

Question :-

Discuss in detail the Gender Critique of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs).

Answer.

Introduction:

Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) are the economic policies that aim to promote growth & stability in developing countries. These policies are often implemented by IMF and World bank, when developing countries seeks loans from IMF and World bank due to their balance & payment crisis then, IMF and World bank imposes these structural policies in their economic models to

make them able to return their loan. But here the question demands from us that how these SAP (structural adjustment policies) affects women and other genders directly and indirectly. SAPs usually demand reduction of govt spending, liberalizing trade, privatizing public enterprises and devaluation of currency. But somehow these structural policies cause social injustice, human rights abuse and gender inequality. Here we will discuss that how SAPs cause gender inequality and how it can be reduced by possible changes.

2) **Effects of SAPs on**

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Women in the developing world: -

There are several effects of structural adjustment policies on the role and economic status of women.

2.1 Effect on education and health of women: -

The health and educational opportunities for women have been decreased in African states because of cut in subsidies according to the requirement of SAPs.

(Global Gender Index 2022)

2.2 Increased stress level and Burden on women: -

Due to structural adjustment policies usually men face unemployment and as a result due to the

unemployment of men
women also face emotional stress and emotional burden. Foreexample: According

to data by Hologic,

The report finds that b/w 2021 & 2022 reported stress was 4% higher in women than men because of lack of economic opportunities and financial burden.

As a result globally mental and emotional disorders increased specially in women."

2.3 SAPs reduce the opportunities for women in formal sector:-

Due to SAPs women face more unemployment, lower wages and even worse working condition than men

Due to employment issues, women are often pushed to informal sector where they face less security and more gender based violence.

3. Some examples that how SAPs affect women in different countries :-

3.1 SAPs caused oppression of women in Ghana:-

In Ghana SAPs led to the removal of subsidies on food & fuel, which increased the prices of basic goods & services. So women farmers had to pay more for inputs such as seed, fertilizers while receiving lower income/prices from their crops. Women also had to

spend more time &
 money on fetching
 water and firewood
 as well as caring
 for their children
 & home. So, it
 really exploits women
 and increased burden
 on them.

3.2 Women unemployment due to SAPs in Tanzania

In Tanzania, SAPs resulted in the retrenchment of thousand of workers in public sector. Many women lost their jobs & income as well as their social benefits such as pension, health insurance & housing. Some women started informal activities such as domestic work and sex work to

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3.3 Women exploitation in Mexico as a result of SAPs.

In Mexico, SAPs encouraged the expansion of export oriented industries where women were in large quantity. These industries offered low wages, long hours, poor working condition and sexual exploitation for women. Women also faced health risks from exposure to toxic chemicals, as well as sexual harassments from their employers & co-workers.

4) How SAPs affected women in Pakistan

SAPs have also effected women in Pakistan in

- following manners.
1. Reduced public spending on health, education & social welfare.
 2. Increased unemployment & poverty, forcing women to enter the informal sector or migrate to urban areas.
 3. Increased gender inequalities & discrimination in access to land, credit & technology.

4.1 How Pakistani women resisted to these policies:-

Pakistani women resisted to these policies in following ways

- 1) Women have formed network & coalition with other civil society organization such as South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP-PK)

and Gender Empowerment
Network (GEN) for
gender-responsive policies
& programs.

- 2) Women have empowered
themselves through education
training, skill development
and self-help groups
to improve their economic
opportunities & livelihood.

How SAPS can
change its policies
for gender equality.

SAPS can change its
policies in following
way for promoting
gender equality and
for reducing its
oppression against different
genders specially women.

- 1) By considering different
needs, interests and
capabilities of women & men

in the design of
implimentation and
evaluation of SAPs.

2) By Promoting women's participation
in decision making
processes at all levels
especially in economic &
financial institutions.

3) By addressing root
cause of gender-based
violence & discrimination
such as patriarchal
norms and religious
extremism.

4) By supporting women's
economic empowerment
through access to land
credit, technology and
markets.

5) By increasing investment
in social sectors
such as health
education that benefit
women & men
equally.

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Conclusion :-

Conclusively, we can say that structural adjustment policies often caused exploitation of men & women and women specifically in different areas and in Pakistan also. So, IMF and World bank should keep in mind the after effects of implementation of SAPs and should re-create these policies in such a way that these would be beneficial for gender equality instead of exploitation.

