

AN OVERVIEW OF FEMINISM ECONOMICS IN ASIA

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Abstract

Feminist economics is clinically significant in economics and economies, based on economic studies of gender-consciousness and equality, as well as its importance in public policy. Feminist economic analysis involves economists, politicians, decision-makers and professionals. Feminist economic research is often focused on topics that have been previously ignored, such as care jobs, intimate relationship abuse, or economic models that may be strengthened by greater integration of gender consequences and relationships, such as between the paying and unpaid segments of the economy. Other feminist researchers have participated in new methods of data collection and analysis, such as gender-based interactions. Feminist economics is directed toward the goal of improving the well-being of girls, males, and females, in local, national, and multinational cultures. This article examines the points of view of various economists, philosophers, and particularly feminist economists, with a focus on Asia.

Keywords: feminism, feminism economics, culture, Asia

Feminist economists draw attention to the social structures of conservative economics, challenging the degree to which it is optimistic and impartial, and demonstrating how its techniques and theories appear to rely solely on macho-associated themes and favor male-associated conclusions and procedures. While economists have historically centered on markets and masculine-associated conceptions of sovereignty, simplicity and reasoning, feminist economists advocate for a broader development of organizational existence, including “socially feminine” subjects such as family economies, and an analysis of the significance of relations, conciseness, and sentiment, in understanding macroeconomic factors. By the 1990s, the progressive theory had been widely accepted as an established sub-field of economics offering book and paper written resources for its professionals.

Feminist economics is a philosophy of economic theory and political campaigning

that acquired considerable visibility in the 1990s, while its roots can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century. It has since generated its own set of principles, theoretical structures, and techniques (Benería et al., 2015). With gender as a core concept, it attempts a more fundamental and individual understanding of the economy and the mechanisms of similarities and differences that take place within it. In particular, feminist economics has become a political strategy that seeks to change the operation of the capitalist model so that all women can have access to a meaningful life on the grounds of equality (Nelson, 2006). In this paper, we relate the ontological, analytical, and philosophical insights of feminist theory, as well as its strategies for radical action, and concrete discussions on economic problems, such as the environmental emergency, the recession and austerity, the perpetuation of existence, and economic reforms of exchange.

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Mainstream academic trends in law, economics, and political science generally regard the assumptions of economic theory as fundamental and indisputable facts. They view the free market and competitiveness as assurances of both performance and growth, and a strong justification for this paradigm to dominate above all others, both in academics and in democratic structures. These claims are also based on highly nuanced and technical debates and methods that make it impossible for semi-specialists to take part in the debate and provide alternate viewpoints. Research teams outside the mainstream lack forums to interact and dispute opposing opinions, or the broad culture and power base to sustain them (Power, 2004). As feminists from all around the globe consider the implications of the status of female rights at the Beijing+25 summit, there is a sense of both pain and hope, since the introduction of the UN action plan in 1990, which remains one of the most significant contributions to human rights and fundamental freedoms, the experiences of feminist groups have brought significant successes in achieving political, social, and economic rights for women (Friedman, 2003). There are now many more women in elected positions, they have greater legal rights, and more nations have equality for women in their constitutions and growth policies. Through UN WOMEN, annual five-year assessments have maintained momentum (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016). That being said, these hard-won gains, are under significant pressure from new trends of de-democracy, neoliberalism, and right-wing nationalist political leadership.

In this sense, the feminism revolutions of the Global South and Global North face a similar collection of problems. Feminism in Asia, however, provides a more measured perspective as it strives to accept both the universalism of women's rights and the unique social, cultural, and religious conditions of the region (Federici, 2013). This enables the fight to promote gender equality more successfully and comprehensively. Globalization and the onset of communications technology have closed the

distance between the Global North and the Global South, enabling accelerated dissemination of evolving feminist ideologies. This pattern is especially apparent in the #MeToo campaign, which has exploded in the Global North and has spread to and been readily accepted by feminists in Asia in conjunction with the issues of violence towards women, and sexually abusive behavior seen online (Kunst et al., 2019). Even so, there is still a significant digital gender disparity in Asia. Women have different access to the web and digital technologies than men due to existing patriarchal societal expectations and economic restrictions. Female factory workers in Bangladesh resort to violent attacks and more conventional ways of activism instead of social media posts to raise a clear understanding of their oppression (Begum et al., 2010). This places Asian feminists in a difficult situation, to be able to build progress against cross-sectional xenophobia in a way which will work for both the English-speaking metropolitan elite with their Twitter feeds, and also the poor, rural peasants who are without telephones.

The 'Aurat March' (Women's March) in Pakistan is a clear example of how a public space recovery initiative brings together urban trained feminists, oppressed, vulnerable urban people, and rural women farmworkers, on a shared forum (Baig et al., 2020). Here, influential visual art, street theatre, and music, all played a significant role in integrating global feminist issues into the limited community. Representing feminists and political leaders of all ages, backgrounds and races, the Girls at the 'Dhabas' campaign in Pakistan and India's 'Pinjra Tod' (Break the Cage) and 'I Will Go Out' campaigns are further indicators of more egalitarian alliances. In these cases, women first developed small and personal organizations, discussing particular problems, such as stringent house rules for college colleagues. They chose to go it alone or in groups at home, with intelligent use of social media, to make particular individuals from their respective groups accessible to broader

audiences (Rehman, 2017). Those who were also open and responsive to the critique of openness, promoted identity politics by focusing on class and caste. They soon addressed broader topics of social welfare, such as family violence or environmental degradation.

These protestors have also stretched the limits of radical feminist advocacy, articulating a desire for the preservation of public spaces following the fight against capitalist systems, hierarchical cultural traditions, and restrictive legislation. Both developments threaten women's rights and liberties, culminating in conspicuous disparities between males and females in the home and at the workplace. Females in Europe and the US frequently advocate for greater participation of women in corporate boardrooms, a very thick glass ceiling that can be shattered, particularly for some well-educated, upper-class women. This appears to be a less significant issue in the Asian sense. Women's experience in Asia is that women seen in leadership roles are mostly from well known, often political families such as Indira Gandhi, Corazon Aquino, Benazir Bhutto, Sheik Hasina, and Megawati Sukarnoputri, and this does not inherently translate to more representation for everyone, either in politics or at work. More inclusive alternatives to feminist requests appear more achievable than depending on one woman or a class of women at the center of society (Iwanaga, 2008). Even though we cannot draw a single brush on xenophobia in Asia, there are long-standing problems that become prevalent throughout the region. Cultural and patriarchal values, protection issues, and unfair separation of caring jobs, limit women's campaigns and make their work unseen. Securing socioeconomic and labor rights, as well as opportunities for women who work in informal agreements, faces a range of issues (Fleetwood, 2006).

In Asia, as everywhere else, job prospects and the effects of the third industrial revolution have been widely discussed, and most policymakers have introduced national strategies to brace for emerging problems.

However, the lack of views on the prospects for women's job initiatives in the area is quite apparent. The problems have yet to gain the interest of the women's movement and to become part of the feminist agenda. Knowledge and experience, study and lobbying activities differ throughout the field, where the current of one nation is the future of another (Collins, 2006). This is partially due to differences in the speed at which the industrial revolution 4.0 progresses and is part of the context of the debate (Inikori, J. E., 2002). As debates on the new estimates continue to be driven by organizations and companies in the Global North, Asia attempts to highlight more diverse viewpoints and other fields of focus. Research teams at IT for Progress, the Centre for Internet & Society in India, and the Online Privacy Foundation in Pakistan are doing important research on policy and activism work in this sense, while organizations such as Geek Girls in Myanmar seek to enhance universal participation with technology (Mon & Saito, 2018).

Precarious and casual employment may have developed in the Global North. However, it is still a fact for many people in Asia, where platformization and the public sector are nothing new (Siegmann & Schiphorst, 2016). Here, it is the current rather than the potential that is of significant worry; in the sense of negative security, it is connected to daily needs and everyday survival.

Further study is also needed in other dimensions, such as the effect of technology and possible work losses on women in the clothing sector in Bangladesh (Yunus, & Yamagata, T., 2012). Care work and its connections with the various burdens that women bear in their daily lives has drawn interest in several countries. In Myanmar and Indonesia, even the word 'care work' must gain mainstream awareness before broader discussions can begin (Berik, & Rodgers, 2010).

The varied interactions in Asia call for a cross-sectoral study into the many dynamic technologies and how they impact different areas of society differently. This can also be

of interest to conversations in the Global North. The importance of looking for options that work for everyone makes the requirements and advice of Asia-wide exchanges much more significant and more critical. As patriarchal capitalism proceeds to enlarge marginalization of communities for all genders, the solution must be feminist unity and comprehensive institutional reforms which resolve systematic economic and social inequality. The situation of women in China in the 20th century was closely related to the communist takeover, and the divisive socioeconomic treatment of women increased. Initially, the Chinese people believed that the Communist Revolution would bring an end to this system. During the Cultural Revolution, females were praised with slogans such as “Female Hold Up Half the Sky.” At the same time, they were prohibited from addressing gender problems which were seen as xenophobic (Dryzek, & Holmes, 2002). Government frameworks that supported and were staffed by women, particularly canteens, elementary schools, and nursery schools, were founded in the early 1980s. The state itself controlled women’s issues, and there was no autonomous feminist agenda in that time (Kulik, 2003). Nevertheless, many of the ideas generated during the uprising had an impact on the body of the women’s movement in the West, as progressive feminism was most ideologically compatible with the left.

In India, governance became militarized in the mid-1960s, with several interest groups emerging to counter inequality and the political collapse brought on by disruptive changes (Abu-Saad, 2006). By the early 1980s, a drought in the state of Maharashtra made things worse for many people. Reaching a peak in 1974, with support from the Navnirman Movement, women in different classes started to partake in concrete acts to undermine governance. The notion of “women’s emancipation” has been a “reputable subject” in India since the 1970s. Women started to see that legal guarantees did too little to alter the realities of their lives (Sen, 2002). Rural women living below the

poverty line began to think of themselves as profoundly marginalized, both financially and by their lower standard of living. Women in lower castes, such as Dalits, understood that they needed to combat the class struggle as well as the struggle with patriarchy (Sabharwal & Sonalkar, 2015).

Developing small numbers in locations such as Bangalore, Bombay, Delhi, Hyderabad, Madras, and Pune, the women’s groups that emerged during this time rejected the patriarchal system. They used a collaborative approach to decision-making (Aranya, 2008). To counter patriarchal dominance throughout the moral and professional realms, papers written in other countries on the progress of women’s emancipation around the world were reprinted and distributed widely. These closely related organizations networked by distributing their articles in both English and other possible options. In Maharashtra, separate from other regions, gatherings penetrated caste and class boundaries, comprised of teachers, workers, blue-collar workers, and white-collar workers, and based on direct action, people in these classes opposed official policies in numerous ways.

The publishing of the Gender Equity Report in 1974 and 1975, as recognized by the United States Women’s Status Census, showed that female involvement in society and politics in modern India had decreased. Unlike the Modern equivalents of the WLM, feminism was a taboo in this period, while sexual harassment became a priority (Rahman & Rao, 2004). As such, feminists were part of that community, but sexual identity largely remained a personal affair. Liberationists were also described as detrimental to class-based revolutionaries, who firmly believed that removing class distinctions would fix societal experiences. In 1981, the Sachet Ana party was founded by feminists in Calcutta with the goal of raising awareness among its representatives and others. Their main protest movement was the development of a play, written by participant Malini Bhattacharya to revolt about the sale of brides. Incompatible with any national movement, the community

became a safe place for women with different views and financial connections (Bhattacharya, 2007). This community was a place for open announcement and the debate of topics opposing government policy and sexism.

In the early 1970s, the women's suffrage revolution in Israel was founded by two members of migrant populations at the University of Haifa, Marcia Freedman, and Marilyn Safir, both active in the feminist movements in India (Dekel, 2011). Seminars in Haifa about how women have benefited from men-controlled culture rapidly influenced extreme events in Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem (Mann, 2006). The first revolutionary socialist organization founded in 1972 was the emergence of awareness-raising movements that used civil disobedience as a way of resolving women's problems. Women's research arose illustrating the past achievements of Israeli female athletes. Freedman states, "It wasn't that complicated to translate American xenophobia into Israel, with several of the same problems: women's rights to operate beyond the home, abortions, and women's concerns governing their bodies, though there was a very popular reaction in Israel that no women's revolution was required since Israeli females were indeed 'liberated.'"

The feminist Nilahem campaign (based on the word Women, for a Revived Society) was founded in 1972, drawing interest across the world against legal injustice and the oppression of the Palestinians (Ahuja, 2016). Even during the 1973 Yom Kippur Conflict, women were withdrawn from the civilian government, and both military and war development resources, were limited to the care of the injured, and maintenance of families. While short-lived, the dispute focused on raising consciousness of the unequal roles for men and women in society. In the same year, Freedman became the first female leader of the Knesset to openly endorse the civil rights struggle. Jerusalem activists saw in the revolution a way to combat all injustice, particularly that of the oppressed and the Palestinians (Lomsky-

Feder, 2004). They led campaigns on low pay, females working night shifts, and oppression of women, as well as the ability to dictate reproductive decisions, as did demonstrators in Haifa and Tel Aviv.

One of Taiwan's progressives, Hsiu-lien Annette Lu, was influenced by the women's rights movement in America. In 1974, Lu reported New Feminism, which called on women to join in moving forward to end the "dominant patriarchal model." Yang Mei-hui described Margaret Mead's *Anatomy and Disposition in Three Primitive Cultures* (1935), applying the idea of gender identity creation to the Chinese. This transcription had an impact on Lu, whose followers founded the Enlightenment Foundations and began publishing the *Enlightenment Magazine* in 1982. Lu also reflected Confucian theory in her feminist debate to promote a societal framework for discussing the double expectations that exist for males and females (Chen, 2006). Through using maxims such as "Do not force on someone what you also do not want," she established the concept of reciprocal regard for females.

Student protests based on anti-communism started to emerge in Turkey in the 1960s, and left-wing protests began to form in the 1970s. That being said, these groups did not answer women's issues, and women were strongly prohibited from addressing them. Indeed, the women's rights movement started to grow in the 1980s. Females who had been active with any of these progressive groups began to speak out about xenophobia and to build awareness-raising groups where they expressed their perspectives as females (Taştan, 2013). Several leaders of the feminist movements in Turkey were skilled, mostly educated, central-class individuals, aligned with feminism in other countries. Due to the somewhat oppressed status of women in Turkey, the campaign went under the radar until "a significant, coordinated feminist movement arose from these separate communities (Gunes, 2013)." One of the largest categories was called *Kadin Çevresi*.

In conclusion, the feminist movement in Asia is a women's position that began in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Women's rights campaigns in Asia have attempted to change the connection of females with the community and how women convey their individuality. Women's empowerment in Asia often discusses specific problems that make the liberation struggle special in different nations. Western women's liberation initiatives have inspired numerous countries, and in the case of China, concepts from the communist regime have also helped mold female empowerment in the West. Many Asian progressives have needed to cross the fence between being progressive and being "Asian." In India, the feudal system has influenced the way in which women's empowerment has been addressed in that race and sexuality can scarcely be differentiated (Eagly et al., 2012). Likewise, the plight of Palestinian women has become significant in defining the perceptions of injustice in Israel. In Japan, the revolution centered on masculinity rather than feminism, to obtain acceptance of women's rights and the right to choose their gender roles. In Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, the independence campaign was influenced by a national movement for sexual empowerment. Usually, the fight towards patriarchy became fused with the campaign against colonization and economic inequality. Turkey joined the women's suffrage campaign later than other nations and was inspired by feminism from other nations and also by Muslim women. Turkey's fight for women's empowerment was divided on the challenges of domestic abuse.

Feminism and its implications has brought women into the workforce, but what must now be done to sustain their involvement? For example, countries like Norway and Sweden are allowing women take up to 3 years off after having a baby to ensure that they remain in the work force, yet are still able to create the taxpayers of the future.

Policies should be made by creating a balance between social obligations and

empowerment to help create a sustainable future. Policy makers must understand that they are the ones who must make changes to the social and economic policies at a macro level, to ensure the sustainability of women in the workplace and in society.

On the micro level, companies must provide equal opportunities going forward, as now in a highly xenophobic world, where race is becoming a more heated issue, the issue of feminism is being overshadowed. There are many women in the workforce who must overcome both hurdles, making their climb towards breaking that glass ceiling even more difficult.

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