

Globalization and Gender

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Abstract:- Gender refers to social construction of social differences and through this paper author proposes to examine the consequences of such constructions. This paper is not just an academic intervention but an urge and on a little aggressive mode, an activism through the stage of academics.

Key Words: Corporate Globalization; violent masculinities

Globalization brought satellite Television, through which foreign investment was indeed welcomed but foreign culture, even till date has been very selectively and with intense caution ingested by some and rejected by the others. We had the first glimpse of this from the 1996 Miss World Pageant and then Miss World 2013, both of which were moments of public debate and criticism. In the latter because of the protests from the majority Muslim population, the geography had to be switched from Indonesia to Bali and the 'swimwear round', had to be scrapped. The 1996 pageant, for similar reasons, was partially held at India and partially at Seychelles, thanks to the '*Mahilla Jagran Morcha*', for whom, the theme of debate was the sanctity and overloaded sentiments attached to India's glorified "*sitafied*", image which was seen synonymous to the Indian culture and ethos. What arises curiosity is the fact that, with the availability of internet, when pornography is just a click away, with even parliamentarians ogling on to it (in prohibited spaces), then how relevant are such protests.

Though globalization did permit Michael Jackson to perform but the protective patriarch in that case was the highly ethnocentric Bal Thackeray, which itself opens up an interesting paradox, or could also be explored as an interesting paradigm shift; while on the other hand, the two pageant events mentioned above, had no such forcefully assertive caretakers despite the fact that lakhs of audience were, glued to them, primarily on screens which were a child of the satellite television, (in other words, globalization). As a consequence, global opportunity for growth was fettered. In simple terms, with globalization, we indeed welcomed the material investment part but were and continue to be highly apprehensive about diluting the 'Indian ethos' (a concept which even today cannot be catalogued because the nation has been overwhelmingly heterogeneous). Since 1995, which is seen as the year of "yuppie" (young upwardly mobile professional culture), we have been consuming all global projects. One manifest variant of simultaneous globalization and glocalization was Pepsi which seemed to have modelled and bottled as if it was a fizz exclusively 'for India', not forgetting to read between lines that its marketing strategy of eating '*gol gappas*' and defining it as '*azadi dil ki*', in 1997, was made to coincide with the 50th year of our independence. To continue with the same product, the famous American line, "*you have got the right one ug-hug*", was neatly adapted to "*yehi hai right choice baby, aha*" and if not the "official thing" for the World Cup, it did climb high on Sachin Tendulkar and Akshay Kumar's shoulders with the tag line, "nothing official about it", cashing on anti-establishment and anti-"official" aspirations of the youth.

Further, very interestingly, we don't mind digging our fingers into a burger at McDonalds nor do we give a pat to the glocalization and globalization of Mc Donald's, with their variant of Masala Dosa burger. In the same vein, though we love to watch Fashion TV, we are very prompt in voicing our violent resentment to it when it comes to our geography. In this background, to be gender transformative is indeed a struggle in the current term and a major part of this struggle is to think about structure and individual as interrelated. Therefore, empowerment is to be thought about collectively not individually. To draw the connect, the author proposes to carry forward her spine of argument by using Nivedita Menon¹ concept, wherein she proposes a sub-type of globalization, labels it as "corporate globalization" and sees it in a painful juxtaposition with gender equity and by extension with gender transformation. This corporate globalization has had two side-effects on the Indian populace: large scale dispossession and access to new worlds of desire and consumption. There is a stark disjunction between these two side-effects and it is this disjunction which results in an interesting interplay between various facets of globalization.

¹ Menon, Nivedita. 2012. *Seeing like a feminist*. Penguin Books

This can be captured very easily in the Nirbhaya and the Shakti Mills rape cases. If we try to draw a comparative objectively, and view them, then the accused, in both the cases and in such similar cases, belong to the utterly marginalized segments of the 'new' Indian economy. Though they were perusing odd jobs but had access to internet and more crucial in such cases is access to 'internet' pornography. While on the other side, the victims in these cases, were 'white collared employees', with the latter being a photojournalist while the former pursuing an internship in physiotherapy.

Coming back to the disjunction, the first process of dispossession rips the rural and tribal community from their economy which is primarily land based, transplanting them into an alien setting through what can sophisticatedly be labelled as "rehabilitation" and simultaneously they get to taste a new fantasy called 'being liberated' which till now was seen to be the lifestyle of their heroes and heroines whom they idolized, living them only by hanging their poster or two in their not so settled houses/carts/autos and the like.

The sudden access to the liquid money because of selling off their landed assets, no matter howsoever frugal, (which till now was only a source of everyday life, primarily as annual agricultural harvests), leads to unregulated rakishness of expenses apparent in wedding displays or; pubs (not for socialization but for focused alcohol consumption) leading to unfortunate episodes such as the Jessica Lal murder case or; for that matter, obtaining possession of swanky bold vehicles like SUVs, which interestingly have a market which openly denies at least the author and many more, an access to it, not for tangible material reasons but interestingly because of an inbuilt masculinity attached to this 'bold' vehicle, which is stereotyped as 'macho' and so denies legitimate access to those who have an unsuitable gender.

Vast majority of such congregation of people, who enjoy an immediate access to money, have actually been ripped out from their land, and on a serious note, when re-rooted in the urban landscape would be nothing but mere debris. As a consequence, the first process associated with corporate globalization, referred to as dispossession, leads to startling inequalities. The glittering malls and spaces of conspicuous consumption are visible but brutally inaccessible to these disposed immigrants. With metro, the once cosmopolitan, elitist geography of Connaught Place in Delhi started to roar with Lower Middle Class population, members of which assertively started to occupy the anonymous spaces outside the multinational brand stores, a situation similar to the deprivation irrigated through the picturesque glittering malls.

Arrogance and violence of India's consuming classes and the urban dwellers towards this segment, a lot of who work as domestic helps, has exacerbated the situation. The statistics put across by the National Commission for Women show eight cases of murder of Household helps every day. Now let us try and see this Indian, violent masculine space, as a development which runs parallel to the second process of corporate globalization, which is the 'access to new worlds of desire and consumption'. This has led to growing assertiveness of young women, not just elite, upper class women but also the lower middle class and working class as well, who today, occupy public spaces with confidence, travel late at night for employment or fun and enjoy the freedom that city's anonymity gives them. This is indeed threatening the masculinity of traditional patriarchal elites at the other end of the economic spectrum and of the new consuming middle class, including young upper caste men of the urban villages with cash to burn, who feel entitled to the fantastic images of consumption, which they till now had only consumed as visuals on television or internet. But due to the sudden extravaganza of the cash wealth acquired, they forget about the prime value of sustainability. Lack of sustainability leads to frustration of their desires, often drawing them into right wing mobilization, extremity of which results in violent attacks on women in pubs; on occasions such as Valentine's Day; on communities such as the transgenders; on anisogamous love affairs such as inter-caste and inter-religious affairs.

There is this unique structural dependence building in with cultural dispositions wherein the traditional anxieties of protecting the purity of caste and religious identities now comes together with modern right-wing anxieties about numbers in modern polity, which is extremely crucial in a majoritarian democracy. Both of these assemblages of identity have to be sustained and the only way one can keep it tied to the roots is by taming those who are perceived to be deviants which of course would be none else but the women or the Dalits. These identity anxieties pave way for deep rooted violence, which not only contributes to violent masculinisation of the countryside and urban public spaces, but also private spaces. To throw light on the latter, Radhika Chopra²'s understanding of South Asian masculinities, throws light on how they come packed with responsibilities which get prioritized at quite a few occasions over their own individual desires. As a consequence, these pent up desires or what can be referred to as the 'shelved selves', are unleashed on their wives and children, (could also be mothers and sisters), occupants of the private spaces.

In conclusion, we need to address a wide range of issues emerging from corporate globalization which result in an unjust, inequitable and ecologically unsustainable cultural ethos. One prime concern which is aggressively emerging out of this is forms of frustrations which are revealing themselves through shades of violent masculinities which need to be addressed immediately. It is from the disjuncture produced by these different

² Chopra, Radhika. 2004. *South Asian Masculinities: Context of change, sites of continuity*. Kali for women.

structures and ways in which these different structures de-stabilize one another that the alternative ways of being men and women and indeed the very challenging ideas of being gender are being produced.

REFERENCES:

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- [2] Chopra, Radhika. 2004. *South Asian Masculinities: Context of change, sites of continuity*. Kali for women