

Women Movement in the Era of Globalisation

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Abstract: From the early 1990s, the principal economic, social and political problems experienced by the mass of Indian women have, in one way or another, become inextricably linked with the processes and policies of liberalisation led globalization. Struggles around basic food security, health, education, women's employment, livelihood and conditions of work, declining child sex ratios, commoditisation of women and human relations with attendant growth in violence against women, expansion of dowry, etc. have all necessitated a degree of confrontation between the women's movement and economic and social practices being established by globalization. Women are not a homogenous category, but is intersected by class, caste, community and ethnicity, and impacted by age, ideology and sexual preference.

Keywords: *Women; Struggle; Globalisation; Women's Right; Homogenous*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today women movement in India is a rich and vibrant movement, which has taken different form in different parts of the country. It is true to say that Indian women are the most oppressed and exploited in the world, and it is equal to say that they are among the most liberated and the most articulate perhaps most free. In this globalised phase women's movement which continue still present in India. when India become independent, it was widely acknowledged that the battle for freedom had been fought as much by women as by men. At that time Gandhi view- for Gandhi when woman, whom we all call abala becomes abala, all these who are helpless will become powerful.. Independence brought many promises and dream for women in India, the democratic society in which both men and women would have a voice, but patriarchy of our male dominated society root cause of women movement in India.

2. MAPPING THE MOVEMENT

However 21st century atmosphere has been changed. In the changed global context local situations are being moved into the increasingly volatile workings of the larger world economy and social order at a pace that tends to quickly erode much of the benefits achieved by local, sectional or issue based action. The impact of wider crises are also immediately and acutely felt at all levels, particularly since as part of the advancing agenda of globalization, most existing protection mechanisms of the state are being withdrawn. In such a situation, there is urgent need for welding together of the several strands of movements and struggles into a stronger political force to confront the erosion of the anti-imperialist protective functions of the Indian state. In the years before independence, the

two main issues they took up were political rights and reform of personal laws. Women's participation in the freedom struggle broadened the base of the women's movement. In post independence India, large number of women's autonomous groups have sprung up challenging patriarchy and taking up a variety of issues such as violence against women, greater the anti-imperialist protective functions of the Indian state. If we see the case of a poor woman in rural India, who is regularly beaten up by her husband, whatever he spends on liquor and violently abuses his wife. Men attack his wife because she has no food to give him. Wife has taken the burden of whole family. But Indian women always support her husband she can't raise voice against him.

2.1. Pre- Independence Movement

The roots of the Indian women's movement go back to the early nineteenth century when social reformers, beginning with Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833), began to focus on issues concerning women. Roy condemned sati, kulin polygamy and spoke in favour of women's property rights. He held the condition of Indian women as one of the factors responsible for the degraded state of Indian society. If Ram Mohan is remembered for his anti-sati movement, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar is more often remembered for his widow remarriage campaign. Following them, improving the condition of women became the first tenet of the Indian social reform movement. Gandhi respected tradition of the society, he realised that there were deep rooted customs and traditions which has been hampering the development of women and women's freedom. Women's inferior status, enforced seclusion, early marriage, condition of widows and lack of education were facts documented by reformers throughout the country.

2.2. A New Beginning

Many issue based on the local interest based movements and organisations involved with women economic activities have also started giving raise their voice for wider and more forceful political intervention and movement against the larger process associated with the globalisation. Economic aspects of globalization bring new opportunities and resources to women. But equally important, globalization promotes the diffusion of ideas and norms of equality for women; though some societies resist such notions, others gradually abandon rules and practices that have functioned to subordinate and constrain women. Women's organisations also have to engage with the consequences of a globalization induced or international demonstration effect based wave of consumerism.

However violence against women, specifically in the form of rape, and what came to be known in India as 'dowry deaths' – the killing of young married women for the 'dowry' or money/goods they brought with them at marriage. This was also the beginning of a process of learning for women: most protests were directed at the State. Because women were able to mobilise support, the State responded, seemingly positively, by changing the law on rape and dowry, making both more stringent. This seemed, at the time, like a great victory. It was only later that the knowledge began to sink in that mere changes in the law meant little, unless there was a will and a machinery to implement these. And that the root of the problem of discrimination against women lay not only in the law, or with the State, but was much more widespread. Old, new, and expanded forms of violence

against women have clearly found powerful stimulus from the cultural environment created by an unchecked drive towards commodification of women, with neo-liberal market fundamentalism establishing itself as the dominant source of social regulation and policy.

One of the basic stand points of the movement is to advance the struggle for equality. This struggle for equality, as we all know, is not just in terms of gender equality but also in terms of social, economic and political equality. Women's experience of inequality does not only depend on gender, but also on other factors including their age, race, and culture, their political, economic and social situation, their health, their erotic preferences, their education and experience, and so on. The differences between life in different contexts, and the inequalities between regions and countries, affect the way in which we engage with issues. The state of the women's movement differs in every place, according to history and current conditions. Even in the same country, we can find radical differences in women's situation from one region to another, because of differences in access to information, services, the condition of civil and political rights, and the presence or absence of war.

Nowadays, there are more women who identify themselves as feminist or have a commitment to equality and women's rights than ever before, across all generations. As a global women's movement, so the challenge in trying to move is to recognise that women are moving to the same beat, even if it is not at the same pace. The power of "global" forces at different levels. The danger here is that we are left with a undimensional relationship to our present and our immediate past, one that obscures a host of questions and Without such accounts, current problems and crises for movements like the women's movement are reduced to the "effects" of globalisation, which can be more or less mechanically read off in a relation of direct causality, such as for instance, the negative impact on women of the new economic policies, or the co-option of the once autonomous women's movement through internationally funded non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The reality is somewhat different. While the participation of urban, middle class women is undeniable, it is not they who make up the backbone of the movement, or of the many, different campaigns that are generally seen as comprising the movement. The anti-alcohol agitation and similar campaigns in other parts of India were started and sustained by poor, low-caste, often working-class women. Anti dowry campaign attempted to bring social pressure to bear on offenders would be isolated in the community which they lived. However in Naxlite movement, where women are played a prominent role and led demonstration against the Govt. A new era of women militancy is developed. Various women organisations established and fighting for women political and economic rights and trying to improve their position by education and social reform. Global women struggle entered in to a new phase it can only result in deepening process of impoverishment and insecurity for the majority, within women suffering the most.

In Indian context the new women group declare to be feminist, most prominent feminist voices opposed to the coming globalisation. Their political commitment is more leftist than liberal. Globalisation can only result in deepening processes of impoverishment and insecurity for the majority, with women suffering most. A common strategy by this perspective is to claim globalisation is really nothing more than a bundle of policies under-

taken at the behest of International pressure by a willing Indian state. The leftist critiques of globalisation-as-economic-policy remain pinned to state-led welfare and socialist planning. The problems with this critique are then transferred to the alternative policy prescriptions offered. Since political-ideological frameworks centred on economic nationalism have lost much of their authority in the current climate, and since the State itself has changed with globalisation, they require much more careful justification. A more fundamental oppositional critique has been offered by eco-feminists such as Vandana Shiva. Her critique extends well beyond the latest form of globalisation to cover the entire period of modernity colonialism and capitalism, and in such a manner that “decentralised agricultural communities” are the only alternative (Shiva 1998) Here, too, one is left with a host of unanswered questions, especially when it is claimed that women farmers already possess a non-hierarchical relation to production, nature, and to gender (Jhon,2009).

One of the biggest challenges women have had to face in recent years is the growing influence of the religious right in India. Right-wing groups have built much of their support on the involvement of women: offering to help them with domestic problems, enabling them to enter the public space in a limited way, and all the while ensuring that the overall ideology within which they operate remains firmly patriarchal. The large majority of Indian women still live below the poverty line leading miserable wretched lives. While there have been scattered and sporadic examples of women’s outraged protests against rape, dowry deaths or sati, women have not been able to mobilise themselves enough to exert political pressure and focus attention on those problems which are today affecting their role and status.

The Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) movement in Ahmedabad led by Ela Bhatt, which was a sort of pioneering women’s trade union movement that began in 1972, was another such landmark in the history of the contemporary women’s movement. Women involved in various trades in the informal sector were brought together by their shared experiences such as low earnings, harassment at home, harassment by contractors and the police, poor work conditions, non-recognition of their labour to list just a few. Apart from collective bargaining, the movement strove to improve working conditions through training.

The Progressive Organisation of Women (POW), developed in Hyderabad in the year 1974, worked towards organising women against gender oppressive structures in society, namely, the sexual division of labour and the culture that rationalised this discrimination. The organisation promoted the ideology of ‘equality’ and opposed the economic dependence of women on men.

3. CONCLUSION

The women’s movement in India today is a rich and vibrant movement, which has spread to various parts of the country. It is often said that there is no one single cohesive movement in the country, but a number of fragmented campaigns. Activists see this as one of the strengths of the movement which takes different forms in different parts. While the movement may be scattered all over India, they feel it is nonetheless a strong and plural

force. For every step forward that the movement takes, there may be a possible backlash, a possible regression. History shows that though the struggle for women's rights is long and hard, it is a struggle that must be waged and won. The women's movement thus has a long way to go in its struggle for bringing about new values, a new morality and a new egalitarian relationship. I think the women's movement has a crucial role to play in meeting the challenges posed by globalization because it cuts across a large section of society and goes into the very homes of people, cutting across class, caste and religious barriers. There's been a history of different women's organizations coming together on joint platforms at the national level and recently the same encouraging trends seem to be emerging at the state levels too.

4. REFERENCES

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