

Reconnoitering Transnational Feminist Tenets in Select Transnational Feminist Texts

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Abstract

A common criticism of modern ‘White feminism’ is its failure to acknowledge that gender is not the only factor relevant to the oppression of women across the globe. Rather, various discursive cultural practices play a decisive role in the subjugation of women. Therefore, to overcome the limitations of ‘mainstream’ feminist theory, transnational feminist writers have emerged as radical agents attempting to interrogate the discursive and oppressive structures of various cultures. Transnational feminists are busy in campaigns across the globe against gender discriminations, pseudo-religious oppression, racial exploitation, class inequality, and other such issues. They reject Western ideas of a ‘global sisterhood’ as the absolute and only norm of women emancipation. This article explores the emergence of transnational feminisms and the trajectory it offers to women who do not fit the White, abled, upper-middle class blueprint of White feminism. It considers how they are empowered to take cudgels against the discursive praxis of various cultures and the oppressive institutionalized knowledge that render women emasculated and hapless. This article attempts to trace key theoretical tenets in select transnational feminist texts.

Keywords: Transnational Feminism, Globalisation, Solidarity, Capitalism, Androcentrism.

Introduction

First wave-feminists primarily focused on equal economic opportunities and legal issues especially with an emphasis on suffrage. Second-wave feminism expanded on this foundation, giving attention to women’s sexuality, domestic violence, and reproductive rights. Rosemarie Tong explains, “Most second-wave White feminists in the West—liberal, radical, psychoanalytic, or care-focused feminisms had false theoretical understanding that women

universally face only gender/sex oppression.”¹ Global feminism mainly spread in the late twentieth century in the Western countries. It promoted “global sisterhood and universalized Western model of women,” which aimed at transcending borders and nations.² However, it must be distinguished from international feminism, which presupposes existing configurations of nation-states as discrete and sovereign entities.”³ To address the loopholes in above mentioned feminist stands, ‘transnational feminisms’ arose to cater to the latest challenges posed by global capitalism, extremist ideologies, and commodification of women by the neo-imperial enterprises. The term ‘transnational feminisms’ was first used by Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan in their 1994 book *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*.⁴ Transnational feminist theorists encompass “postcolonial feminist criticism to focus on the situations of women in multiple geographic contexts in feminist theories and activist practice, through the decentring of both national and imperialist/neocolonial power structures.”⁵

Transnational feminisms earnestly provide suitable options for exposing oppressions in various cultural contexts. These kinds of transnational feminist endeavours seek to address contradictions and complications with an understanding of ‘scattered hegemonies’, to use Grewal and Kaplan’s term. They elaborate:

We need to articulate the relationship of gender to scattered hegemonies such as global economic structures patriarchal nationalisms, ‘authentic’ forms of tradition, local structures of domination, and legal-judicial oppression on many

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¹ Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2009).

² Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood Is Global: The International Women’s Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1984).

³ Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kapan, *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*, eds Inderpal Grewal and Kaplan Caren (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 73.

⁴ Grewal and Kapan, *Scattered Hegemonies*, p. 19.

⁵ M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminist Geneologies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, eds M. Jacqui Alexander and Talpade Mohanty Chandra (London: Routledge, 1997), p. xiii.

Reconnoitering Transnational Feminist Tenets

levels...transnational feminist practices require this kind of work rather than the relativistic linking of 'differences' undertaken by proponents of 'global feminism'; that is, to compare multiple, overlapping, and discrete oppression rather than to construct a theory of hegemonic oppression under a unified theory of gender.⁶

Transnational feminism is a radical but humane and purposeful agenda with the ability to confront influences and disparities between the privileged and underprivileged women of the world. It broadly seeks to challenge the narratives and contemporary practices of neo-imperialism, pseudo-fundamentalism, neo-nationalism, and the impact of these ideologies on gender and other social factors. The chief aim of transnational feminists is to highlight the perspectives of women whose voices have historically been muzzled, misrepresented, and objectified. This article works to exemplify the following key theoretical tenets in select transnational feminist texts.

Interrogating “Sisterhood is Global and Powerful” and “Universalized Western Woman Model”

Robin Morgan's idea that “sister is global and powerful” is rationally rejected for preferencing a universalized Western model of women's liberation that celebrates individuality and modernity. Morgan states, “women as a world political force is predicated on the fact that ‘female human beings per se [have] become other, ‘the invisible in virtually all existing countries [in which] the standard for being human is being male.’”⁷ She further explains, “Women have shared attitudes because of a common condition which, despite variations in degree, is experienced by all human beings who are born female.”⁸ Gender-based oppression, discrimination, and hegemonic patriarchal structures are established in manifold ways. The phrase “scattered hegemonies” declares that the negative social energy operates differently in different locations, therefore, a monolithic strategy to confront oppressive power structures is of inadequate relevance to address the diverse problems of women across varied cultural contexts.⁹ Grewal and Kaplan brand the present world as “postmodernity, which is the socio-politico-economic condition in the age of neoliberal capitalist globalization.”¹⁰ In the setting of postmodernity, “the power is no longer centered in the metropole but

⁶ Grewal and Kapan, *Scattered Hegemonies*, p. 18.

⁷ Morgan, *Sisterhood Is Global*, p. 1.

⁸ Morgan, *Sisterhood Is Global*, p. 4

⁹ Grewal and Kapan, *Scattered Hegemonies*, p. 19.

¹⁰ Grewal and Kapan. *Scattered Hegemonies*, p. 4.

scattered around the globe as the capital is dispersed following the movements of a few hundred multinational corporations.”¹¹ Mohanty argues that “homogenization and historical reductionism results in the production of the ‘third world woman as a singular monolithic subject.”¹² This sort of belief has severely damaged the cause of women in non-Western countries, especially those in developing nations. Resembling Mohanty, Grewal and Kaplan are also sceptical of global feminism for its neglect of “the diversity of women’s agency in its construction of a theory of hegemonic oppression under a unified category of gender.”¹³

When considering what a ‘woman’ is, Whiteness and the European construction of femininity are taken as default. White feminists fail to acknowledge the differences in agency and privilege that White, financially privileged women have over non-White, non-wealthy women, as well as women who experience other, diverse disadvantages. The privileges that White women have enjoyed are yet to be cherished by the women of the Third World, where women are still struggling for their fundamental rights. Various structural norms are invoked to justify the abuse of women, and their bodies are often objectified. Transnational feminists seek to empower women by working to pull apart different forms of oppressive practices. Transnational feminists through their arguments have brought to limelight that mainstream feminists consciously or unconsciously support oppressive patriarchal systems and fail to understand varied cultural nuances that marginalize and oppress women in different locations. Transnational women fiction theorists and writers from varied cultural contexts have illustrated this brilliantly in their plots, interviews, and autobiographies. The intersectionality section of this article sheds further light on this.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a concept was devised by Kimberlé Crenshaw to accentuate “the intricate intersectional oppressions experienced by women of colour, caste, religion, ethnicity, and inferior social and economic rank.”¹⁴ For instance, Black female writers feel a responsibility to bring to limelight

¹¹ Grewal and Kapan, *Scattered Hegemonies*, p. 10.

¹² Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies*, p. 51.

¹³ Grewal and Kapan, *Scattered Hegemonies*, pp. 17-18

¹⁴ Kimberlé Crenshaw, ‘Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics’ (1989), in *Living with Contradictions: Controversies in Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 39–52.

the intersectional oppression that they suffer. In the late twentieth century, African American feminists started to question the hidden racial and imperial hegemony of mainstream feminists, which had ignored the multiple repressions that the women of colour face throughout the world. What one can easily gather after exploring Black feminism is that their struggle is threefold. First, they suffer the inherent oppression of working under capitalism. Second, they face barriers because of their gender. Finally, their race means they are further discriminated against. For instance, Ann Petry's *The Street*¹⁵ describes how intersectionality of identities limit African-Americans from attaining equality in the White, capitalist, racialised patriarchal social structures in America. The protagonist of the novel, Lutie Johnson, has to confront these three interrelated hurdles. Lutie, an earnest believer in the American Dream, experiences the punitive effects of poverty and how it shapes her life. The restrictions enforced upon Lutie make her understand that the American Dream is not accessible for Black women. A particularly poignant moment is when she sees the corpse of a Black man on the street.

But the thing she had never been able to forget were his shoes. . . The soles were worn out. They were mere flaps attached to the uppers. She could see the layers of wear. The first outer layer of leather was left near the edges, and then the great gaping holes in the center where the leather had worn out entirely, so that for weeks he must have walked practically barefooted on the pavement.¹⁶

Black people have been “shining shoes and washing clothes and scrubbing floors for years and years... the hard work. The dirty work. The work that pays the least.”¹⁷ Mrs Hedges, who acts as a partner to Junto (the White capitalist) in the sexist economy via Boots, reflects on the oppressive intersectional order:

[Mrs Hedges's] thoughts returned to Lutie Johnson. With that thick, soft hair, Lutie offered great possibilities for making money. Mr. Junto would be willing to pay very high for her. Very, very high, because when he got tired of her himself he could put her in one of those places he ran on Sugar Hill.¹⁸

The scarred body of Mrs Hedges and her bald head symbolises her bruised morality in particular, and the tortured psyche of the blacks in general. Mrs Hedges' past experiences demonstrate the constant trauma faced by Black

¹⁵ Ann Petry, *The Street* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946).

¹⁶ Petry, *The Street*, p. 196.

¹⁷ Petry, *The Street*, p. 70.

¹⁸ Petry, *The Street*, pp. 255-56.

women in the USA. She has desperately searched for a job, and at times has had to look for food in the garbage. She has sought employment from door to door, but all in vain until she met Junto. The fire in Junto's apartment left her burnt, receiving injuries on head and losing all her hair, all but ruining her chances of improving her life through an advantageous marriage. Mr. Junto offers her a hair cap, but she rejects it as she has decided to assume a manly role in the street that culminates in the partnership with Junto. The dangerous intention of Junto to pay capital for Lutie Johnson not only suggests to her prospective sex worker status, but also conveys undercurrents of the sexually vicious compulsion of slavery. Junto, sensing the beauty of Lutie, is willing to procure her for his own carnal desire. This latent intention, in which Junto would act as the White proprietor and Lutie as the black body, clearly demonstrates the intersectional oppression of slavery, sexism, and capitalism.

When Bub, Lutie's son, asks her why White people want Black people shining shoes, Lutie cannot bring herself to explain to him the reality of racial politics. She realised that it must be "hate that made them wrap up all Negroes in a neat package labeled 'colored'; a package that called for certain kinds of jobs and a special kind of treatment" that limits inclusive expectations.¹⁹ Forced into economic poverty, Lutie fails to visualise a future for herself and her son Bub: "She couldn't see anything but 116th Street and a job that paid barely enough for food and rent and a handful of clothes."²⁰ Lutie, after composing herself, tells Bub that she does not want him to do the dirty jobs and does not want him to earn money the way Bub had tried:

She thought about this small dark apartment they were living in about 116th Street which was filled to overflowing with people who lived in such apartments as this, about the White people on the downtown streets who stared at her with open hostility in their eyes, and she started talking, swiftly, forgetting to choose her words. 'I'm not going to let you begin at eight doing what White folks figure all eight-year-old colored boys ought to do. For if you're shining shoes at eight, you'll probably be doing the same thing when you are eighty. And I'm not going to have it.'²¹

This ghetto she lived in lacked the facilities of the other side that was "filled with sunlight and good food and where children were safe was fenced off to African-Americans so people like Lutie could only look at it with no

¹⁹ Petry, *The Street*, p. 71.

²⁰ Petry, *The Street*, p. 147.

²¹ Petry, *The Street*, p. 71.

expectation of ever being able to have it.”²² Lutie came to the realisation as to why White people abhor Black people so much, for they are entitled to White sources of pride at birth. Her struggle throughout the novel brilliantly exemplifies the intersectional oppression of race, gender, economy, and racialised patriarchy in America.

Similarly, Dalit feminist fiction, another brand of transnational feminism, is trying to serve the cause of Dalit women in India. Dalit feminist fiction as a radical practice has subverted mainstream women’s movement in India, for mainstream Indian feminist writing had bypassed the caste system in its agenda altogether. Like Black men, Dalit men also operate under the oppressive practices of patriarchy exploit Dalit women. Dalit feminist fiction is full of glaring elucidations of oppressive structures of patriarchy, caste, and gender intersection in the caste ridden Indian urban and rural context. Dalit feminist fiction explores how caste, gender, and global capitalism assert itself in different aspects of the everyday life of Dalit women in particular. Urmila Pawar, a famous Dalit woman writer, in her autobiographical work *Aaydan* (translated as *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman’s Memoirs* by Maya Pandit) has tried to objectively expose the intersectional oppression of caste, class and Dalit patriarchy.²³

The idea of intersectionality is well understood through stories of characters who are situated at the different axes of power. Pawar’s fiction is a cosmos of bringing to light and questioning the atrocious social positions of caste, class and gender, and their cumulative effects on lives of the women. The economic poverty of her characters’ is strictly interconnected with their caste of Mahars, which are at the bottom of the Hindu *Varna* system and with the problems of gender. The narrator of *Aaydan*, like most of her community members, suffers from economic dispossession. Because of their weak economic status, they do not have enough food, clothing, proper shelter and other comforts. Her account of the eating habits and their poverty clearly unravels the whole reality:

They somehow managed to buy a little rice, which they would cook in a big mud-pot and serve with some watery soup. This was served to the men first, in one common dish. They sat on their haunches to dine, as if they had sat down to shit! It was true that Dalits had the custom of all people eating from one plate, but that was usually

²² Petry, *The Street*, p. 147.

²³ Urmila Pawar, *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Women’s Memoirs*, ed. Maya Pandit (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

because there were few plates in the homes.²⁴

Urmila Pawar narrates explicitly the intersectional oppression she has to face in her life, because of her gender, caste, and weak economic status. She writes:

I was born in a backward caste in a backward region, that too a girl! Since Father died when we were quite young, Aaye had to be very thrifty to make ends meet. Basically, she was a born miser, really! There is a saying in Marathi: imagine a monkey drinking wine, getting intoxicated, getting bitten by a scorpion, and then a ghost casting its spell on him. The point is people's traits intensify and eventually cause havoc in their lives. Her case was similar. Therefore, food was always scarce in our house.²⁵

Pawar has faced humiliation in all her social interactions with people of upper caste. As soon as people came to sense her caste, they would either try to evade her, or scorn her. For instance, on the birthday celebration of her younger daughter, Manini, the latter invites her friend Kishore to share the birthday cake with them. Urmila feels the humiliation of belonging to her Mahar caste, (before becoming a Buddhist) when she is humiliated by the invitees:

Kishore and her brother came, ate the cake, and went home after celebrating the birthday. Kishore's brother told his mother that he had seen photographs of Ambedkar and Buddha in our house. The next day, Kishore's mother came and stood at our door. Without even stepping inside, she started abusing us. "We did not know that you belonged to this particular caste! That is why I sent my children to you. From now on, don't you give my daughter anything to eat if she comes to your house. We are Marathas. We cannot eat with you." Before I could say anything, she had left!²⁶

In addition to her lower-caste status, she experiences crushing poverty, which does not allow them to eat or dress well and be clean in public like others. Most of their normal dreams as human beings are suppressed due to their extreme poverty and caste factor. The author has recorded many instances of the cruelty undergone by the Mahar people at the hands of the upper-caste Hindus. For instance, she narrates:

Once when I had gone to stay with Akka, a poor couple came to see them from a village called Anaav... There was a huge gaping wound on husband's bare back . . . It seemed that in their village there was a ritual. An upper-caste man would inflict a wound on a Mahar's back

²⁴ Pawar, *The Weave of My Life*, p. 17.

²⁵ Pawar, *The Weave of My Life*, p. 79.

²⁶ Pawar, *The Weave of My Life*, p. 202.

Reconnoitering Transnational Feminist Tenets

and his wife had to cover the wound with some cloth and go on walking around, howling! Quite a ritual, that one! Dada, Akka's husband, was telling them, "You have to resist this custom! How can you tolerate it? This ritual is symbolic of some old sacrificial rites! The Mahar symbolizes the animal sacrificed! I tell you, get converted then this will automatically stop."²⁷

She strongly resists these hostile forces to build her identity and overcome her sense of dishonour and dependency. The marginalised status of Dalit feminists enables them to have,

epistemic privilege and to be aware of events and conditions about which more privileged groups are either oblivious or dismissive. In particular, within a tightly integrated capitalist system, the particular standpoint of poor indigenous and Third World/South women provides the most inclusive viewing of systemic power.²⁸

The complexity of lives lived with the burdens of caste, class and gender is brilliantly explored in *Aaydan*.

Interestingly, Islamic feminism is considered as the most controversial brand of 'transnational feminist project'. Omaima Abou-Bakr is among the first who theorised Islamic feminism.²⁹ Islamic feminists challenge patriarchy, which is culturally rooted and has nothing to do with the religion of Islam. The prime strategy employed by Islamic feminists is to reinterpret the Quran, and to expose the misinterpretations and inauthentic contexts that are in circulation. Islamic feminists have employed the theoretical apparatuses of post-structuralism, chiefly the view that language functions as an instrument of institutional control. Reinterpreting the Quran, and providing new translations and interpretations, is therefore an important part of this movement. Islamic feminists resist those narratives that try to construct single Muslim homogeneity. Therefore, Islamic feminists interrogate this homogeneity, both in patriarchies and in the groups that oppose them. Besides fighting on theoretical front, in Muslim societies, women writers try to expose the pseudo-religious, patriarchal and economic factors that intersect.

The constitutions of most Muslim countries grant their citizens, irrespective of gender, equal rights before the law. However, often this is abruptly challenged by the application of Personal Status Laws and Codes

²⁷ Pawar, *The Weave of My Life*, p. 72.

²⁸ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "'Under Western Eyes" Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles', *Signs* 23, no. 2 (2003), p. 511.

²⁹ Omaima Abou-bakr, 'Articulating Gender: Muslim Women Intellectuals in the Pre-Modern Period', *Arab Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2010), pp. 127–44.

which have been adapted and interpreted from Shari'ah Laws by pseudo-religious patriarchal machinery in a biased manner. The inauthentic interpretation of Shari'ah law is perceived by many Islamic feminists as sanctioning illegitimate powers to Muslim men in the institution of marriage and divorce. In her novel *Blasphemy*, Pakistani writer Tahmina Durrani exposes the corrupt religious and patriarchal institutions. In *Blasphemy*, she unmasks the devilish character of a pseudo-religious cleric, Pir Sain, through the novel's protagonist, Heer. The novel exposes how patriarchy can misappropriate religion to subjugate women. The narrator, Heer, unveils the whole story:

To me, my husband was my son's murderer. He was also my daughter's molester. A parasite nibbling on the Holy Book, he was Lucifer, holding me by the throat and driving me to sin every night. He was Bhai's destroyer, Amma Sain's tormentor. He had humbled Ma, exploited the people. He was the rapist of orphans and the fiend that fed on the weak. But over and above all this, a man closest to Allah, the one who could reach Him and save us.³⁰

Metaphorically the shrine of Pir Saein stands for power and masculinity. Endowed by the 'divine image of the shrine', Pir continues sexually abusing women, thereby proving that "The Shrine is a symbol of all exploitation."³¹ Heer is a beautiful woman married to this pseudo-religious leader at the age of fifteen, against her wishes. Her mother's ecstasy knows no bounds and she wondered, "How will I sit with him? What will I say? My Pir is becoming my son-in-law! O God, I could not even dream of sitting on a chair in his presence."³² Pir Saein is a perfect epitome of corrupt capitalist, sexist, and patriarchal institutions. Women against pseudo-fundamentalism target, in Clara Connolly's opinion, "the state rather than the fundamentalists of any religion and seek not only the complete separation of church and state but a 'measure of legal and social protection against the efforts of fundamentalists to restrict their life-choices and sexualities.'"³³ Tehmina in this novel exposes the pseudo-religious individuals and institutions that indulge in all carnal desires and malign the religion of Islam. Redeployment of the true Islamic laws is one of the continuing fights which feminists in Muslim countries continue to fight.

³⁰ Tahmina Durrani, *Blasphemy* (London: Penguin Books, 1998).

³¹ Durrani, *Blasphemy*, p. 143.

³² Durrani, *Blasphemy*, p. 26.

³³ Clara Connolly, 'Ourselves Alone? Clár Na MBan Conference Report', *Feminist Review* 50, no. 1 (1995), pp. 118–26.

Appreciating Alternative Practices of Intervention and Fight

One of the flawed practices of feminists from the mainstream tradition has been the predisposition to view all women as having a single perspective. Misrepresentations of non-White women's agency and resistance often result due to a lack of attention how cultural ethics and structural forces affect forms of agency and resistance, and how transnational feminists appropriate these values and expose the divergent forms of oppression. For instance, mainstream feminists consider Muslim women (especially women who wear head coverings) act as exemplars of the "silent, apolitical, exotic Muslim woman"³⁴ with the *burqa* defined as "the ultimate yardstick of women's oppression."³⁵ However, most of the Muslim women consider the hijab as a form of agency and powerful weapon to confront coloniser's voyeuristic gaze, and thus offer an alternative model of woman subjectivity.

Durrani in the novel *Blasphemy* exemplifies how Heer uses burqa as a tool to conceal her identity and elope with her lover, Ranjha. The political developments of twenty-first century have made it challenging for Islamic feminists especially to completely ally with Western feminism for fear of racism. They feel there is an inconsistency between the promises and practices of both the Islamic and pseudo-secular institutions. Whatever the situation, if Islamic feminism has to thrive in order to protect Muslim women from being prisoners of inauthentic Islamic practices, they have to contribute proactively for a just society in which Muslim women can live their lives free from unequal financial and political structures and inauthentic religious and cultural mores. If feminism means alleviating biased androcentric pulls on women, Islamic feminism is surely a positive transnational movement in the global fight for women's rights.

One of the glaring features of transnational feminists is their propensity to not campaign for feminist vicissitudes, but also to provide productive knowledge for comprehending socio-political reality globally. Before the dawn of transnational feminisms, White feminisms lesser privileged women and considered them helpless victims, and their narratives were considered untrustworthy. However, opposed to the predominant stereotype of Third World women as sufferers and voiceless, transnational feminisms proclaim that these women have been actively resisting

³⁴ Basuli Deb, 'Cutting Across Imperial Feminisms Toward Transnational Feminist Solidarities', *Meridians* 13, no. 2 (March 2016), pp. 164–88.

³⁵ Deb, 'Cutting Across Imperial Feminisms toward Transnational Feminist Solidarities', p. 167.

oppression for centuries. These feminists have used Indigenous forms of knowledge and resistance to unsettle the web of Eurocentric knowledge trap, and have shown that alternative forms of knowledge and narrative techniques can be a useful tool to resist the oppression that these women have to face in various implicit and explicit forms on daily basis. Economic security and education can bolster their spirit, and awaken them from deprivation and desolation.

Grilling Globalisation and Encouraging Global Partnerships

A major premise of transnational feminisms is their mutual emphasis on the damaging impact of neoliberal global capitalism on women, especially Third World women. The stance accepted by these feminists in their estimation of global capitalism is ‘anticapitalist’.³⁶ Capitalism and economic exploitation are recognised as major contributors to unequal transnational feminist subjectivities. Despite so many changes in the economic structures, women still retain the primary responsibility for work within their households. How gender works in the undercurrents of globalization and the countermeasures of new nationalisms, and ethnic and racial fundamentalisms is brilliantly interrogated and exposed in the transnational feminist praxis. For instance, Pawar narrates that it is because of desperate poverty that the people of her (Mahar/Dalit community) go for begging for festive food from the upper-caste people:

Our sisters-in-law, Vitha and Parvati, would also go begging, along with other women in our community... Their entire house would survive for two days on those leftovers. In some houses the flesh of dead animals would be eaten. But that was forbidden in our house.³⁷

Mohanty focuses on third world women’s perspective as providing “the most inclusive viewing of systemic power”, for “it is especially on the bodies and lives of women and girls from the Third World/South... that global capitalism writes its script. It is only by focusing on these women’s experiences that we can—demystify capitalism as a system of debilitating sexism and racism and envision anti-capitalist resistance.”³⁸ The benefits of globalisation are yet to reach the underprivileged women of the world. It hardly matters whether they are located in North America, Global South, or Third World countries. Transnational feminists explore various discursive cultural practices and link

³⁶ Mohanty, “‘Under Western Eyes’ Revisited”.

³⁷ Pawar, *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Women’s Memoirs*, p. 43.

³⁸ Mohanty, “‘Under Western Eyes’ Revisited”, p. 511, 514.

diverse local practices to formulate a global set of companionship. For example, they need to examine, in Grewal and Kaplan's opinion,

Fundamentalisms in the entire world and seek to understand why only Muslim fundamentalism appears in the media today as the primary progenitor of cruel conditions of women when Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Confucian, and other forms of extreme fundamentalisms exert profound controls over women's private public and private lives.³⁹

Mutual interests, not urgencies forced by those with superior privilege than others, are crucial and can provide a foundation for true cooperation and common purpose to the women of the world to fight on various fronts against discrimination of every sort. Leading examples include Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), which originated in India in 1984 and has a clear focus on Third World women's economic situations.⁴⁰

These groups have sometimes worked separately and at other times formed coalitions in order to promote the common goal of "resisting the neoliberal global economy and empowering third world women."⁴¹ Other transnational feminists focus on "patriarchal nationalisms and fundamentalist movements."⁴² Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML) are a leading example of such feminists. WLUML was designed "in response to concerns about changes in family laws" in some Muslim countries from which its founding supporters came, such as Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, and India.⁴³ These solidarities are founded on women-centric knowledge. These women are not yet having access to basic education, forget about digital knowledge and employment. Many transnational feminist activists have prepared themselves actively, not only to bring attention to and lessen the negative impact of neoliberal global capitalism on third world women, but fittingly to provide a just global economic model that is promising to women all over the world.

Conclusion

It seems clear that when it comes to the transnational feminists' agenda, it hardly matters to them that they are exposing their own people, culture, religion, or tradition in their attempts to dramatise the traumas of racialised

³⁹ Grewal and Caren. *Scattered Hegemonies*, p. 19.

⁴⁰ Valentine M. Moghadam. 'Islamic Feminism and its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of the Debate', *Signs* 27, no. 4 (2002), p. 144.

⁴¹ Moghadam, 'Islamic Feminism and its Discontents', p. 144.

⁴² Moghadam, 'Islamic Feminism and its Discontents', p. 143.

⁴³ Moghadam, 'Islamic Feminism and its Discontents', p. 144

patriarchy, pseudo-religious fundamentalism, and casteism. They expose the various oppressive trajectories that exist between postmodernity, chauvinism, capitalism, and globalisation. Less privileged women become mere objects of bartering between various oppressive structures of globalised, pseudo-religious patriarchal machinery. Transnational feminist activists have been quite effective in forming global feminist coalitions on some key issues. However, transnational feminists must be careful not to refashion the all-inclusive essentialising tendencies of former global feminism. The theoretical inputs and strategies employed by transnational feminists still seem lacking that punch, which can honestly alleviate the status of women who are oppressed diversely in different locations.