

= Globalization and women in China =

The study of the impact of globalization on women in China examines the role and status of Chinese women relative to the political and cultural changes that have taken place in the 20th century as a consequence of globalization . Globalization refers to the interaction and integration of people , products , cultures and governments between various nations around the globe ; this is fostered by trade , investment , and information technology . Globalization affected women 's rights and the gender hierarchy in China , in aspects of domestic life such as marriage and primogeniture , as well as in the workplace . These changes altered the quality of life and the availability of opportunities to women at different junctures throughout the modern globalization process .

The dynamics of gender inequity are correlated with the ideological principles held by the ruling political regime . The imperial era was dominated by the social paradigm of Confucianism , which was a pervasive philosophy throughout the Orient . Confucian ideals emphasized morality , character , social relationship , and the status quo . Confucius preached jen (humanity) and the equality and educability of all people ; Neo @-@ Confucianists and Imperial leaders used his beliefs in social hierarchy , particularly in the family setting , for the physical and social oppression of women . As the Chinese government began to re @-@ assimilate themselves into the global community in the late 19th to early 20th century , it shifted away from conventional Confucian ideals and women ? s role in society changed as well . After Mao Zedong established the People ? s Republic of China in 1949 , a change in traditional gender roles came about . Mao ? s death marked the beginning of the current communist administration and an influx of international communications in the areas of commerce , politics and social ideals . Since the 1980s , under the new communist party , the women ? s rights movement has gained momentum and has become a national issue and a sign of modernization .

In rural areas , women traditionally work alongside their family to produce crops like tea and rice . In urban areas , women work in factories , living away from home . Most of these factory workers are young girls that send their income to their families . To help maintain the rights of women in factories , labor unions and organizations were built . In their homes , women take care of their children and cook .

= = Western bias = =

Western scholarship has historically used ideas of subordination and victimization to characterize traditional Chinese womanhood . These beliefs were largely constructed on the basis of ideological and political agendas , and were widely accepted despite their ethnocentrism . Early European writings pertaining to Chinese women were produced by missionaries and ethnologists at the conclusion of the 19th century . The goal of the missionaries was to ? civilize China , ? and highlighting weakness and victimization provided for the continuance of their work . This belief prompted scholars to use female subordination as a means to validate Western ideas about Chinese culture and Confucian principles .

In the 1970s , as the feminist movements were forming , they began to affect the literature surrounding women in China . Studies on Chinese women from this period were concerned with women ? s liberation , and were sympathetic to the feminist movement . This sentiment largely influenced the topics and methodology of the research . With this shift in perspective , the focus of discourse remained on subordination , patriarchal oppression , and victimization . These studies examined such issues as foot binding and the chastity of widows . Literature formulated by feminist writers did nothing to dispel the myth of the weak , subservient woman . These works provided a new bias that had not before been articulated . Feminists believed that Chinese women were a part of a ? universally subordinated womanhood " . This line of thinking illustrates the cultural superiority inherently felt by Western women . Writings on Chinese woman rarely account for differences in time , ethnicity , class , region or age , preferring to describe the status of women as a static , unitary fixture of Chinese culture , despite the political and geographic boundaries that defined different regions and the economic and social changes that occurred throughout history .

= = History of female oppression = =

= = = Traditional roles and Confucianism = = =

From the Han Dynasty (206 BC @-@ 220 CE) until the modern period (1840 ? 1919) , scholars and rulers developed a male @-@ dominated patriarchal society in China . Confucianism was at the root of the development of the patriarchal society in China , and emphasized the distinctions between the sexes and the roles they have within the family . These ideologies continued through the Tang dynasty (618 @-@ 907) , and girls were taught from a very young age to be submissive to their fathers , then to their husbands , and later to their sons . During the Song Dynasty (960 @-@ 1297) , Confucian scholars further developed the patriarchal tradition with more restrictions for females , including foot binding for girls at a very young age .

= = = Married life = = =

The traditional Chinese marriage system is organized by the parents of the groom and bride in order to obtain alliances between the two families to ensure the continuance of the family line . There were three types of marriages that emerged in the late Chou Dynasty (951 @-@ 960) . In these three marriages , the Chinese woman 's main function was to produce children . The first marriage was called a capture marriage , in which the groom would go to his prospective bride 's house at dusk to " kidnap " her . The second type of marriage was called a purchase marriage , in which women were paid for by their husbands . Once women were purchased , they became their husband 's possession and could be traded or sold . The third type of marriage was the arranged marriage , which was accomplished by a matchmaker who acted as a go @-@ between for both families . If there was not a matchmaker , the marriage could be deemed unacceptable and the husband had the right to dissolve the marriage . The married woman 's role at home depended upon the social rank of her spouse , but the prime mission of married women , regardless of their social status , was to bear a son in order to carry on the family name . In addition , a married woman was to be obedient to her in @-@ laws as if they were her own parents .

The marriage law of 1950 was issued after the founding of the People 's Republic of China in 1949 . It declared the abolition of the feudal marriage system characterized by arranged and forced marriage , male superiority , and the disregard for the interests of children . This law also asserted the rights of adults to divorce , which embraced the free @-@ choice marriage , and helped transfer power from the older to the younger generations .

= = = May Fourth Movement = = =

The " New Culture " movement began in China around 1916 following the unsuccessful activities of the 1911 Revolution to establish a republican government , and continued through the 1920s . The May Fourth Movement , which took place on May 4 , 1919 , was a demonstration led by students at the National Peking University against the government , in which they protested the abolition of Confucianism and changes in the traditional value system . Many believed that the solution to China 's problems would be to adopt Western notions of equality and democracy . Since the movement stressed group efforts and propaganda , women were involved in numerous collective tasks such as publication , drama production , and fund raising , which helped them gain more social contact with men and win respect .

= = Domestic life of a Chinese woman = =

= = = Foot binding = = =

Foot binding is the process in which the arch of a woman 's feet is broken and the toes are wrapped up against the foot to create a smaller looking foot with an acute arch . These " fists of flesh " were seen as attractive and arousing for men and the practice was passed down as a prerequisite to marriage from mother to daughter across generations . Special shoes were made to accentuate the small size of the women 's feet . This process was painful and often confined women to their rooms . Few lower class women were able to have their feet bound because they needed to be able to walk normally to accomplish house work . Bound feet came to be an indication of high class and wealth for women . Chinese male reformers during the imperialism period recognized the liberation of the Chinese women as something necessary for their own sake . The humiliation that China had gone through on an international level was turned on the Chinese ? women ? . Naturally , the foot binding was recognized as ? national shame , ? and people found it as a serious problem to be disappeared , thus raging anti @-@ footbinding campaigns in the 1890s to the 1900s . Moreover , the new government that came in after the 1911 revolution banned foot binding practice . Thus , it started to disappear in the coastal areas in 1900 to 1920 . However , the practice was still popular within the interior areas of China till the 1930s and even in the 1950s . The practice has been outlawed multiple times since its inception in the 13th century . It was finally banned as the Communists came to power around 1949 .

= = = Trafficking of women = = =

Women are sold through gangs of women traffickers who kidnap and transport young women and girls across large distances from their homes . Their papers and documentation are taken from them . These women are purchased by men who bar them from leaving the home for fear of the women escaping . Some of these women feel a sense of duty to the family once they have committed to them and had children . They also have no means of escape . This practice has been banned by the government since Mao Zedong and the Communists came to power . Men who buy wives are subject to time in jail , and those convicted for trafficking women face execution .

= = = Confucianism and Communism = = =

Under Confucianism the typical family was patriarchal because men have the capability to pass on the family name and carry on the lineage of the ancestors ; women were expected to be subservient . As the Communist regime changed the structure of Chinese society through economic reform , the structure of the Chinese family was altered . " The Four Olds " (sijiu) - old ideas , old habits , old customs , old cultures - were discouraged and were replaced by Communist ideology particularly during the Cultural Revolution . The economy was shifted to total government control with few chances to own private property and communal property . Collectivization destroyed " clan @-@ based " systems and had a great effect on motivation of workers and family loyalties .

The traditional social structure was further degraded by the Cultural Revolution . The Red Guards turned members of a family against one another as they sought out " class enemies " to be sent for " re @-@ education , " ultimately resulting in a loss of family ties . Women were elevated to equal status as men through a series of laws which prohibited practices such as arranged marriages , concubinages , dowries , and child betrothals . Under these marriage laws , women enjoyed joint property in marriage and could file for a divorce .

As a result of Communist rule in China , the social status of women improved greatly . Women were empowered to work outside the home . Communist rule also brought about the end of practices such as foot binding , child marriages , prostitution , and arranged marriages . China has seen a decrease in domestic violence due to government @-@ supported grassroots programs to counter these practices . Women in rural areas remain largely uneducated .

= = = Population control = = =

During the reform period , the Communist regime in China regulated birth control . The party legalized abortion in 1953 and then created public birth control study groups in 1954 . There was a push for a limit on childbirth in 1956 , which had no immediate effect on the population . In 1979 , the One Child Policy was implemented and is still in effect today .

Another instance of population control is the prevalence of female infanticide . Due to the One Child Policy , most families want a boy rather than a girl . Since the 1980s , roughly 200 @,@ 000 female infants would be killed per year because of the preference for male children and the advancement in technologies such as ultrasound , which help to find out the sex of the fetus . In addition to female infanticide , girls are being unregistered or are abandoned by their families , which stops them from receiving education and legal benefits the government offered . These methods of controlling population have resulted in a huge gender gap in China .

= = Chinese women in the workplace = =

= = = History of working women = = =

In the imperial era , women were prohibited from having official positions . It was unimaginable for women to hold these positions because during this time women underwent foot bindings , which prevented them from doing any sorts of physical labor . They held jobs that required minimal physical activity like domestic chores and producing textiles to sell or use .

During Mao 's rule (1949 ? 1976) , Chinese women were needed for their manual labor for farming and for urban industrialization . To compensate for their hard work , they were provided access to education and politics . The Chinese government supported women 's education . The percentage of girls attending school was 96 @.@ 2 % compared to below 20 % before the People 's Republic (1949) . The Chinese government has tried to decrease the amount of women illiterates while promoting adult and vocational schools . The amount of illiterates has gone down from 90 % in 1949 and 32 % from 1993 . In the first 30 years of Communist rule women 's discrimination was decreasing , but they did not have jobs that had real decision @-@ making power .

Now in the present day , there are more employed Chinese women . They receive the same amount of money for the same amount of work that they do . The Chinese government has made great efforts to achieve a high level of economic status for women . Since 1949 , with the founding of the People ' Republic , the rate for employed women has risen . Chinese women account for 44 % of the work force and 34 @.@ 5 % account for the women 's work force in the world .

= = = Rural areas = = =

The key role women have in farming is to maintain ownership of the main sources of production in rural areas . In traditional China. women were not allowed to own land . Land was inherited through the sons , and if there was no son in the family , it was taken by a close male relative . In less populated areas , women do more agricultural work than men because of shifting cultivation . In more populated areas , men do more work than women because extensive plough cultivation is used . During the busy periods of planting , transporting , and harvesting , women are brought onto the field to work rather than working in the house . Female involvement is high in the double @-@ cropping rice area . Women also play a role in tea cultivation . Other types of work women perform in the countryside include pig and poultry rearing , spinning , weaving , basket @-@ making , and other handicrafts . This type of work supplements agricultural income .

= = = Urban areas = = =

China 's economic policies laid the basis of the industrialization drive in export @-@ oriented development , and its reliance on low @-@ wage manufacturing to produce consumer goods for the world market . Young migrant women left their homes in rural settings to work in urban industrial

areas . Work included export @-@ oriented industrialization , manufacturing in electronics and toy assembly , sewing in garment production , and mixed assembly and sewing in the footwear industry . Hong Kong and Shenzhen were cities established as centers of export @-@ oriented industrialization , and migrant women workers have made up 70 % of Shenzhen 's three million people .

Private sector employers are reluctant to hire women because Chinese law requires that the employer cover maternity leave and childbirth costs .

= = = = Reasons for migrant labor = = = =

A recent phenomenon , the migration of rural Chinese workers began in 1984 when the Regulations of Permanent Residence Registration became less punitive and allowed people to move to find employment . People left rural areas to escape poverty , and females left due to the lack of local opportunities for women . In the cities , women could find new , low @-@ paid factory @-@ based jobs that did not require highly skilled workers . According to national statistics , the ratio of male to female migrant workers averages 2 : 1 , and an estimated 30 @-@ 40 million of the migrant women work in the cities , namely Hong Kong and Shenzhen .

In 2003 , 70 % of the 5 @.@ 5 million migrant workers were females in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone . In the Nanshan district of Shenzhen , females comprised 80 % of the workforce with the average age of 23 . Young female workers are preferred over older females or males for several reasons . First , as married women are less mobile , female migrant workers are younger and more likely to be single than their male counterparts . Young rural women are preferred for these jobs primarily because they are less likely to get pregnant , and are able and willing to withstand longer working hours , have ? nimble fingers , and will be less experienced in asking for their statutory rights . In many cases , migrant women sign contracts stating that they will not get pregnant within their period of employment . ?

In the interest of the family , rural females are sent to find urban employment over male counterparts , mainly to supplement familial income at home and to support the males , who are more likely to attend college . The male standard of education in China is higher ; particularly when a family is under financial stress , females are more likely to drop out of school to generate income for the family . Because females have lesser impact on the family ? s long @-@ term financial stability , their rights for opportunities development are consequently unequal .

This new system allowed rural residents to migrate , it did not allow them to change their residence or accept any benefits in the cities . This resulted in a growing population of migrant laborers without the minimal benefits of residency including medical care , housing , or education . Many migrants , particularly less educated , younger women are unaware of their rights . Today , up to 90 % of migrants work without contracts , in violation of the Chinese labour law .

= = = = Degradation = = = =

Women factory workers are known as " dagongmei " (working girls) . They are traditionally young women migrants who experience a segmented labor market in informal and low @-@ wage employment sectors . Workers in export @-@ oriented factories receive minimum wage and minimum overtime pay , they pay for meals and lodging at the factory , and they pay fines for breaking factory rules . The average daily wage , for a 12 @-@ hour day in a toy factory , in the mid @-@ 1990s was \$ 1 @.@ 10 USD for migrant women workers in Shenzhen .

These conditions create " maximum surplus appropriation " ; workers ' daily lives revolve around factory production and are dependent on the regional economy . The state disallows local unionization and has the All @-@ China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) as the legitimate forum of worker representation . Without the right to form unions and with the state sanctioned ACFTU , migrant women workers find it hard to effectively gain suitable rights and treatment from the factory management . The 2003 statistics from the People 's University show 90 % of migrants work without contracts , directly violating the Chinese Labour Law . According to the ACFTU ,

migrant workers are owed over 100 billion Yuan in back wages .

Organizations are now attempting to assist and empower female migrant workers through training and education on their labor @-@ related rights . Legal clinics have begun to assist female migrants in filing claims against employers and local labor bureaus . One case of female worker exploitation in the Hua Yi garment factory in Beijing resulted in mistreatment by management as well as withholding pay for at least 24 women . After filing complaints , in collaboration with the Center for Women 's Law Studies and Legal Services of Beijing University , the women received 170 @,@ 000 Yuan in back wages and compensation .

Relations between workers and employers represent both the immediate need of manufacturing plants for large quantities of low wage laborers , and the insecurities young workers face in relocating long distances to life in factory dormitories . Hiring single young women serve needs of management . The employment of young females allow management to exhibit maximum control and authority over the labor force . Compared to older women and male workers , young single women are susceptible to the authority and demands of management . The common manipulation of " factory as family " by owners and managers suggests how workers hold a subliminal status within the factory environment . Uneven power relations inside the factory result in demands from management for personal services from women workers , from hair washing to sex .