most South Asian countries took significant steps to open their economies for trade and investment in the beginning of the 1990s<sup>2</sup>. Sri Lanka had already taken the course of liberalistaion of economy int he late 1970s. Tariff rates for imports can serve as an approximation for the difference between domestic and world market prices. According to this indicator, South Asia has become more integrated into the world trading system, as tariffs fell significantly throughout the 1990s from initially very high levels. Similarly, South Asian trade to gross domestic product (GDP) ratios have risen between the 1980s and 1990s. Regional exports almost doubled during the 1990s as compared to the previous decade. Whereas the share in manufactured goods

Table 1: Economic globalisation in South Asia, selected indicators 2003

	Exports of goods and Services (% of GDP)	Foreign direct investment net inflows (thousand current US\$)
Bangladesh	14.21	102472
Bhutan	..	200
India	14.48	4269000
Maldives	85.17	13505
Nepal	16.65	14778
Pakistan	20.48	534000
Sri Lanka	35.77	228720

Source: World Bank (no date)

increased in the same period, a large portion of it remains in labour-intensive goods such as textiles and clothing (T&C) across South Asia (MHHDC, 2002). Put in global perspective, however, the degree of integration into the world economy is relatively low as compared, for example, with Southeast Asia or Latin America.

A gender dimension in this tighter integration is commonly noted in the margin. The notion of 'gender' refers to socially constructed roles and socially learned behaviours and expectations associated with females and males (World Bank, 2001). Gender equality as a universal goal is enshrined in various international declarations. More recently, the Millenium Development Declaration (2000) reaffirmed the primacy of gender equality as development goal (Tran-Nguyen, 2004).

Despite the recognition of gender equality, little progress has been made in achieving this goal, particularly in South Asia. Varying between 15 and 20 percentage points, the gender gap in education remains significant in most South Asian countries (Table 2). With an average of 37.4 per cent in 2003, South Asia is characterised by the second lowest female labour force participation rate world-wide after the Middle East and North Africa. They hardly increased during the past decade (ILO, 2004). Even in a country that has been praised for its implementation of labour legislation like Sri Lanka, including non-discriminatory remuneration, women workers in manufacturing only earn 81 per cent of men's average wages (UN DESA, 2006). Resultantly, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan rank 99th to 107th on the gender development index (GDI) and thus at the bottom of the distribution. Sri Lanka forms an exception with a rank of 66 (UNDP, 2005a).

Table 2: Gendered youth literacy rates in South Asia, 2003

	Female	Male
Bangladesh	41.1	57.8
Bhutan	..	..
India	67.7	84.2
Maldives	99.2	99.1
Nepal	60.1	80.6
Pakistan	53.9	74.8
Sri Lanka	96	95.1

Source: Genderstats (no date)

Note: Youth literacy rates (% of people aged 15-24)

Tran-Nguyen (2004) relate this situation to gender-related social norms that (for e.g.) associate reproductive work<sup>3</sup> with women and serve as barriers to their economic participation on equal footing with men. It is compounded by male authority at home and in the workplace that weakens women's bargaining power.

This article tries to answer the question if and how global economic integration has influenced and interacted with gender imbalances in South Asia. The focus hereby is on indicators related to the labour market such as employment opportunities, wage equality, working conditions, as they can be assumed to be affected most directly by intensified trade and investment flows. The next section presents theoretical approaches and empirical evidence regarding the globalisation-gender interface. Examples from the South Asian experience are then provided in the third section. Section four concludes with a summary and recommendations for a globalisation that benefits gender equality and women's empowerment.

## 2. Gender and Globalisation -- Theory and Experience

Does globalisation marginalize or empower women? Although different types of economic players, such as buyers, sellers, savers, and investors are identified in macro-economic theory and policy-making, they do not refer to the basic social category of gender. They implicitly assume that policy measures affect women and men equally (Randriamaro, 2005; Corner, 1996).

In reality, trade policies may affect women and men differently due to gender inequalities in access to and control of economic and social resources and decision-making. Their impact is also mediated by the different roles that women and men have within societies in particular, the gender division of labour (Randriamaro, 2005).

In order to analyse trade-gender effects and interactions, the different roles of women and men need to be kept in mind. They may differ across regions and sectors, yet, some general features of women and men's economic roles can be identified<sup>4</sup>. The most significant gender difference is the strong influence of reproductive work on labour market decisions of women as compared to men. It results in lower participation rates, higher labour turnover, employment and wage discrimination, as well as a high concentration of female as compared to male workers in unskilled, informal, and unpaid occupations across economic sectors. Occupational and sectoral segregation is particularly pronounced in South Asia where cultural norms in a number of countries prescribe a separation of female and male work environments.

According to Tran-Nguyen (2004), trade and investment flows can be associated with gender equality in different ways: First, they can have a positive or negative impact on growth and employment opportunities for women and men. Second, they may induce competitive pressures, which may reduce or encourage gender discrimination in terms of access to employment or regarding wage differentials. Third, they may facilitate or raise barriers to access resources and services by women and men; and finally, multilateral trading rules may facilitate or

constrain governments in applying policies or regulations that address gender inequality.

Classical and neo-classical trade theory identifies trade as a catalyst of growth. Whereas no unified theory of international investment exists, empirically the capacity of investment flows to catalyse growth have been supported (Borensztein et al., 1998; Blomström et al., 1994). Economic growth can thus be seen as an indirect consequence of globalisation.

The empirical evidence regarding interactions between gender equality and growth remains ambiguous<sup>5</sup>. Whereas Dollar and Gatti (1999) and Klasen (1999) find a negative impact of the gender gap in schooling on growth, Seguino's (2000) results, confirmed by Busse and Spielmann (2005), support the opposite view. Dollar and Gatti (1999) identify a positive correlation between per capita income and measures of gender equality. This association was both upheld and qualified by the UN (1995). Whereas a strong positive correlation was observed between economic growth and women's relative participation in the labour force between 1980-1990, however, depending on development levels this association appears to be curvilinear. The emerging trend of defeminisation<sup>6</sup> that can be detected in some middle-income countries, such as South Korea and Mexico, is in line with such a non-linear relationship. Mehra and Gammage (1999) relate this shift to a restructuring in the export sector of the respective countries, connected to a process of technologisation.

According to the Heckscher-Ohlin framework for trade analysis, trade leads to a factor price equalisation, including gender wage differentials. Similarly, it is assumed that gender wage discrimination is costly for employers insofar as it leads to inefficient and thus not profit-maximising production (Becker, 1971). Increased competition going hand in hand with trade expansion would erode these differentials. On the other hand, non-neoclassical economists hold the view that competition is based on cost reduction and firms will use wage disparities as a toll for competition (Seguino, 2000). Skilled workers will be paid efficiency wages to attract them, whereas unskilled workers with lower bargaining power will be given lower wages. Given the concentration of male workers in skilled and female workers in unskilled occupations, trade expansion would thus lead to an increase in wage differentials (Tran-Nguyen, 2004).

The increase in female non-agricultural employment, especially in textiles and clothing, footwear, electronics can be associated with such skill polarisation. The employment of large numbers of women in the low-value chains of global production networks can thus be seen as a stepping stone for a systematic industrial strategy in several developing countries (Tran-Nguyen, 2004).

Siegmann (2003) identifies two mechanisms for effects of international investment flows on gender equality in the labour market. A cost effect associated with transnational corporations' (TNCs') greater orientation towards the world market is their preferential recruitment of, on average, lower paid female workers. Given global competitive cost considerations, this appears as a rational strategy for TNCs in comparatively labour-intensive industries. Conversely, foreign firms'

advanced technological endowments relative to domestic companies require a well-educated workforce with technical skills. In light of these perspectives, gender gaps in education and, on average, women's weaker labour market attachment disadvantage female workers' employment in skill-intensive production.

According to Randriamaro (2005), foreign direct investment (FDI) might lead to substitution of domestic products due to foreign companies' competitive pricing and thus to job losses in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Given the concentration of female entrepreneurs in the informal sector, FDI may thus influence gender equality in access to employment and income unfavourably.

Advanced technologies employed by foreign providers may go hand in hand with better quality of goods and services. However, the private provision especially of basic services such as in the area of education, healthcare and water and sanitation may have negative implications for equity in access to services for marginalised groups of the society. Critics of basic services privatisation are concerned that as basic rights are transformed into commodities, access to services will be available only to those who can pay the price set. Due to women's role as informal care providers as well as water managers and preference given to boys in schooling, this may have negative repercussions for gender equality.

For example, the imposition of user fees for education under SAPs resulted in girls leaving schools first and more frequently, even when only minimal fees are imposed (Young and Hoppe, 2003). The same programmes had a negative impact on female health via intensification and lengthening of work, via higher food prices, intra-household differences in access to food, and via access to health care (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1989).

The opening up of economies for international trade and foreign investment under the rule of the WTO has been a powerful trigger for global economic integration. WTO rules are generally obligations of conduct, not of results. It also means that policies that are meant to achieve specific development outcomes, such as gender equality and women's economic empowerment, sit uncomfortably with the general approach of the WTO system that rejects fixing economic outcomes of free market exchanges. However, WTO rules offer negotiating space for women's economic empowerment (Beviglia Zampetti, 2004)<sup>7</sup>.

For example, the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) aims at facilitating trade in agricultural goods. Women farmers in many developing countries are primarily involved in agriculture for their household's own consumption, and therefore their primary concern relates to food security and self-sufficiency. Increased export orientation in agriculture may therefore lead to the replacement of women's agricultural work and endanger food security (Çagatay, 2001). The AoA does not specifically aim at ensuring food security and fostering self-sufficiency. WTO members, however, can make use of special provisions for developing countries contained in the agreement, in particular, of the exemptions from limits on domestic supports in such areas as extension services, stockholding for food security, domestic food aid, or disaster relief. These are important areas where existing social and

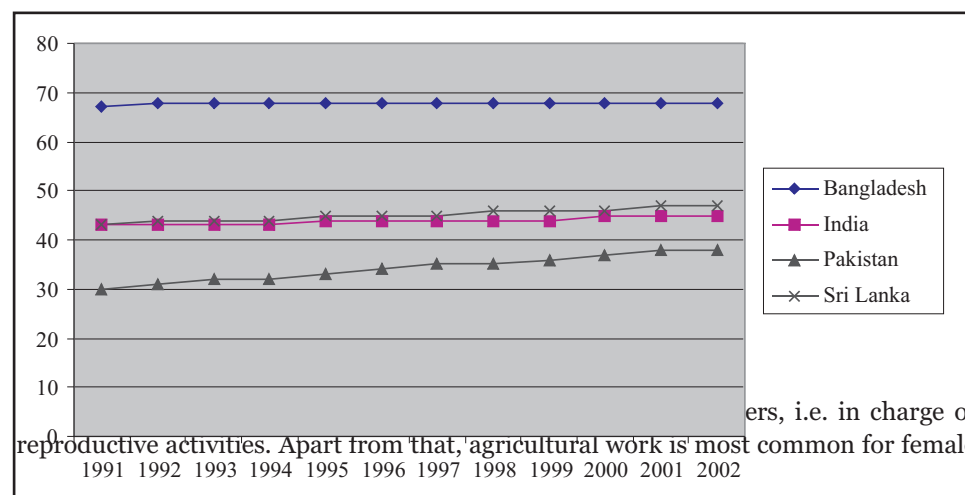
economic biases against women may call for specific public intervention. For instance, there is a significant bias in many countries against the provision of extension services to women farmers that may need to be addressed. Furthermore, specific support for fertilisers, seeds and water may be critical for small subsistence and women farmers.

The objective of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is to assist the freer flow of services across national borders - from postal delivery via tourism to medical advice. Indiscriminatory treatment of foreign service providers, so-called national treatment, according to WTO rules inhibits provision of support for domestic providers who behave in a way that enhances women's empowerment and gender equality. However, the GATS does not require its members to extend unconditional national treatment to all its trading partners. There are no restrictions on the number of types of conditions, which may be attached to national treatment conditions. A requirement, for instance, that a foreign university setting up a branch in Karachi applies a minimum quota for female students would thus be perfectly legitimate.

### 3. Gendered Face of Globalisation

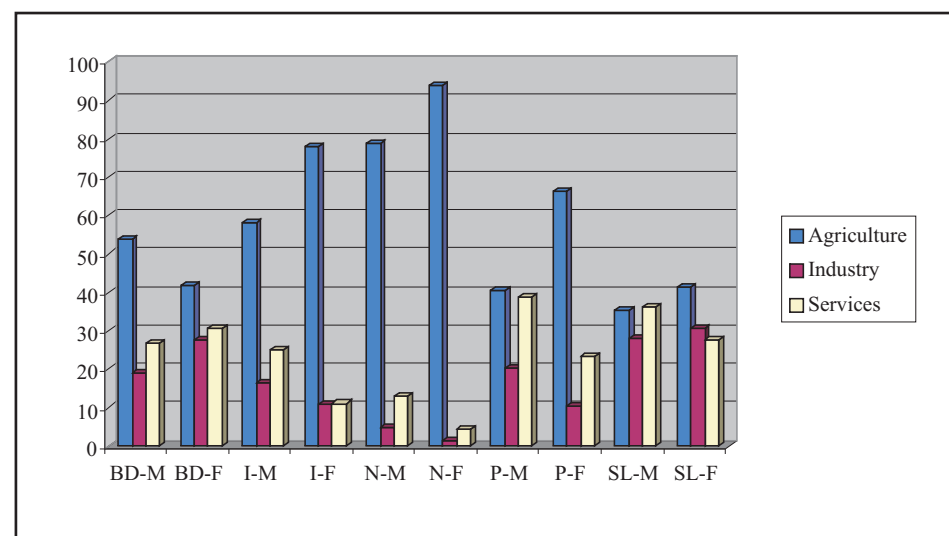
During the period of tighter integration of South Asia into the world economy, South Asian women's involvement in the paid labour force has not increased significantly (Figure 1). Whereas the female labour force participation rate is comparatively highest in Bangladesh, it has not changed much since the beginning of the 1990s. Significant increases can be observed in Pakistan only, from a very low initial level of about 30 per cent.

Figure 1: Labour force activity rates in South Asia, selected countries 1991-2002 (% female)



Source: World Bank (no date)

Figure 2: Gendered employment in South Asia by major sector (%)



Source: MHHDC (2000)

Note: BD=Bangladesh (1996 data), I=India (1994), N=Nepal (1996), P=Pakistan (1997), SL=Sri Lanka (1995), F=female, M=male

employment. As can be gauged from Figure 2, up to 94% of the female workforce in Nepal are involved in agricultural work, also reflecting the lack of diversification of the mountain kingdom's economy.

However, a large proportion of this work is not remunerated. In Pakistan, for example, more than half of all employed females above 10 years as compared to about one third of males are employed as unpaid family helpers in agriculture (Federal Bureau of Statistics, 2003). Yet, in Sri Lanka, the majority of women work in the plantation sector (MHHDC, 2000). Their employment is thus both remunerated and directly tied to the world economy.

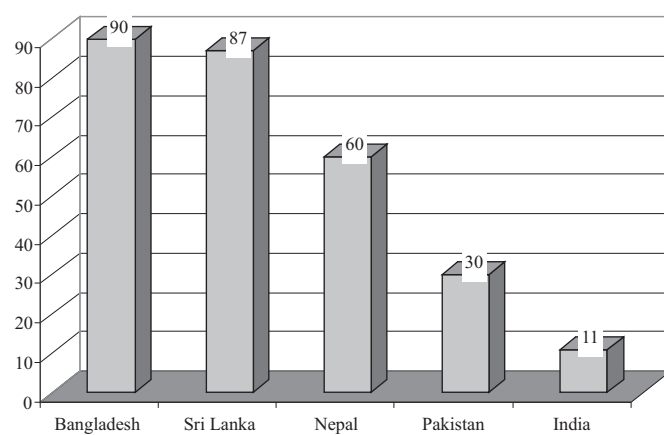
Technological change through the 'Green Revolution' did not provide an encouraging example of globalisation's impact on women in South Asian agriculture. The adoption of high-yielding varieties (HYV) of rice and wheat in India and large parts of Asia depressed landless labourers wages, many of whom are female, and replaced female post-harvesting work - a traditional area of female wage employment. This may have offset any gains made by increasing employment due to the introduction of HYV technology packages (FAO, no date).

Seasonal cotton-picking in Pakistan is almost exclusively done by women and girls. The increase in cotton production at an annual growth rate of 14% in the latter half of the 1980s is likely to have caused a tremendous rise in the demand for female wage labour (Kazi, 1999). However, recent research shows that they did not benefit from liberalisation in textiles and clothing trade in terms of better wages and working conditions (Siegmann, 2006).

In Bangladesh, the area under commercial shrimp farming has tripled between the 1980s and 1990s, the largest share of the produce is exported to northern markets (Rahman, 1999). Activities related to shrimp farming are dominated by female employment. Globalisation here meant employment creation for women. Women are also strongly involved in marine food export processing in India where workers are commonly young, unmarried migrants. Wages in this sector are higher than agricultural wages. The employment has thus given them financial independence and a chance to improve their standard of living, however, often at the cost of their health (Jha, 2005). Shiva (1996), on the other hand, highlights the gendered costs of the rise of Indian marine exports. She stresses that women in fishing and farming communities suffered most through the expansion in shrimp farming as it was chiefly female-dominated jobs in fisheries and agriculture that were replaced. Similarly, in the Maldives, when exports of marine products increased between 1977 and 1990, women's participation declined from 62 per cent to 20 per cent (Shiva, 1996).

Significant opportunities have become available for women in South Asia's low-technology manufacturing industries such as the textiles and clothing (T&C) industry (MHHDC, 2002). This process has paralleled the export-oriented development path, South Asian countries embarked on, mainly since the 1990s. Therefore, within South Asia, differences in gendered manufacturing employment often have to do with the structure of the T&C sector. Pakistan as well as India display a relatively low share of female employment in the T&C industry due to a more significant textile rather than garment production, whereas Bangladesh and Sri Lanka specialise in garment manufacturing.

Figure 3: Female workers in paid employment in the South Asian T&C industry (% of total T&C workforce)



Sources: Siegmann (2005a)

### Box 1: Women's employment and empowerment in Bangladesh's export manufacturing

Bangladesh's exports of ready-made garments have experienced exceptional growth since the mid-1980s. The country developed its clothing sector in the shadow of the quota system in T&C trade. In 2002, Bangladesh was the seventh largest supplier of ready-made garments to the USA and number nine for the EU market (Nordås, 2004). Growth of the sector has gone hand in hand with employment creation for women. The share of women in the total manufacturing workforce increased from 28.4% to 36.6% between 1990-1 and 1995-6. A peculiar feature of the country's labour market is that women are concentrated in export-oriented garment production, but represent only 10% of the manufacturing workforce for the domestic market (Bhattacharya, 1999). Preferential recruitment of women indeed may have supported export competitiveness due to the differential between female and male wages as assumed by Seguino (2000). However, in the export-oriented manufacturing sector, women's wages are converging towards those for men. The average gender wage differential in Bangladesh's manufacturing sector was 0.57<sup>8</sup> for production workers in 1991-2. However, in woven apparel production, women production workers' wages constitute 90% of those of their male colleagues (Bhattacharya, 1999).

Studies have shown that work in the export-oriented garment industry in Bangladesh has had a positive effect on women's self-esteem and decision-making within the family. Women garment workers tend to marry and have children later and are often able to take part in choosing a husband (Randriamaro, 2005). An assessment of their working conditions depends on the point of reference. Some authors highlight their weaker bargaining power as compared to men with the resulting lower wages as well as their long working hours with a blatant lack of occupational safety and health provisions. Kabear (2004) underlines the progress in terms of economic independence and bargaining power a job in the ready-made garment sector means for the women employed there if compared to the situation without.

In Sri Lanka, having modernised its T&C sector, wages as well as female-intensity are highest in regional comparison. Here as well, the comparatively low cost of labour and the investors' enthusiasm to establish themselves in a quota-free environment facilitated the emergence of the T&C industry as a major employer of female labour. Employment of women in manufacturing increased by 50% from 1977, the year Sri Lanka started to open up, to 1995. However, much of the employment gains have been concentrated at lower levels of the occupational structure (Fontana, Joeke and Masika, 1998).

In contrast, Singh (2003) assumes Nepal's WTO accession in 2004 to affect women's employment negatively due to a substitution of Nepalese woollen carpets through imported products as well as the removal of the quota for garment supply under the ATC in January 2005. Both garments and woollen carpets' production in Nepal is characterised by a large concentration of female workers. Latest developments have proven these pessimistic assumptions correct. Nepal has lost significant export shares to the EU and USA (ILO, 2005; UNDP, 2005b) with the associated job losses hurting women most.

As in other regions of the world, the share of the services sectors in the South Asian economies is rising. The services sector accounted for more than half of South Asia's combined GDP in 2004 (World Bank, no date). The services sector encompass the provision of services in tourism as well as a large portion of remittances from migrant workers, earning their livelihoods as construction workers and domestic servants in the Middle East as well as nurses in Europe and North America. Resultantly, the services sectors are to a significant degree globalised. FDI in services such as banking, telecommunication, water and sanitation etc. are other important links with the global economy.

#### **Box 2: Opportunities in Nepal's tourism**

In Nepal, tourism has become the country's export engine since the mid-1970 s. In 1996, it contributed 20 per cent of total export earnings. Within just three years, between 1993-1996, this meant an increase of 80 per cent (Fälth, 1999). In terms of income and expenditures by women, it is evident that the impact of globalisation on this sector has been positive (Jha, 2005).

In a case study from the mountain community of Dhampus, Gurung (1995) describes how, before the advent of tourism, women's lives were centred around the household and farmwork, whereas now numerous off-farm employment opportunities are available in which women can participate. With less than 3% of the total, relative female employment in formal accommodation establishments, such as star-ranked hotels, is low. It is significant in the informal hotel sector, though. This segment includes teashops, guesthouses, and portering. Women's involvement totalled more than one third of total employment in this sub-sector in 1991. Besides the access to cash income, the move from unpaid farm work to income-generating work outside agriculture implies better working conditions in terms of hours of work and physical strain. Indirectly, the risen income in their community has led to the investment of time-saving technologies such as water pipes, toilets, and rice-mills. The availability of these facilities helped especially to reduce women's workload. However, it is mainly the relatively well-to-do who have benefited.

Due to cultural and legal constraints, the majority of migrant workers from India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh are men (Kaspar, 2005; Oishi, 2002). Whereas in the late 1970s, migrant workers from Sri Lanka were only a small stream, it had swollen to nearly a million by 2002 (Tran-Nguyen, 2004). Almost 80 per cent of them are female (Oishi, 2002). Female domestic workers in households of the Middle East form a large portion of these migrants. They make an important contribution to the nation's foreign exchange earnings and to family resources, but at considerable cost to themselves and with minimal improvement of their position (Fontana, Joeke and Masika, 1998). Indirectly, male migration abroad, in particular to the Middle East, has led to a feminisation of agriculture, e.g. in Pakistan (MHHDC, 2000; Kazi, 1999).

As many developing countries, South Asian nations compete for foreign investment in order to create employment, overcome foreign exchange constraints and to upgrade technologies. But the efforts to become competitive often hurt the

social sectors first. It is most often these sectors that face budgetary reductions when liberalisation policies are implemented. Such cuts in social spending are likely to hit poor rural women the hardest who already have limited access to education and health facilities (MHHDC, 2002).

#### **Conclusions**

The presentation of examples across South Asia mirrors the inconclusive theoretical and international evidence regarding the interface between globalisation and gender equality. Theoretical approaches regarding gender and globalisation are still in a nascent stage and cross-country studies few. Moreover, no systematic investigation into the interrelationship between globalisation and parity between the sexes has been undertaken in the South Asian context. Therefore, obviously, generalisations are inappropriate. Any empirical analysis has to take country- and sector-specific features into account. Even then, an assessment of the costs and benefits of globalisation for gender equality in South Asia might still depend on the aspect of gender equality investigated. An increase in relative female employment, for example, might be paralleled by worsening health indicators.

Having said that, some commonalities can be identified in the South Asian experience outlined above. In agriculture, the concentration of female farmers in labour-intensive activities with little utilisation of technology has led to a replacement of women's work where more capital-intensive techniques were introduced, such as through the 'Green revolution'. Conversely, where labour-intensive primary sub-sectors were stimulated through globalisation, for instance in cotton-picking and shrimp farming, women were recruited on a preferential basis.

A similar pattern can be noted in the manufacturing sector. New avenues for women's employment have opened in light (read labour-intensive) manufacturing across the region, in particular in the T&C sector. It is endangered, however, from a future move towards more capital-intensive production that is likely to crowd out a largely unskilled female workforce.

The picture emerging from the services sector is patchier. Whereas e.g. the tourism industry in Nepal allowed women's economic empowerment through paid alternatives to involvement in agriculture, most South Asian women are barred from economic opportunities abroad.

For all major sectors, in comparison with their male colleagues, women workers often get stuck in the lower rung, with long hours, poor working conditions and little job security (MHHDC, 2002). Their lower levels of schooling as compared to males are compounded by gender-related discrimination and cause a comparatively weaker bargaining power in the labour market.

These factors provide entry points for action. Overall, one can say that economic globalisation creates economic opportunities for those endowed with productive resources such as human, and physical capital, access to formal employment, geographical mobility. In order to benefit from such opportunities,

women and girls' access to resources need to be strengthened. They include rights to land, access to capital and technology, support for unconstrained mobility and first of all equal access to education.

Given the gender-blindness of the policies and institutions governing trade at national, regional and international level (Randriamaro, 2005), a conscious effort needs to be made to 'engender' the globalisation agenda. Potentially dissimilar impacts for women and men and unfavourable consequences for gender equality - need to be recognised and investigated at national, sectoral, and regional level as South Asian policy-makers take liberalisation decisions. A number of tools for such gender-sensitive trade assessments have been developed by international organisations (Randriamaro, 2005; UNIFEM and Durano, 2004).

Governments need to make use of existing manoeuvring space within WTO rules and in bilateral and regional trade agreements to make sure trade and investment liberalisation is not clashing with national policy goals, such as the achievement of gender equality. Liberalisation of trade and investment without recognition of its potential gendered impact and without national policies in support of women's empowerment carries the danger to further marginalize South Asian women.

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#### End Notes

1. This article is partially based on Siegmann (2005b).
2. Sri Lanka started to liberalise and open up its economy in 1977. See MHHDC (2002) for a concise overview about steps undertaken by South Asian countries to further integrate into the world economy and their development impact.
3. 'Reproductive work' refers to activities for the care and development of people, performed mostly by women under conditions of unpaid labour. 'Productive activities', in contrast, refer to income generating activities, generally linked to the market (Çađatay, 1998)
4. For an overview related to South Asia, see MHHDC (2000).
5. The following discussion is based on Tran-Nguyen (2004).
6. 'Defeminisation' denotes the decrease in the female share of the workforce.
7. The following discussion is based on Beviglia Zampetti (2004).
8. A wage differential of 0.52 denotes that women's average wages are 52 per cent of men's average wages.

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