



Research Paper

Feminist Approach to Globalisation: Vandana Shiva as a Critic of Globalisation

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Abstract:

Feminism looks at globalisation as a negative concept because through the process of globalisation women and girls became the victims of oppression. In the corporate sense, globalisation is a positive concept. Feminists worldwide have in their opinion on this matter, possessed different approaches to globalisation theories. In this article, the researcher tries to find answers to some questions, like, why all the feminists are against globalisation? Are all the feminists conceiving the same notion of globalisation? especially what Vandana Shiva thought about globalisation. Does her anti-globalisation approach and activities bring justice to women, particularly in third-world countries?

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Feminist Approach to Globalisation

In a corporate context, globalisation is a positive word, because it has meant more profit and more power. In a political context “globalisation: is a challenging word because it has been difficult to control in the context of traditional political power structures. In an international Women’s Movement “globalisation: is a negative word, because, it has brought great harm to many women– by facilitating the systematic exploitation as a source of cheap domestic and migrant labour for example, and accelerating the international operation of organised crime, drastically increasing the trade in women and girls, for various forms of commercial sexual exploitation. For these reasons, globalisation has been largely demonised by the Women’s Movement and perceived as a force only to be opposed.

Feminist theory of globalisation contends that gender oppression interacts with these systems of oppression along with their forms of systematic disadvantages that arise within the global context. It emphasises the social construction of masculinity or femininity. All other theories have identified the dynamics behind the rise of trans-planetary and supra-territorial connectivity in state, capital, identity, and the like. Biological sex is held to mould the social order and shape significantly the course of history and presently globality. The main concern lies behind the status of women, particularly their structural subordination to men. Women have tended to be marginalised, silenced, and violated in global communication. Feminists argue that globalisation affects men and women differently due to existing gender inequalities. For example, women are often overrepresented by low wages and precarious work, and they may face greater job insecurity and exploitation as a result of globalisation. Feminists emphasise the importance of understanding how gender interacts with other social identities such as race, class, sexuality, and nationality. They argue that a one-size-fits-all approach to globalisation policies often fails to account for the unique challenges faced by women from different backgrounds. The feminist approach to globalisation also aims to challenge patriarchal norms and structures that perpetuate gender inequality. This may advocate legal and cultural changes to promote gender equality. The feminists emphasise the importance of women’s political participation and representation in the decision-making processes at local, national, and international levels. This includes advocating for policies that promote women’s leadership and empowerment.

Several prominent feminist scholars, activists, and thinkers have contributed to this particular perspective of globalisation, like, Naila Kabeer, Sakia Sassen, Chandra Mohanty, Vandana Shiva, Arundhati Roy, Silvia Federici, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Angela Davis. Naila Kabeer is an Indian-born British-

Bangladeshi development economist and professor known for her work on gender, poverty, and social justice. She has written exclusively on issues related to women's empowerment and development. She stressed the need to recognise women's agency and the various ways in which they resist, negotiate, and adapt to the impacts of globalisation. Sakaia Sasen, a sociologist and professor, is famous for her work on globalisation, urban sociology, and migration. She has explored how global economic processes impact local communities, and individuals, with attention to gender dynamics. Chandra Mohanty, an Indian-American Feminist, is acknowledged widely for her work in postcolonial and transnational feminism. She has written exclusively on issues of race gender and feminism. Vandana Shiva, an Indian scholar, activist, and ecofeminist is well-known for her work on sustainable agriculture, bio-diversity, and women's rights. She critiques the impact of globalisation on local communities and the environment. Her approaches to globalisation link environmental issues to gender concerns. She argues that women, particularly in developing countries are inappropriately affected by environmental degradation and climate change and advocates for policies that address both environment and gender justice. Arundhati Roy, an Indian author, activist, and intellectual, big name for her critiques of economic globalisation, corporate power, and social inequality. She has written extensively on issues of social inequality and human rights. She calls for policies that promote gender equality, reproductive rights, and access to education and health care on a global scale.

Criticism of the Feminist Approach to Globalisation

While the feminist approach to globalisation has made a significant contribution to the understanding of the intersection of gender economics and global processes, it's not without criticism. Critics argue that this approach may sometimes prioritise gender at the expense of other important social categories like race, caste, class, and sexuality. Some critics argue that the feminist approach to globalisation can be overly Western-centric, with a focus on issues and perspectives primarily relevant to Western countries. This can potentially marginalised the experiences and concerns of women in non-Western contexts. Another criticism of this approach is of economic essentialism. It relies heavily on economic determinism, assuming that economic factors are the primary drivers of gender inequalities. This may oversimplify the multi-faceted and complex nature of gender relations. Critics also contend that the feminist approach may sometimes oversimplify the discussion of globalisation, failing to fully account for the wide range of impacts and experiences that vary depending on location, culture, and context.

Some critics comment on unclear policy prescriptions of the feminist approach. The feminist approach doesn't always provide clear and actionable policy recommendations. This can make it challenging for policymakers and activists to implement concrete changes based on feminist analyses. Another observation against the feminist approach is that it has the potential for cultural imperialism. Feminist intervention in a non-Western context can be perceived as imperialistic or insensitive to local traditions and values. This may hinder the effectiveness of feminist initiatives. The feminist approach is also criticised for inadequate initiatives for economic realities. The feminist approach may not always give sufficient attention to economic realities and constraints faced by women in developing countries. It's important to balance advocacy for gender rights with practical considerations of economic development.

A study has been made also against the feminist approach with a limited emphasis on power structures. The feminist approach may not always sufficiently address broader power structures, including political and institutional systems that contribute to gender inequalities. The feminist approach may sometimes overlook the agency and strategies of women in non-Western contexts. They emphasise the importance of recognising and supporting and supporting local women's movements and initiatives.

Vandana Shiva on Globalisation

Vandana Shiva, the internationally well-known ecological feminist of India, is a leader of the anti-globalisation movement. She argues that through the masculinisation of agriculture, globalisation harms gender justice, turning nature and women into passive fields for sowing and permitting corporations to plunder local resources, removing capital from local hands while improving the Western concept of individualism, ownership, and the marketplace into cultures that thrived on community, cooperation and respect for nature. Globalisation in the form of economic liberalisation and free trade agreements has led to increased corporate control over natural resources, including seeds and agricultural practices. She is critical of multinational corporations that dominate the global agricultural market, often at the expense of local farmers and biodiversity. Shiva highlights the impact of seed patents and intellectual property rights on women's traditional knowledge of seed saving and farming practices. With the commercialisation of seeds and privatisation of agricultural knowledge women may face challenges in accessing and sharing seeds, which have been central to their roles as seed keepers and custodians of agricultural biodiversity. In 1991, five years before the first genetically modified (GM) crops had been planted she founded 'Nabadanya' meaning 'nine seeds', an initiative to save India's native seeds and spread among farmers. Eight years later, she took the chemical monolith Monsanto, the world's largest

producer of seeds to the Supreme Court for bringing GM cotton into India without permission. Monsanto finally got permission to bring GM cotton to India in 2002, but Shiva kept her fight against chemical multinationals, which Shiva calls 'poison curtain'.

"We have taken on these giants when they said 'We have invented rice, we have invented wheat', and we have won," she says. Currently, more than 60% of the world's commercial seeds, are sold by just four companies, which have led the push to patent seeds, orchestrated a global monopoly of certain GM crops such as cotton and soya and sued hundreds of small-scale farmers for saving seeds from commercial crops. For Shiva, the global crisis facing agriculture will not be solved by the 'poison curtains' nor fossil fuel-guzzling, industrialised farming, but instead a return to local, small-scale, farming no longer reliant on agrochemicals. "Globally, the subsidies are \$ 400bn a year to make an unviable agriculture system work," she says. Shiva is critical at bio-piracy where MNCs patent and exploit indigenous knowledge of plants and traditional medicine. She argues that this practice inappropriately affects indigenous women who often play key roles in the preservation and transmission of traditional knowledge related to medicinal plants.

Shiva is critical of bio-piracy, where multinational corporations patent and exploit indigenous knowledge of plants and traditional medicine. She argues that this practice misappropriately affects indigenous women who often play key roles in the preservation and transmission of traditional knowledge related to medicinal plants. The globalisation of trade, according to Shiva, often leads to the exploitation of women's labour in industries such as textiles and agriculture. Women in developing countries may be employed in low-wage, precarious conditions, facing challenges such as poor working conditions, lack of job security and limited access to workers' rights. Shiva links environmental degradation from certain globalised industrial practices to the health impacts on women. For example, the use of pesticides in industrial agriculture can lead to adverse health effects for women working in or living near these areas. Shiva advocates for women's empowerment through local sustainable and ecologically friendly practices. community-oriented approach She believes that a localised and community-oriented approach to agriculture and development can enhance roles rights and economic opportunities.

Criticism of Vandana Shiva's approach to Globalisation

Shiva has been criticized for her opposition to certain agricultural technologies, particularly GMOs. Investigative journalist Michael Specter in an article on The New Yorker on 25 August 2014 called "Seeds of Doubt", raised concerns over some of Shiva's claims regarding Shiva's claim regarding GMOs and some of her campaigning methods. He wrote: "Shiva's absolutism about G.M.O.s can lead her in strange directions. He argues that her anti-G.M.O. stance is based on ideological grounds rather than scientific evidence. In 1999, ten thousand people were killed and millions were left homeless when a cyclone hit India's coastal state of Orissa. When the U.S. govt. dispatched grain and soy to help feed the desperate victims, Shiva held a news conference in New Delhi and said that the donation was proof that the U.S. has been using the Orissa victims as 'guinea pigs' for genetically engineered products, although she made no mention that those same products are approved and consumed in the United States. She also wrote to the international relief agency Oxfam to say that she hoped it wasn't planning to send genetically modified foods to feed the starving survivors.

Critics argue that Shiva's approach to complex issues related to globalization can be overly simplistic. Globalisation involves multifaceted economic, social and political factors, and some argue that Shiva's solutions, such as promoting localism and opposing free trade, may oversimplify the challenges and hinder potential benefits of globalization, such as, increased economic growth and poverty reduction, when managed responsibly. Shiva has been accused of promoting a romanticized view of traditional agricultural practices and rural life. Critics argue that this essentialist perspective may overlook the complexities of modern societies and the potential for innovation and positive change through a combination of traditional and modern perspectives. Shiva's activism is influenced by a strong ideological stance against capitalism and multinational corporations. While critiques of corporate practices are valid. Critics contended that Shiva's ideological bias may sometimes cloud a more nuanced understanding of complex issues surrounding globalization.

Opinions on Vandana Shiva's approach to globalization vary and she also has a significant number of supporters who appreciate her advocacy for sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, and social justice. Like any public figure, Shiva's view and actions have sparked ongoing debates, and the criticisms mentioned here are not universally accepted.

Conclusion

Vandana Shiva's feminist critique of globalisation emphasises the gendered impacts of economic policies, the commodification of nature, and the importance of recognising and preserving women's traditional knowledge and roles in sustainable development. She contends that a more inclusive and sustainable approach to development is needed to address the specific challenges faced by women in the context of globalisation. Shiva's emphasis on localism and community empowerment is aimed at giving communities including

women within their community. This can contribute to reducing gender disparities and empowering women within their communities. She has been influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy, and her works often reflect elements of Gandhian principles. While Shiva draws her inspiration from Gandhi's philosophy, it is important to note that she has developed her own unique perspectives and approaches to addressing contemporary issues. Shiva's work extends the realm of political independence, encompassing environmental activism, sustainable agriculture and social justice, with a global perspective.

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