



A Perspective of Choice Feminism

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyse the presence of choice feminism that includes various perspectives of it. It employs whether there is a need of choice feminism or not, regarding its impact on different aspects of feminism. This article centralises the importance of feminism in terms of choice feminism and how it positively and adversely affects the society and current position of women. It also emphasises whether it recognises the identity or creates space among them and their positions. This article explores how economic classes generates differences among women and their perspectives and in what ways women must not be needing any approval from men.

Keywords – Choice feminism, Women, Privileged Women, Poor Working-Class Women, Empowerment

Introduction

Choice feminism, a new word of a new era, might be an unfamiliar word for people but it was established during post feminism age and more officially by media culture. It encourages the opportunities of women so that they can embrace themselves and the choices they opt for as justified ones which are politically accepted. According to choice feminism, women who are working and who are housewives, both have right to exercise their choices. Therefore, their individual choices must be appreciated and given equal importance. Individualism is necessary for the existence of choice feminism to promote the values of it. It also contradicts with a political notion against systematic inequalities as it is individual centric. It is a branch of modernism that gives women freedom to make their decisions. Every decision is to be taken as an expression free from any judgemental view like patriarchal norms.

Feminism has passed through many realms and struggled a lot to honour its present position. The feminist movement suffers a lot as there have been so many different ideologies on which women have been working by letting one another down, whereas men have been enjoying this internal battle a lot making women believe that the source of strength comes from the validation of men only. When a woman feels empowered by her choices, eventually they are the consequences of patriarchal values because there is no need of men's validation to enjoy empowerment. It is toxic and weakening for female integrity.

By making a choice, a woman is essentially a feminist and that choice is itself a contribution to attain equal rights. The question is not whether the choice would bring any expected positive impact or adverse one but consideration is what is desired and these choices might be related to beauty, grooming, sexual life, marital decisions etc. There are two types of situations in it, one is choice that can be described as choosing one from two or more options. Another is agency that could be the degree to which a woman is influenced by making the choice.

Choice may or may not provide power

Choice feminism is about giving recognition to women who are empowered by making choices and have created space for them. However, all the choices of women are affected by external factors a lot as her capacity to choose is completely restricted by them. They can be caste, class, conservatism or liberalism her upbringing etc. Every choice doesn't provide power to women and each time choice is not given because there is none. Sometimes the choices are related to power but all the choices are not dignified such as the life of a sex worker. Many choices in life have been made under impressions and none cares about under what limitations they are made. The probabilities of these limitations increase when women belong from poor working class and uneducated. The vulnerability due to lack of awareness and education is the main cause.

People think that women are related to beauty which is a pre-requisite condition for a woman. Men also expect women to be delicate, submissive and quiet where they are not given choice. Most of women do make up to beautify themselves and use the cosmetic products to look gorgeous. Make-over is considered self-empowerment for women and if a woman decided to have a make-over, it is completely her choice to reinvent oneself and cultivate life style habits. However, in fact a woman feels that there is something not right with herself to begin with, there must be some flaw in her looks that she is in need of a transformation. The real question is whether they try to look beautiful for themselves and to increase their self-confidence or to make men find out they are pretty in men's eyes. It is a question whether it is really a choice or requirement. The notion whether every woman gets a chance to choose or there is any who are not affluent enough to have an option is unanswerable.

Some women are not as confident as their peers and feel extremely insecure in some areas and situations. According to the Choice feminism, a woman should have a right of what to do with her body, whether to shave or get a make-up or keep her clothes upright harmonising with the occasion. On the contrary, the bitter reality is that when any of the above-mentioned thing is not done, women feel less confident and ashamed. They cannot accept themselves without womanly desired expectation and that substantially doesn't leave women with any other choice, rather making them feeling weak.

Choice feminism – a complex explanation

Choice feminism is itself a paradox that promotes perceptions and alternatives to women; however, in reality, the impacts are not reachable to every class of women. It only benefits a minor group of them who are extremely vocal, particularly privileged or white feminists. There has been a wide gap in the process of thinking freely between a woman having privileges and a woman with low income. When a woman having all the wealth chooses not to buy any expensive branded product, she is appreciated for her lack of agreement leaving an unwanted thing. A low-income woman has not been in the same place as she is not given a choice to choose something. For her, everything is acceptable by birth and a matter of survival.

Women who have been facing gender, caste, racial and class discrimination, have minimal time to deal with this notion. On the other hand, women who don't present themselves in an orderly manner are mocked and ridiculed in the society for not keeping up oneself and it has been putting a low-income woman in a constant tiff with the society. They have been finding themselves around customary and institutional blocks.

Some women can choose their husband as they wish, some can choose their husband but the condition is that the caste should be the same and some do not get any of the mentioned privilege showing an inability to have an option. In some countries, whether belonging from an ordinary and simple background or privileged one, women choose to be housewives. On the other hand, at some places the scenario is different as women are forced to be housewives. Even after child birth, a woman might prefer to spend more time with baby while in some cases a woman never had any opportunity to choose between her child or career. Though many of them try to balance between work and home, they need to take permission of men in male dominating society. It proves that certain patriarchal customs are so naturalised that women cannot put out of them.

Non-uniformity of Choice Feminism

Choice feminism is not uniform for every girl and woman and it cannot be exercised everywhere in each aspect, as in every society disparity is there in how much freedom a woman should have. Printing heavy slogans and publishing self-help books are only beneficial to the businessman who have been hiding their exploitative tendencies that they have opted for women employees. Those quirky lines are superficial in the real world who give access to a minor group of women who can raise her voice against any exploitation leaving inaccessible back ground for majority of common women. Being a feminist doesn't mean not to put make-up or buy expensive branded products or enjoy lavish routine life or raise voice against oppressive manners publicly but being a feminist means not to predetermine these standards of being a woman with beauty, grooming and choices.

Choice feminism wings the decisions made by women. Once women say it's their choice to do so, there must not be any further question to ask. If they are ready to bear either positive or adverse effects of the decisions they make, the consequences would be liable to them. This must be accepted and if it will be, women might applaud the act of making their choices without the concerns of men. However, believing in emancipating the rights of women and apparently implementing the notion are different things. Providing equal rights to women may threaten the existing structure of power distribution but it does not identify the problem.

Conclusion

Choice feminism is a new concept of the contemporary era of feminism but its presence is not necessary. Women do not need any theory or ideology to prove their existence in the 21st century as for some, it is desirable and for others, it is not. It creates differences between women of different classes. Women, belonging from privileged class welcome this concept with open heart, however, working class women who are not privileged, are not bothered by its presence or absence. They are already preoccupied with other societal and economic issues of their personal lives. Eventually, it is woman's choice whether to receive or not choice feminism.

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