

Can Identity Politics Translate into Notions of Gender Equality

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ABSTRACT:

Do we know our identity? Can we accept everyone's identity regardless the existing prejudices? Can identity politics bring a sense of equality or will it break us into pieces of groups? Through this short article, I want to explain the elementary concept of identity politics that has always been in the corner of roads of equality and justice and how has it changed the whole spectrum the fight for gender justice and equality. A lot of people have been staying in the closet and not come out from centuries due to fear, not of being judged but of being dead. In these times of extreme judgement and hatred, the movies, tv shows, books and every other source of mass communication has helped people to become more accepting and understanding about the different identities every human carry along with their personality and it is totally not justified to harm them for their mere identity. This article aims to create a sense of ease and acceptance for all those who have been quite judgmental and prejudicial about the various identities of humans. It goes without saying that the whole concept of identity politics stands by the saying "live and let live" and we as mere humans should be more accepting and understanding if not then just mind our businesses and not create havoc and chaos because you don't find the other human in lines of your understanding of identity. While movements still take and people yet again sacrifice their lives for the rights of their identity, it would make it easier for them if we as people support their decision to choose the path and make the world a euphoric state.

At the first glance this topic glares onto my face questioning my years of education since it seems to pose a standard of intellectual knowledge that one has to have in order to give an opinion on the above topic. But through this article I've come to terms with the fact that either way I have to drain my energy into analysing the other topics which are equally tough so why not understand a subject which has gained tremendous momentum in the 21st century.

Let me begin the task by deconstructing the topic; the first question that has to be answered is what is identity politics? In the most simple terms available, Identity politics can be described as a political advances and fractionation based on people aligning the concerns most relevant to their particular racial, religious, ethnic, sexual, social, cultural or other identity, and forming exclusive political alliances with others of this group, instead of engaging in more conventional, broad-based party politics. Say I'm a member of transsexual community, so in interest of the whole community we would join a movement or a group who has the same ideology or point of view regarding but, not involve in the mainstream ideology that addresses every citizen rather I would stick to the ideology I feel is beneficial to my community as a whole in order to make policies that directs for the benefit of my community.

The answer for the question would definitely be yes when it is a question of gender equality since there has been a drastic change in the minds of people regarding coming out and being accepted for their sexuality or

gender and it somehow becomes a necessity now for political parties to regard the concerns of the communities who will be in best interest for policy and decision making. Although this issue looks quite specific with relation to the objectives of the groups of people with similar ideas, it indeed in the long run tends to disintegrate the whole population into bits and pieces since the citizens would divide themselves into smaller groups with same interests which is entirely against the idea of a state itself. Moreover, it has been always used with a negative essence in most cases because of its nature to, usually blow the demands out of proportions and act on personal benefits that would kill the very existence of such movement. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to understand various points of view since such an ideology has been a catalyst in major movements related to justice to specific groups of people such as the feminist movement, the civil rights movement in the U.S., the LGBTQ movement, as well as nationalist and postcolonial movements.

The word identity politics has been used in political discussion since at least the 1970s. One main objective of identity politics has been for those feeling subjugated by and actively undergoing anguish under mechanical social inequities to illuminate their anguish, and those who felt subjugation in terms of their own recollections of events by processes of cognisant and collective action. One of the earlier written examples of it can be seen in the April 1977 statement of the black feminist group, Combahee River Collective, which was reprinted in a number of compendiums, and Barbara Smith and the Combahee River Collective have been credited with coining the term. Following that, a lot of attention and momentum has been gained through various social movements involving feminism movements, LGBT social movements, Queer nationalism, Political lesbianism, and Bisexual politics that has broadened or enlarged the scope of such ideologies from being women-centric to supporting movements of all genders and sexuality or women of backward castes such as Dalits (specifically in India).

Nowadays most of these movements are not taking place in a conventional rally or dharnas or hunger strikes, rather they involve ways that capture the attention of youngsters and all learning minds in the forms of mass communications like books and films, now in a generation with a high data speed and unconventional techniques, TV series and YouTube originals etc are also being used to convey the real and raw concerns of every community mentioned. The reason for the reliability is because they are written or directed or portrayed by people who are involved in the issue in real life which puts them in a better place to explain. And there has been some tremendous TV series, movies and books that have managed to capture these movements and successfully convey the audience that they wanted to deliver regarding the struggles and empowerment in the later part.

In the early 1970s, the Dalit movement has caught fast pace in the country of India. The main motto of the movement was to object the atrocities faced by the Harijans or Dalits as called in the country who face objections on very small acts of entering a temple. Due to their societal status most of Dalit women are abused

and send off to prostitution which is against the very basic right of life of the Dalit women. The same can be seen in the film called *Acchut* released in 1940 . This film has been a classic gem in sparkling the fire amongst the citizens and giving an idea of equality in times where we were still struggling for independence . This film is about how the Dalit women fight for their rights to enter the temple premises stating that it was a public place of worship and no one can stop them from utilising their right . This film was ahead its time and simplifies the objectives and visually depicts the struggles and victory , further adding its value to the movement.

Another gem of a film is *Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony* , a 1999 film documentary about the most significant movement of adult suffrage for women. The movie successfully showcased the revolution of two women who spent their entire lives in educating the other women about the importance of equal rights and the power of vote. The film , in the short film period covered the short comings of the patriarchal society and how the two women identifies the inequality and created a movement of change in their era. Unfortunately the women could not survive long enough to see their dream coming true but the film would remain in the history as a cult classics as an initiative towards identity politics for women rights.

On the global entertainment media , netflix and youtube originals like , *Queer Eye* , *Orange is the new black* and modern family has slowly infused the idea of LGBTQ and transsexual movements subtly and successfully established supports to members of the group .while on the other hand , in indian film industry ,although there were films ahead their times , depicting LGBTQ and transsexualism when such words were still a taboo failed to grab audiences in their time but are now identified and tagged as cult films on the very issues like *Fire* , *Aligarh*, *Bombay talkies* , *memories in march*, *article 15* etc.. Now that the LGBTQ wave has reached the shore of India , it as been widely accepted and more tv series as well as films are being made to normalise the topic.

With the growing craze for visual entertainment the demand for written accomplishments or books have dropped but *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* is one such book that explains the birth of all civil movements and other movements that has given importance to certain identities of people and citizens . In chapter 11 , from identity to identities ,he explains how in 1960s, identity politics became a thing on global platform and, how not only civil but rights related to sexuality emerged in the cities with global importance which kind of hints towards the origins of the whole concept of identity politics and how it evolved through more and more people jining groups of interests for securing and demanding their rights without living under the rock as well as realising the importance to help other people by educating them.

The whole article bias down to one conclusion , has there been , any essentials changes that has translated the concept of identity politics to notions of gender equality. The answer is neither yes nor no because there is always a grey area wrapped under the theories. Rather this concept has helped people evolve as humans and treat each other equally , first , by accepting the rights as well as freedom of individual sexuality and treating

them just like any human . Secondly , grow aware of the changes that take place time to time . For example , few years back LGBTQ was under wraps f anonymity and now it is a greater issue to be addressed individually in every nation. Thought this piece of accumulation of various information , it makes it clear that movies , books , tv series or technology in general has a great role to play in enlightening the humans into various new ideolo-gies and adapt and accept them.

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MOVIE REFERENCES

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- Orange is the new black
- Modern family

BOOK REFERENCE

- Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment