

Women in the Era of Globalisation (Poetry Presentation)

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"Women of Ideas: Feminist Thinking for a New Era"

This feminist event is for all women who denounce the escalating violence and oppression that mark the 21st Century, who rage against the continued exclusion and silencing of women throughout the world, and who are convinced that a strong feminist response is essential for the creation of a fairer future.

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Introduction:

I understand Globalisation, a legitimise way to impose the neo-imperialist policies on developing world. The neo-liberalism and the free market philosophy, which see society as a market. No question of equality in the newly defined market relationship between producer and consumer. It's a treat to the democratic societies and more importantly women's livelihood rights. The new Patent Law and the Seed Act 2004, take away control over seed from women farmers, making seed a corporate monopoly. This increases food insecurity and destruction in rural livelihoods and traditional seed making processes. In India farmer's suicide has become a regular incident. Women and children are denied to food rights. Women in the global South are in vulnerable condition, globalisation widen the gap between the rich and poor in terms of food, water, livelihood and health resources. Efforts are underway to enforce Universalisation in Indian society. Universalisation of culture, resources and identity. Universalisation symbolises hierarchy and hegemony. There is no universality in this universe. Societies are not universal, cultures are not universal. Politically, economically, nations are not universal. In fact, "universalisation" is a fake concept.

In South Asia the dominance of neo-liberal policies and Structural Adjustments by the international instruments has led to unprotected labor practices in unorganized sector where women are largely involved. Government cut down subsidies from the welfare schemes. In the developing world where there is an acute shortage of gainful employment opportunities, millions of women opt for migrant work, particularly in areas that make them more vulnerable to emotional, psychological, physical and sexual violence. Child labour is a product of poverty, many in the sex trade and in bonded labor. Employers exploit children who represent cheap labor, often in hazardous conditions and those akin to slavery. Feminization of child labor, growing poverty; the gap between rich and poor continues to increase,

Women play major role in mainstream economy but comparatively in-equal economic conditions to men in today's world. The new opportunities offered by the globalisation are not reached to women because women are not playing key role in decision-making process. They are often victims of exploitation and marginalisation. Unemployment is not only a macroeconomic problem but also linked with several things. It loses women's means of support and identity. Salaries are still often determined by gender rather than the skills required for the job, resulting in unequal pay for equal work. Women's skills are a necessary resource for economic growth and development. Women must therefore be fully integrated into the labor market without any discrimination. Such integration requires adequate labor and social policies and investment of public and private resources in every field.

Educating and training women and girls especially in non-traditional work is the key to their economic development. Targeting resources at women by recognizing their right to health, education and employment, by giving them full access to economic resources, and promoting gender-balance in decision-making, is essential in order to overcome poverty.

My Dream-Land

*I am wandering with an unrealized dream.
The dream is linked to the soil.
Somebody made me landless
marauding my dream.
Over the water and electricity meant for farming
restrictions are imposed.
Someone plundered my labour.*

*Must be some big country,
it pillaged me, my village, and my crop
Claiming rights over what belonged to me
demanding patent over my curry leaf
my neem tree and my turmeric.*

*What can I do—
I am born in this soil.
As a woman of the soil I know nothing
except cultivation.
Other than physical toil
I know nothing.
The secrets of WTO are beyond my reach.
I became a casualty
in the midst of their trade agreements.
I know nothing about
exploitation, appropriation.
I am the peasant-worker in this country.
What can I do—
except staring blankly at the sky.*

*The secret corridor is extending
from forest to the village;
Traces of movement's commotion on the outskirts;
the blazing land struggles,
dreams nurturing wings.*

*Some day
in this vast country
in some corner-village*

*I shall till the land with my own sweat
and sow the seeds of green dreams.*

I shall carefully nurture that crop.

(Women play major role in food production and processing. But women still lack access to land. Without secure land ownership rights, they are unable to obtain credit and support for production)

www.love.com

*Ah, it's enough.
Falling in love
Regretting later
Why all this—
Better stop loving.
Crazy fellow, why are you after me
like this talking about love?
In the global market
everything is available, see
Love World Wide Web.*

*You say you didn't get it?
Searched thoroughly?
That's why you are here!
What next?
India is no longer engaged in agriculture
It's making beauty queens in fashion-factories.*

*You say you have seen the world
And nowhere you could find
marriage, children and family!
Yes, who will do an absurd thing?*

When everyone is migrating

*why are you here—
Look at them,
how they are fleeing with intellectual property!*

*Look at him,
son of a farming labourer,
how he has gone carrying a computer
over his head saying
there's nothing here except bacteria!*

*Haven't you still got the message?
Listen, love...heart...are outdated things
Worth not even a paisa.*

*You are a strange fellow with a heart
an emotional fool,
a sentimental fellow born in India.
Don't you go?*

*Then, come here,
I'll tell you a secret.
Here you'll get Amma
you'll get rice-meal
and what all you cannot buy with dollars.*

*Why are you looking like that—
Want e-mail?
note down—
prema@matrubhumi.net.in*

Beyond the Boundary

*Fallen!
You will not recuperate.
That's it.*

*For the sake of love
empires have collapsed,
what are you?*

*Have I invited you,
asked you to love me?
Why behaving like a developing country!*

*Ok, whatever,
you are here.
Give me a kiss.
No, not now
Let boundaries be occupied first.*

*Don't send primitive love-signals like that.
You smack of antique disposition.
What's the use of it, the heart?
Will you hand over the empire?*

*Look that way
What's happening beyond the boundary.
Not 'I love you', but should utter 'IMF'
This is a modern love poem.
Practice it.*

*Precisely like you,
saying "I love You"
the earth used to revolve around the sun
Now it's doing rounds around the World Bank.
Better know it.*

*You—Hovering around me,
I—Hanging across you,
in the shade of imperialism,
come,
let's cherish love-whispers.*

Global Wave

*I am not speaking about
the tidal waves in spate in the ocean.
I am speaking about the exploitation
going on in the name of 'development.'
Speaking about the big countries*

*that eat away smaller ones.
Speaking about the terrorism of
powerful countries.
My land, my yield, my water
my labour, and my intellect
why one, the thing that subsumes all—
I am speaking about economic imperialism.*

*Sapping my energy and vigour,
The global wave made me ineffectual.
Investing small capital
it exploited of my labour enormously.
In my field, the global wave
turned me into a farming laborer.*

*I know nothing except tending farmlands.
Other than feeding fellow beings
I know nothing about hitting out in the stomach.
How can I remain silent
when farmers are dying before my eyes?
The nightmares of insecticides,
spurious seeds are haunting me*

*No trace of tilling the land
anywhere near;
the farmlands were crushed under
the wheels of real estate.
Now one has to migrate
in search of manual work.
Flow of anguish that knew no bounds.*

*After a prolonged phase of patience
after a protracted period of fruitless labour
I have learnt speaking.
Why, anyone will speak.
After enduring so much
anyone will speak out.
And they will start questioning.*

*After violence
a word of assertion is unavoidable.
After exploitation, struggle is inexorable.*

(A large number of unskilled labour face survival problems. Globalisation has created livelihood struggles. This poem on--Resisting the 'development' that converts land-owners into laborers and questioning the human rights violation in the name of 'development').

India Shining

*If anybody says, "India is shining"
I feel like slapping with resentment.
A wave of torment splashes in the heart.
Inexpressible despair rages.*

*All habitations are deserted.
No traces of radiance-celebrations
Not even the glimmering light of street lamps
Except the wink of oil lamp
No electric light in the front-yard
Even if the government is replaced
no change in the lives of the poor.*

*I am searching for a new terminology
that reveals the true meaning of 'shining'*

*In the background of globalization
that wipes out our existence
that obliterates our address
that markets fruits of our toil to ourselves
there is a social need now
to know the new meanings of old terms.*

*Now I have understood.
Hunger, penury, unemployment, illiteracy—
all these should not be exposed.
A star-studded global curtain be used.
And then, sophisticatedly,
'India shining' be affirmed.*

(‘Indian Shining’ is a slogan created by a corporate ad agency while carrying out the election campaign of a national party in the last general elections in 2004; it’s a different matter that the then ruling party was rejected by the people)

Water Needed

*The throat is parched
water is needed.
The field is desiccated
water is needed.
Life is emaciated
much water is needed.*

*My well without water
my pond without water
my river without water—
They are laughing at me.*

*My water, a saleable commodity
for mncs, is marketed in bottles.
I must buy my water,
I am alienated from my own water.*

*It is the water
that provided me sustenance
after my mother.
Because of this water
my fields dazzled in green.
Because water is there
I live my life contentedly.*

*It is this water that made
my village colourful,
and came into its own.*

*Now there's no water.
One has to wage a war for water
Yes
All the future wars will be over water.*

(We are opposing the imperialist globalisation. We also question the neo-liberal agenda and the consumerist utopia. It creates 'new needs' which are not necessary to our society. It creates market to their products. That is the current capitalist globalisation.

The burden of the water crisis falls most heavily on women. Water privatization, the resulting stress for the poor and the denial to access to safe, clean drinking water is aggravating women's water burden).

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India