

**DOES REFORMS AND EMERGENCE OF FOREIGN CULTURAL VALUES MADE CHINESE
WOMEN MORE EMPOWERED AND FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT? AN EMPIRICAL
ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

This paper emphasis on the major determinants of cultural values changed over the period of last decades which entirely changed the role of Chinese women. Reforms policies of the Chinese government played a vital role in this transition. Improving economic situation and a big market with a huge population attracted massive foreign direct investment, followed by the foreign cultural values. This was the turning point of Chinese society; many foreign cultural values emerged into the strong culture of China. Emergence of artistic values had the multi-dimensional effect n the lives of the Chinese women. This study has been supported with major comparable survey variables taken from the World Values Survey (WVS) which was conducted in 1990, 1995, 2001 and 2007, gradual changes in the cultural values of equal rights of women in education, job and doing business made the women more empowered and independent in their decision making at household level.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Culture Emergence, Financial Autonomy, Chinese Women, Westernization.

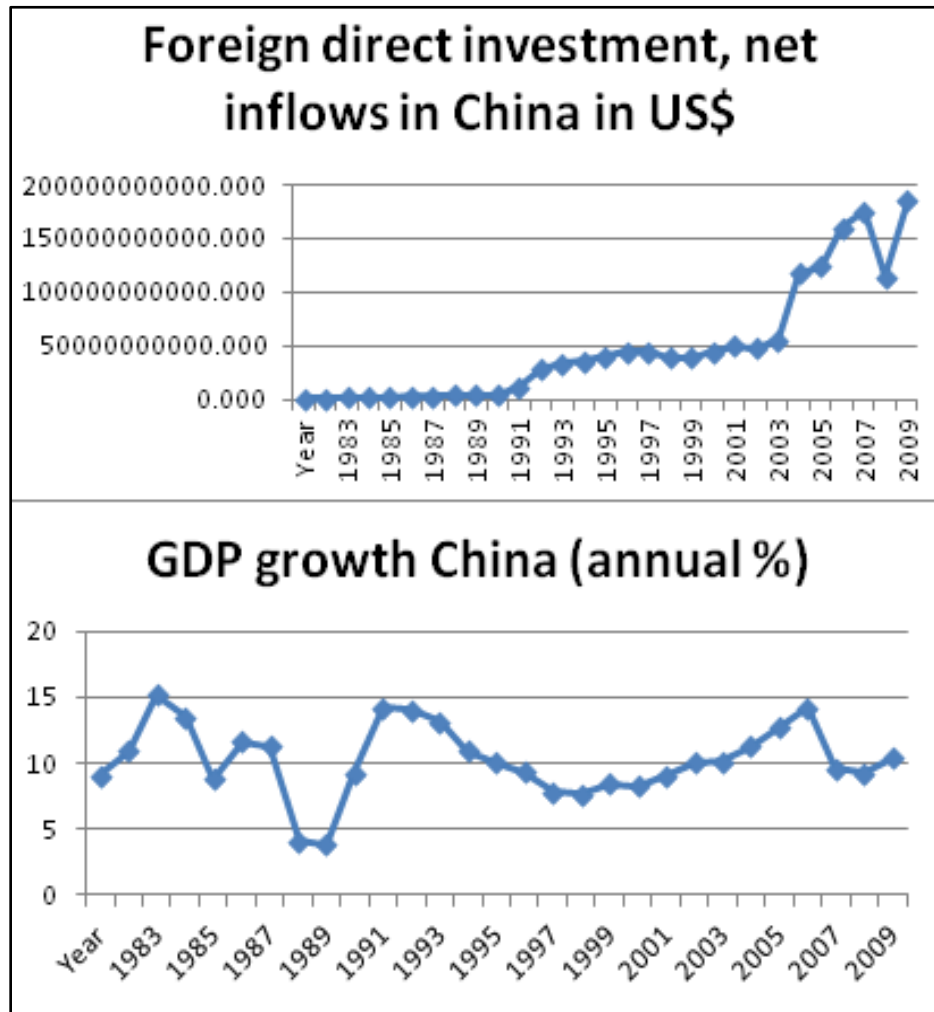
IMPACT OF THE GLOBALIZATION ON CHINA

China gained a prominent economic growth in last three decades after the emergence in front of the world. It gained the steady economic growth of 8.69% per capital GDP growth rate during last thirty years according to the World Bank (2009). This growth rate is higher than the United

States, Europe, Japan and India. There are various studies which shed light on the outstanding growth of China, such as the institutional reforms (Qian, 2003; Woo & Thye, 1999) considerable improvement in the total factors of productivity (Bosworth & Collins, 2008; Perkins & Rawski, 2008), and speedy growth of the capital (Chow & Li, 2002). Therefore improving economic conditions of the country not only improved the life of people but it also provided opportunity to other nations. Opening policy of the government let the foreign capital enter into the economy; in the meantime, these foreign direct investments were welcomed here along with their culture values. Strong Chinese culture has its roots way back from centuries, but it has also shown a relative adaptability to change value and to adapt these. Pertaining the rate of adaptability of such values, G. Hofstede (1980) emphasized that this modification, if it is occurring, is a really sluggish. Various other researchers believe that the modification is much more quick and for that reason the research on values have to be regularly updated (Triandis, 1984). The crosscurrents strategy recognizes some elements of this system may change over a period of years (quick adjustment), while various other components of values might take generations to alter (slow-moving adjustment). Inglehart (1990) determined an overall change in values amongst succeeding generations in Western countries, which he has actually classified as a change from materialist to post-materialist values. These terminal values are less likely to change in business ideology influences (i.e. economic, political, and technological modifications). On the other hand, the values that are more peripheral are much more susceptible to change when there are financial, technological and political changes. Making a disagreement, Calman (2004) evaluated the adjustment in ethical values and recommended that there are a series of center values which are unlikely to change over long time periods, and there are a series of secondary or obtained values around which there is even more controversy and within which differences of sight take place.

Changes in the cultural values had strong impact on the women in China. Recently women are started being considered equal to men in most of the economies of the world. They have an equal stake of the household income generation and economic growth of the country, as it is evident from the family survey of China, which was conducted in 1982. Results of the survey showed that around 81% of urban women used to work outside of their home (Tsui, 1989); this ratio is considerably high as compared to many countries. Chinese women are major part of the economic growth of the country. According to Becker (1985) economic development was the process of restoring the labor market and household production roles in China. It is believed that females may do less market work and are paid less than male workers.

Figure 1 Foreign Direct Investment inflow and GDP Growth in China



Source: UNCTAD, FDI and GDP database (2010, www.unctad.org/fdistatistics)

CHANGING CULTURE VALUES

Chinese culture values have been under discussion in the literature of the international business and management practices by the (B. Hofstede, 1989), (G.O. Faure, 1999), (Child, 1994), (Child, 1990), (Fang, 2003), (Fang, 2006), (Hsiao, 1990), (N. Campbell, 1988), (Guy Olivier Faure & Fang, 2008); (G. Hofstede, 1991; Lockett, 1988); (M. Lockett, 1990) and (Porter, 1996). Following result extracted from the famous World Values World Values Survey (2014) (2013) website, WVS conducted the after every five years, due to the inaccessibility of data from different countries such as China. In table 1, some variables are comparable from 1990 to 2007. For this study following are the comparable and non comparable variable taken under consideration to know more about the changing values which helped Chinese women to change their situation.

Table 1: Changing Cultural Values

Question	Options	1990			2007		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Autonomy Index	Determination, perseverance/ Independence	12.70%	13.00%	12.30%	16.50%	16.80%	16.20%
	1	2.80%	2.80%	2.80%	49.00%	51.60%	46.90%
	0	0.10%	0.20%	-	29.20%	26.70%	31.30%
	1	46.40%	45.70%	47.40%	5.20%	4.90%	5.50%
	Obedience/Religious faith	38.00%	38.20%	37.60%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Marriage is an out-dated institution	Disagree	84.90%	85.10%	84.60%	87.60%	87.70%	87.50%
	Agree	15.10%	14.90%	15.40%	12.40%	12.30%	12.50%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Jobs scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women	Agree	41.40%	49.70%	28.70%	42.30%	44.00%	40.70%
	Disagree	49.60%	39.60%	64.90%	32.70%	30.20%	34.80%
	Neither	9.00%	10.70%	6.40%	25.10%	25.70%	24.50%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Feeling happiness of	Very happy	28.30%	28.50%	28.10%	21.20%	20.60%	21.70%
	Quite happy	40.20%	40.00%	40.50%	55.50%	57.30%	54.10%
	Not very happy	29.40%	29.80%	28.60%	19.30%	18.20%	20.20%
	Not at all happy	2.20%	1.70%	2.80%	4.00%	3.90%	4.10%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Family important in life	Very important	62.10%	59.90%	65.50%	78.50%	80.00%	77.20%
	Rather important	33.10%	34.80%	30.50%	19.60%	17.90%	21.10%
	Not very important	4.30%	4.70%	3.80%	1.80%	2.00%	1.70%
	Not at all important	0.50%	0.70%	0.30%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
University is more important for a boy than for a girl	Agree strongly	4.40%	4.20%	4.50%	3.80%	4.40%	3.20%
	Agree	19.40%	20.80%	17.80%	16.90%	19.10%	14.90%
	Disagree	58.40%	59.10%	57.50%	68.30%	67.20%	69.30%
	Strongly disagree	17.90%	15.90%	20.20%	11.10%	9.30%	12.60%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Job best way for women to be independent	Agree strongly	24.30%	18.20%	33.30%		
Agree		50.90%	52.80%	48.10%			
Disagree		21.40%	25.00%	16.00%			
Strongly disagree		3.40%	4.00%	2.60%			
Total		100%	100%	100%			

Contd...

Basic kinds of attitudes concerning society	Society must be radically changed	5.20%	6.90%	2.70%
	Society must be gradually improved by reforms	70.10%	69.50%	71.00%
	Society must be valiantly defended	24.70%	23.60%	26.30%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
Question	Options	2007		
Men make better business executives than women do	Agree strongly	5.70%	7.10%	4.30%
	Agree	31.80%	33.50%	30.10%
	Disagree	56.20%	54.10%	58.20%
	Strongly disagree	6.40%	5.20%	7.40%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
Democracy: Women have the same rights as men.	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	1.70%	1.40%	1.90%
	2	0.80%	0.60%	1.00%
	3	0.90%	0.60%	1.10%
	4	0.30%	0.10%	0.60%
	5	1.80%	2.20%	1.40%
	6	3.40%	3.20%	3.50%
	7	3.20%	3.00%	3.30%
	8	7.90%	8.60%	7.20%
	9	18.80%	17.50%	20.10%
	An essential characteristic of democracy	61.20%	62.70%	59.90%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Base for mean	1736	834	902
	Mean	9	9.1	9
	Standard Deviation	1.81	1.71	1.89

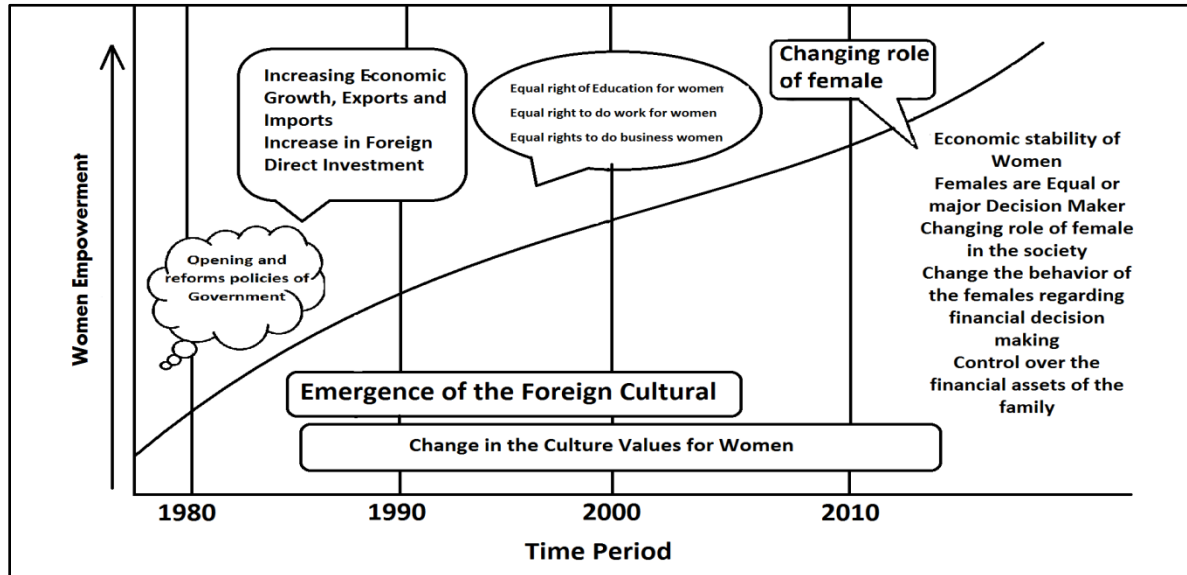
Source: World Values Survey (WVS) (1990, 1995, 2001 and 2007)

Independence is an important ingredient of anyone's life, either male or female, everyone prefers dominance over obedience. Previous studies about China proved the typical household was based upon Confucian concepts in which female's primary roles are of a wife and a mother (Zhang, 2009), but now situation has been changed and females are active part of the economy and source of income, sharing burden of the family expenses with their husband, they are not only wife and mother but they are earning source of the family. Survey results showed different results, whole society transformed from the obedience/religious faith towards the determination, perseverance / independence especially the big change came in the behavior of the females from the period of 1990 to 2007. Concerning the family issues, Chinese society still holds the

strong faith on the marriage relationship of man and women, in 2007 87.6% respondents disagreed with the phenomena of marriage an out-dated institution which is higher from the 1990. With changing situation of the country and the economic situation of the families and incoming foreign culture values, family bond became stronger and family importance increased from 1990 to 2007. Efforts of the Chinese Government to make the females active part of the society are very successful. Females are working in the country side by side to man and earning a good amount of money with respect from the society. Therefore, females keeps stronger sense regarding scarcity of jobs and agree to some extend to men getting priority over women.

Importance of education cannot be denied, an elite core is needed to run the country's affairs, for the factories and other manufacturing need the technical labor. In all aspects of the life there is need of professionally and technically educated people. To make the females economically independent first we need to educate them so they can be active part of the economy along with being a good month, sister, wife and a crucial part of future nation. Importance of the education for the Chinese women is very important, whole society knew about this issue very well so they disagreed with issue that university is more important for the boy than for a girl, from 1995 to 2007 number of people whole disagreed with it increased much. So universities in China have no gender discrimination, there is free and open competition to get education in all fields of the study. Therefore, educated women have more chances to get the good jobs. Majority of the respondents from the survey results in 1990 was in the favor that best way of the females to be independent if and only when they do the job. And this change in the society values brought the positive effective on the whole society, this wave of changed let the females to be economically stronger and independent. Resistance to change is part of the human nature, Chinese people also believe to accept the change gradually instead of radical change in the society, only 24.7% of the respondents believe not to accept the change and keep the same values. History showed that Chinese society accepted the changes gradually and accepted the reforms by the government and foreign values in the society. Beauty of the democracy lies in the equal rights without gender discrimination majority of the respondents of survey in 2007 answered that women should have equal rights with mean value of 9 with standard deviation of 1.81. It shows the stronger equal rights for the females in the society. As the females were working the whole society side by side man performing all type of the jobs. So, when asked about the question either man can be better business executives than women do, then majority of respondent disagree with it. Role of the females as successful business executives was appreciated.

Figure 2: Determinants of Changing Chinese Culture Values



Source: Compiled by Author

Above Figure demonstrate the changing role of the female over the period of time, on the x axis there is time period and on the y axis there is women empowerment. It started after the opening and reform policies in the late 70's. Due to the rapid economic growth the demand for the foreign products increased and exports also showed the prominent growth, many foreign companies started investment in the China. The FDI brought the capital as well as foreign cultural values, due to the emergence of foreign cultural values and reform policies, life of the women had major shift. They started getting the equal rights for the education, job, and business also in the household income and major decision maker at household level. Now Chinese women role is entirely changed as compared the women in the past, now they are more empowered. Previously they were considered the only mother and wife and taking care of the family, now they are earning for the family side by side man. They are economically stable, they have the control over the family income, and they are spending more money for the family and become the major decision maker for the household decision especially regarding the financial matters.

CHANGING ROLE OF THE CHINESE WOMEN

Chinese value face assistance and the Confucian principles of finding respect discreetness, heat and refinement (Gabrenya, 1996). The role of females in the Chinese society has actually transformed drastically in the previous century. In specific, women, who were holding up half of the sky according to official mottoes, were motivated to get in the workforce. The function of families such as childcare was interacted in such a way that individual family members could possibly not even make many choices on household tasks. Following are the major area which

got affected by the changing culture values and made the Chinese women stronger and respectful in the society as compared to previous century.

CHINESE WOMEN AND MIGRATION

Rapid economic growth bring the China in the prominent position in the world but it brings with itself a major problem of adjusting migrant workers, these adjustments are of an enormous pressure to urban cities. There are more than 210 million rural migrant who work in different urban cities of China. It accounts for the 22% of the total working population. What is interesting is that half of them (49.5%) are females(Wang, 2010). According to different statistics in (Jiang, 2012), in last decade there a huge spike seen on the property value that results in a huge problem for the people who plan to get married. Some studies conducted in the China previously which showed many young male workers are unable to get married because they do not have enough money to buy the house, this ratio is quite high for men in rural areas (Zhou, Wang, Li, & Hesketh, 2011). Though China adapted the foreign culture but still it has its traditional concepts and values in place.

CHINESE WOMEN AND JOB MARKET

Interestingly, 49% of the Chinese population consists of women and 46% of the total labor force women (Women in China, 2011) but only 4% of the Chinese women can make possible to reach at the top level management of the organizations such as COO, EFO or HRD. In the modern China, more than 53% of the women get the lower-level jobs at workplace and their economic situation is not good (Women losing ground, 2012). Chinese government was working hard to improve the conditions of the women to bring them to the main stream of the economy. Since 2009, China has actually been acknowledging women entrepreneurs' achievements by providing 30 'Mulan in Business' awards each year. Mulan is a legendary heroine from the 5th century who disguised herself as a man to take her father's space in the military (Liu. Shimin, 2013). In China 18% of the CEO post is hold by the females as compared the 8% of global average according to the report of the Grant Thornton International Business year 2011. In the meantime 8.5% board seats and 4.1% board chairs are held by the women are higher than United States of America according the report of Catalyst (2012). Chinese women are becoming more powerful day by day, as shown in the fortune's International Power 50 List, it contain the seven Chinese women (Fortune, 2012). These figures show the growing strong role of the women in the Chinese economy. The number of women at the top managerial positions as compared to men is higher in the private companies as compared to state owned enterprises proven by the study of the listed companies in the Shanghai and Shenzhen Stock Exchanges by the Zhang (2012) during 1997 and 2010. Private sector giving more

opportunities and using the skills of to the women which leads toward the economic growth and personal status uplift.

ECONOMIC STABILITY OF THE CHINESE WOMEN

Economic reforms and opening up polices of help the whole nation to grow faster, therefore advantages which women got was multi dimensional. They gain high quality of the equation from good universities in the country and abroad and proved themselves that they can do any job. They not only performing the normal jobs but also worked on the top management job and earned the good amount of the money and made the economic situation better. According to the report of China Daily (2013) number of female billionaires increased in the China and interestingly half of them are self-made entrepreneurs. Not only the top level but the low level, income level of the working women increased which made their economic situation stronger. During the reforms it was quite common to say that women can get independent and more confidence if they can do job. So in the job and business both sectors women encouraged. And they proved that everything is possible for them. So today Chinese working women is more economically stable then past.

CHANGING LIFE STYLE OF CHINESE WOMEN

In modern era, during fast economic growth and lavish life style, marriage is still considered the basic desire of an individual. In past the factors to consider while getting married included beauty/handsomeness, education level, job or business love/like and different other aspects. This a very important factor considered in major parts of world to own a house before getting married. According to the Black (2002) San Francisco that is considered as the loveliest city in United States has high number of gay couples, because of high housing prices. It clearly shows that people there also consider buying house before getting married (conventional marriages). In the urban areas, there are many skilled and high income males as compared to the females which attract more females to get married (Edlund, 2005). Considering the situation of the China in this respect, we could conclude that during the economic transition, role of the urban husbands is considered main financial supports of the family. This trend also shows the restoration of the function of the household production and labor market process of the economic transition (Li, Zhang, Sin, & Zhao, 2006).

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members possibly not even make many choices on household tasks. China is in fast growing economy with process of modernization, but still, they follow the old traditions. Females are the most important segment of the nation; they are active part of the economy. This paper elaborates point of view of the working female in China, regarding the decision of marriage, its relationship to housing decision and related issues.

CONCLUSION

Chinese culture have very strong values and people showed some resistance to change and they accepted the change gradually, over the period of last four decades, many culture values changed due the emergence of the foreign values. At the national level people like the autonomy and females become move powerful and stronger with the equal rights for the education and doing job. Phenomena of female empowering in relationship with letting them do jobs was widely accepted and appreciated by the nation. For getting better education and good jobs greater number of females migrated from the rural areas to developed parts of the country. Changes in the females' situation came gradually in the society with the help of the opening policies of government, foreign direct investment which was followed by the foreign culture values. Even though Chinese females keep the local cultural values but major aspects of their lives are dominated by the western values. They are more independent, economically stronger and preferring foreign brands are prominent in everyday life. For making females independent, first they need to be economically stronger which only came with when they are able to get the equal opportunity in the jobs and education. In Chinese society they got the equal rights for the getting the education and doing the jobs on the open and fair competition with men. Role and status of the today's Chinese women enormously changed from women in last century. Education had the great impact on the lives of the women; education made them aware about their rights and duties and improved their core competency. Well educated female getting the good jobs and working at top level also, made them the essential income generation source for the family, economic stability of the female increased their negotiation power, higher the negotiation power greater the empowerment in decision making.

Above findings will help for the government to formulate the financial strategies keeping in mind female's attitude towards financial decision making. Business people and marketing firms will use above results for developing the strategies by knowing the real decision maker at household level. This paper will provide the guidelines for the future research work regarding the household decision making and cultural studies. For the better understanding of the phenomena of cultural emergence and household financial decision making, face to face interview need to conduct with working women of China.

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