



Beyond the Epistemological Vagaries of Gender in Critical Geopolitics: Navigating the Feminist Foreign Policy Odyssey

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Abstract

The feminist scholarship in international relations, despite its subversive quest-driven methodological innovation, deconstruction of gender, investigation of power relations, and epistemological adventurism with time has been criticised for overlooking its axiological dimension. The normative commitment of the feminist project has stood for inclusivity, gender justice, equity, sensitivity towards marginalisation and gendered discrimination while upholding strong self-reflexive credentials. On the other hand, the omnipresence of gender has extended beyond the realm of a mere analytical variable and a research tool to the decision-making establishment of nation-states while shaping the international political agenda. In the course of its disciplinary trajectory, critical geopolitics as an offshoot of geopolitics has embodied gender and feminism in its theoretical dynamics, and its shortcomings were subsequently bridged by the emergence of the feminist geopolitics perspective. While critical geopolitics from the very beginning exuded postmodern and poststructuralist assertions by categorically refuting traditional essentialist assumptions, feminist geopolitics stood for re-envisioning gender and the point of intersection between the narratives of political geography and feminist geography. However, the chronic lacuna in the concretisation of feminist foreign-policy making approaches in international relations demonstrated the epistemological nebulosity and tokenism associated with the global feminist project, which needed to be mitigated for ensuring gender parity and social justice. The research paper aims to advance the case of feminist foreign policy-making in international relations as a novel political framework by establishing its advantages vis-à-vis the emerging dynamics of world affairs. It navigates the journey toward feminist foreign policy-making while introducing the concepts of gender, feminism, geopolitics, critical geopolitics, feminist geopolitics, and the feminist scholarship within the disciplinary ambit of international relations by following a qualitative research methodology using secondary sources.

Keywords

critical geopolitics; feminist geopolitics; feminist foreign policy; gender; international relations

Introduction: Understanding Gender and Feminism

Gender, entailing a social construct, instead of a biological binary, has been subjected to religious, cultural, societal, class, ethnolinguistic differentials and power asymmetries throughout history, and has been globally circulated vis-à-vis formal actors of international relations. Gender essentially denotes a whole gamut of socially constructed roles, activities, attributive features, and behaviour, conditioned by societal norms and deemed to be socially appropriate for men and women, varying across place and time (Whitworth 392). Myriad academicians and theoretical practitioners have advocated the necessity of observing the analytical distinction between the biological category of sex and the socially contrived entity of gender. Charlotte Hooper (2001) held that beyond the divergences in conceptualising gender, there are three rudimentary dimensions associated with gender, namely, the physical embodiment involving the physiological make-up and the function of reproductive biology; the institutional architecture and the epiphenomenal gendered social processes they typify ranging from the economy, family, to the state; the discursive connotations of the gendered constructions of the linguistic system, including its constitutive role in the gender order (Hooper 20). Unfortunately, the lack of representation of the female question in an exclusively male-dominated discipline of geopolitics in specific, and international relations in general, had prompted a radical disciplinary reconstruction, and consequently the culture of silence surrounding the question of gender, the ways in which the global economy, geographic delineations of power, and global politics affected women at large, were soon addressed by prominent feminist scholars (Narain 1).

The ubiquity of gender in obtaining the status of a somewhat global currency, shaping the global policy agenda, affecting grand narratives and normative entities like peace, conflict, and violence, typifies its worldwide distribution with remarkable frequency (Whitworth 399). Geopolitics as an important area of enquiry, dealing with the geographical dimensions of power within the umbrella of international relations, has internalised the component of gender, especially in the evolution and operational dynamics of critical geopolitics through the works of scholars Simon Dalby. Converging with variables like race, class, citizenship, and national identity, gender has constituted an integral component in the multi-scalar phenomenon of both state-centric as well as international politics (Eichler 2). While the journey towards inclusivity and representation, envisaging a comprehensive egalitarian approach has been insurmountably difficult, the outstanding scholarly contribution of eminent feminist scholars in geopolitics; ranging from J. Ann Tickner to Cynthia Enloe, has re-oriented the disciplinary foci, as Tickner held that the complete absence of women and discourse surrounding gender within the broad ambit of international relations perpetuated more gender hierarchies, leading to increased global insecurities (J. Ann Tickner).

It is practically impossible to initiate a discourse on the issue of gender without discussing feminism and its legacy in the academic trajectory of geopolitics and international relations. Feminism has embodied the variable of gender as a vital subject of analysis, and the academic tradition of feminism has largely evolved as a corollary of the sustained campaign for women's socio-political, economic, and civil rights during the course of its three waves (Narain 2). Stemming from a historical necessity and protracted

movement, feminism as an intellectual tradition has found multidisciplinary epistemological representation, whereby its macroscopic study agenda has been primarily concerned with the analysis and depiction of how biological differences are translated into the form of the social construct of gender, while using this social construct of gender to study the nuances of domination and marginalisation of women across power structures. (J. Ann Tickner 03:10-03:22). Notwithstanding the theoretical proliferation and epistemological nebulousness with time, feminism has been a cardinal component of the global human rights discourse; deconstructing gender; analysing the nuances of differentiated and gender-specific violence; interpreting the oppressive repercussions of patriarchy, male-dominated institutions and structures of power; dealing primarily in equating women and relations between nation-states while simultaneously investigating the equations arising between men, power, privacy, violence, family, and the individual in general; possessing a momentum and sense of dynamism in spearheading the emancipation and empowerment of women (Koopman 274).

Gender is intertwined with the theoretical edifice and the global project of feminism and feminism has blatantly exposed the horrors of gender-based violence, and gender-based discrimination while depicting the rueful state of women's comprehensive marginalisation in geopolitics in specific, and international relations in general. It has categorically subverted the stereotypical patriarchal gendered constructions of women; throwing light on systemic gender inequality, marginalisation and gender-based exclusionary manoeuvres while shattering the myths of gendered identities which had legitimised women's restricted access to power and limited political agencies (Smith).

Research Outline

Germinating the seeds of a feminist approach within the disciplinary scope of international relations, while problematising gender, has been a herculean task. However, beyond the epistemological successes of gender-sensitive analysis in critical geopolitics, while investigating gendered assumptions in the study of international relations, guided by geopolitical reasoning, the axiological dimension has been grossly overlooked (Dalby 596). The chronic vacuum of materialising feminist foreign policy making initiatives by nation-states while augmenting female representation in the defence and security establishments has been truly alarming ("From Gender to Geopolitics"). Set against this backdrop, this research article attempts to trace the concretisation of a feminist policy framework in international relations.

Firstly, the article aims at advancing a theoretical examination by linking feminism and gender through the lens of geopolitics. It introduces the notion of geopolitics and critical geopolitics and puts forward an analysis of feminist geopolitics. Secondly, it decrypts feminist foreign policy approach in international relations while stressing its evolution and changing dynamics. Finally, it raises the case for feminist foreign policy architecture in international relations and the emerging dynamics while navigating the way forward.

Research Methodology

The approach of this study is entirely predicated on qualitative research methodology, based on secondary sources of knowledge and information, backed by theories, norms, and doctrines that address the subject comprehensively in order to support the analysis. While interpreting the available literature on gender and feminism in international relations and the feminist foreign policymaking, this research article has adopted a deductive approach to advance a hypothesis to justify the materialisation of a feminist foreign policy framework in international relations. A collection of information from a vast array of secondary sources ranging from research papers, journal articles, issue briefs, policy monographs, online articles, books, to YouTube videos constitutes the edifice of the research work.

Geopolitics and Critical Geopolitics: A Theoretical Examination

Geopolitics as a body of thought was formalised through the writings of eminent Swedish political scientist and geographer Rudolf Kjellen, who devised the nomenclature in 1899, defining it as the systematic study or theory of the state as a geographical organism or a spatial phenomenon. Although historically, famous philosophers like Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, Aristotle, and Alexander von Humboldt had touched upon the notion of geopolitics in world affairs while studying the geospatial transformations and finite spaces, it gained traction in academic and policy circles after the nineteenth century (Dodds and Atkinson 2). While the existing academic literature is replete with the contributions of geostrategists and political geographers like Sir Halford John Mackinder, Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, Karl Ernst Haushofer, Nicholas John Spykman, General Giulio Douhet, and Alfred von Schlieffen among others, the scope and nature of geopolitics as an area of enquiry got transformed with time. As stated by Taylor (2000), Geopolitics stood for the least problematised realm of geographical knowledge, which was implicitly underwritten by the strategic considerations of the Cold War and the political predicament of the so-called “real world” (Hyndman 310). Geopolitics has transcended from being the doctrine of spatial determinism of political processes predicated on the pillars of political geography, recognising the primacy of the state as the cardinal actor of world politics, to embracing multiple non-state actors and accommodating elements of critical historiography in its evolution (van Efferink).

As advocated by several scholars and academicians, there are four contending perspectives under the umbrella of Geopolitics, namely, the Realist school perspective dealing with power relations, security, and anarchy; the Traditional Geopolitics perspective akin to the teachings of Halford Mackinder; the Political Economy perspective; and Critical Geopolitics. Essentially, “critical geopolitics” is the subversion of the analytical objectivity underlying traditional geopolitics, which chiefly dealt with power and space as primary variables (van Efferink). In political geography, the advent of critical geopolitics was a byproduct of the shifting balance of power with the demise of the Cold War-era bipolar international order; and was heavily influenced by postmodernist and poststructuralist undercurrents, responding to the realist school of the conventional geopolitical discourse while challenging the claims of international relations theory and international political economy (IPE). Critical geopolitics not only refuted the

taken for granted categories of analysis in the mainstream international relations theory and exposed the commonsense perception of normative entities of peace, war, and violence within the Post-Westphalian order; it also managed to situate power in a diffusive relational manner traversing a whole range of social strata, instead of concentrating it in the hands of the sovereign state or an individual (Sparke 495).

Critical geopolitics throughout its epistemological and ontological trajectories stood for offering incorporeal polemic of multiple dominant geopolitical narratives prevalent within the mainstream academic realm; especially regarding war and the political grounds on which any form of conflict is orchestrated, critical geopolitics has subverted the binaries that typified any type of conflict in the international system (Tuathail et al. 316). Jennifer Hyndman (2001) opined that while critical geopolitics evolved as an area of enquiry by getting thoroughly influenced by the teachings of poststructuralist philosophers like Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, it necessarily implied a novel mode of interrogation in exposing the multiple grounds of knowledge production, in a teleological quest towards destabilising the normative per se, decentering and deconstructing the Enlightenment vision of nation-states in a Derridean fashion, rather than getting characterised as a theory demonstrating the intersection between spatial phenomenon and political processes.

However, critical geopolitics very often got engaged in transformative methods while offering embodied manner of seeing and knowing and thus got criticised for getting limited to the function of propelling nonobservant deconstruction involving dominant binary oppositions in the international system (211). Critical geopolitics thus suffered from shortcomings in getting confined to the realm of disembodied critical practice of providing polemics of conventional geopolitics sans any coherent commentary on the opportunities of political resistance, and remained aloof from the ontological commitments involved in the epistemological process of how to geograph the world as a whole (Sparke 378). Notwithstanding its limitations, critical geography epitomised a culture of transgression in challenging the connotations of imperial truth and military weapon associated with the statist knowledge production site of geography, getting committed to the decolonising process of inherited geographical imaginations (van Efferink).

Decoding the Facets of Feminist Geopolitics

By offering the promise of well-interrogated categories through the humanising lens of subjectivity and phenomenology, critical geopolitics despite its somewhat restricted ontological future, prepared the foreground for feminist geopolitics, where scholars like Cynthia Enloe argued that the personal is geopolitical and the geopolitical is personal (“From Gender to Geopolitics”). The entire project of feminist geopolitics is driven by one primary consideration, viz. re-envisioning of gender in international relations. Feminist geopolitics offers a unique space of intersection of the narratives of feminist geography and political geography, characterising a novel approach of analysing global issues while internalising the normative blueprint of feminist politics; arguing that the intimate is essentially a highly politicised sphere for feminist scholars to use it as a vital tool of analysis, rather than merely a refuge (Koopman 277). Feminist geopolitics

not only contested and examined gender and the socio-political construction of the geographical scale but also held that such socially and politically engineered scales, likely informal and apolitical, are important sites for effective geopolitical research. The scholars and academicians of feminist geopolitics thoroughly analyse the various scales of resistance to de facto power hierarchies at the personal, individual or private level, examining the significance and the power of reproduction as an essential geopolitical project (Fluri 260).

The centrality of the body as a special site or arena of contestation as well as the zone where enactment or enforcement is associated, highlights the predominance of gender and sexuality as key elements of research in feminist geopolitics (Olson 148). Feminist geopolitics fundamentally stands for a more evolved and constructive version of critical geopolitics, whereby traditional state or capital-driven variables are challenged efficaciously (150). The uniqueness of feminist geopolitics lies in the thorough scrutiny and deep investigation of formal and informal forms of political mobilisation and political action, as the crux of feminist geopolitics involves the exploration of politics vis-à-vis the scales and spatial representations which are not typically held as powerful or political (Fluri 261). While perceiving the notion of sovereignty, nationalism, citizenship, state, security, and strategy as intrinsically gendered formulations, feminist geopolitics exclusively focus on how the shifting distinctions between the private and the public realm have systematically marginalised and cornered women from coherent political involvement across power structures (Dalby 600). Feminist geopolitics is often equated as a corollary of Anglo-feminist political geography, whereby the primary focus lies on interpreting what the “political” typifies and its relationship with geospatial constructions. It can be said that while feminist geopolitics enables the world to situate the state in specific circumstances and contexts while investigating how power and resistance as major determinants function in a similar fashion across scales and geographical sites, the discipline offers a fresh analytical understanding by opening up a series of political possibilities and respective solutions (Kulkarni).

In this regard, Dowler and Sharp (2001) observed that akin to how the mainstream geopolitical discourse moulded everyday lives and bodies, several mundane activities and processes, and identities facilitate the shaping of re-constructed imaginations of the nation-state and the international as a whole, and feminist geopolitics is wholeheartedly committed towards centering the myriad phenomenological experiences of the peripherally marginalised. Feminist geopolitics, in essence, transcends the mere representative aspect and involves grounding the geopolitical discourse in getting embedded in everyday mundane activities. Additionally, the subject matter does not perceive bodies are merely discursive inscription surfaces but as valuable sites of performance (Dowler and Sharp 166). As a highly dynamic form of analysis more efficacious than the gender justice approach in international relations, feminist geopolitics effectively portrays the vast array of insecurities in the daily life of marginalised women, demonstrating their operational dynamics across entangled scales in international relations (Koopman 284).

Jennifer Hyndman (2004) linked the intellectual project of feminist geopolitics with a new analytic or epistemological imaginary rather than an entirely different theory,

which challenged the essentialist assumptions of mainstream geopolitical imaginaries. According to Hyndman, feminist geopolitics must adopt three essential steps as novel methods, namely, scrutinise and carefully examine the sites of violence across domestic/international and public/private distinctions; place an added emphasis on studying women's varying mobility in order to investigate the nuances of geopolitical power across space in the international system; and incorporate a more effective and coarser scale of security than the traditional concept of the nation-state, which gives importance to the safety and comprehensive well-being of both individuals and groups of people (Hyndman 319).

Simon Dalby (1994) vociferously argued for gender-sensitive analysis in geopolitics and held that feminist geopolitics has the potential to act as a subversive weapon to the dominant themes and traditional substantive considerations of the mainstream geopolitical discourse. Dalby was instrumental in introducing a series of feminist themes while filling the void in critical geopolitics, such as, evaluation of the practical implications of security for women across different circumstances and places; reasons for the refusal to write international relations by following the conventional disciplinary diktat; the numerous challenges to the epistemologies of hegemonic masculinity involving their legitimised practices of domination in international relations; the decryption of gendered formulations of spaces, territories, borders, or other cartographic constructs; investigation on the meaning of peace in a highly flux world order replete with violence against women and the application of rape or sexual violence as a tool or territorial weapon; sustained focus on exploring situated knowledge across sites and spaces for decoding the discursive constructions of several political identities, which are typically prescribed by mainstream international relations theories and dominant foreign policy measures (Dalby 608).

International Relations and the Feminist Approach: Brief Analysis

Ever since its inception, the discipline of international relations was exclusively a male-dominated arena propelled by hegemonic masculinity as a socially constructed culturally dominant form of masculinity and the celebration of male power; whereby gender stereotyping, hierarchical categorisations and power binaries deeply marginalised women ("Highlights of Gender and Geopolitics"). The feminist scholarship in international relations came into prominence after the theoretical and ontological success of feminism as a global project necessitated innovative modes of enquiry, and it was after the demise of the bipolar world order with the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s that a thorough re-examination and disciplinary re-orientation in international relations opened up a new space for gendering international political processes and phenomena, taking cues from postmodern and critical methods of investigation. The path-breaking research, new agendas, and novel theoretical assertions offered by eminent scholars like Cynthia Enloe, Spike Peterson, and J. Ann Tickner concretised the feminist approach in international relations; whereby critical insight into gender as the centre of gravity of global analysis introduced a newfangled narrative in dealing with a vast array of issues ranging from global governance, international security, international law, nuclear proliferation, to peace-building and conflict resolution (Narain 3). The evolution and

overarching importance of the feminist scholarship within the disciplinary ambit of international relations signalled a quantum jump from equating success with socially constructed masculine values of power and self-reliance to deconstructing gender, elevating it as a powerful organising logic, and subsequently gendering the empirical, normative, epistemological, and ontological considerations of the discipline (Hooper 2).

According to Jacqui True (2008), international relations feminists adhere to praxis-driven normative theory wherein there are divergences in their normative conceptualisations. True held that feminism in international relations, in accordance with feminism in other theoretical disciplines attempt to examine existing gender relations, and study the overarching dominance of masculinity over femininity, aiming at transforming how they work at different levels of social, economic, and political life. In simple words, feminism in international relations as a whole stands for challenging or revising the mainstream or conventional disciplinary foundations while drawing on the subjective experiences of ostracised, marginalised, and oppressed individuals (mainly women); and refuting the disciplinary gender bias that is ingrained in the rationalist methods of enquiry and internalised within the substantive edifice of international relations vis-à-vis concepts like global governance, security, state, power, and sovereignty (True 408).

J. Ann Tickner (1992) proposed a non-gendered model of human action in international relations and demystified certain masculine assumptions in international relations; ranging from the realists' perspective on security, power, and anarchy; to the rational-actor, game theory, and capitalist production models governing the international political economy, as these assertions only offered an ineffective, incomplete or partial, and highly masculinised version of human agency and production. Cynthia Enloe and Marysia Zalewski (1995) advocated that the processes, activities, transactions, and interactions governing international relations facilitated the construction of gendered identities and the process of identity formulation or construction has a profound impact on the dynamics of international politics, and such influences occur in the respective methodological and ontological restrictions of realism, pluralism, and structuralism to consider. The feminist scholarship in international relations internalises the politics of identity construction while projecting gender as an explanatory framework, and the feminist approach essentially analyses gender fissures, constructions, exclusions, and divisions, accompanying the simultaneous examination of oppositional formulation of feminine and masculine gender identities in international relations (Hooper 7). In the contemporary period, the feminist scholarship has adopted a multidimensional approach of intersectionality by moving away from a dualistic perspective to embracing more fluid interpretations of gender, fluid forms of identification and the importance of discourse in their respective formulation while examining the production and reinforcement of exclusively hierarchically-bound gender identities as byproducts of nationalism and colonialism (Narain).

Feminist perspective to international relations is driven by a sense of ethical commitment towards being inclusive and pluralistic of the several vantage points in international politics, self-reflexive of multiple exclusions, and attentive to relational power. The feminist scholars are empathetic and palpably concerned about the dialectical interplay of power, relationships, and politics in all places, transcending state boundaries

to involve international public spheres (True 409). Feminism gives coherence and proper representation by recognising that women are the transformative catalysts in geopolitical, geoeconomic and societal processes, simultaneously highlighting myriad women's issues, covering inequality and relations of power while unfolding the role of gendered power in international politics. As feminism is historically concerned with the analysis of women's subordination and marginalisation, gendered inequality, and the formulation of gendered identities across power structures; feminism has challenged the patriarchal imaginary and homogeneous conceptualization of women in international relations by refuting the traditional concerns of so-called "high politics" dealing with security and state in international politics by ostracizing women while exposing gendered logics as cogent organising frameworks of analysis (Smith). For feminists, power is an omnipresent variable informing all social relations from the very personal level to the international level. The feminist scholars while stressing the cardinal importance of gender in governing all relations of inequality observe that effective forms of exclusion are perpetuated through gendered formulations, especially by systematically, institutionally, and peripherally marginalising the "feminine" in political affairs (Whitworth 398).

Feminist Foreign Policy-Making in International Relations: Contemporary Existential Necessity

Despite the rigorous theoretical exercise and emergence of multiple variants of feminism, the materialisation of feminist foreign-policy-making frameworks in international politics remained elusive. The chronic vacuum and tokenism surrounding the incorporation of feminist elements into the arena of decision-making in matters related to national security and foreign policy characterised a vast majority of the international community for a long period of time, despite the multilateral endorsement of "gender mainstreaming" through international institutions like the United Nations (UN) (Whitworth 400). In an exceedingly transformative world order devoid of structural predictability, a tremendous amount of political and economic re-balancing has shifted the balance of power with the proliferation of myriad non-traditional security challenges and new forms of conflict vis-à-vis the prominence of non-state actors in the international system. Transcending beyond a mere analytical tool and a research field in academics, the axiological lacuna of feminism needed to be mitigated in an age of fractured geopolitics whereby the international public decision-making prompted a major recalibration in incorporating gender studies to examine multifarious challenges of the global commons ranging from socio-economic inequalities, climate change, religion, migration to poverty (Naves). It had become imperative for nation-states to conceptualise their respective feminist foreign policy frameworks, in order to unpack the perceived demarcation between so-called "soft" and "hard" issues of international politics that were motivated by gender stereotyping and hegemonic masculinity while necessitating a proactive engagement across sectors, adhering to social justice, inclusivity, and equity ("Raisina 2018").

In the international system, a major breakthrough has been the formulation of the feminist foreign policy approach by giving it a concrete shape and coherent form, which has been preceded by the historic adoption of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)

Agenda by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) under the UNSC Resolution 1325 in the year 2000, aimed at ensuring full, formal, meaningful, and equal women's participation in peace-making, peace-building, and conflict prevention efforts ("From Gender to Geopolitics"). In tune with the UN-level deliberations, the feminist foreign policy approach stands for perhaps the first major stepping-stone and an institutional milestone in the long journey towards advancing gender parity, gender inclusivity, and gender justice internationally. In this regard, Sweden was the first country to formalise the feminist foreign policy architecture, coining the nomenclature in 2014 (Kulkarni). Essentially, the feminist foreign policy approach signals the nation-states to systematise and institutionalise the effective application of a gender-equality lens while stimulating gender consciousness in policymaking across all levels of bilateral, multilateral, plurilateral or minilateral diplomatic engagement, which embody trade, development cooperation, financial assistance, peace and conflict, and national security imperatives. The feminist foreign policy framework also impels state actors and individuals to question and challenge the primordial or historically rooted elements of patriarchy that have perennially guided diplomatic activities and norms, defined state identities, and determined the role of power, legitimacy, and authority in international politics (Baruah).

A feminist foreign policy basically entails a specially designed political framework that constitutes a mechanism for ensuring justice, solidarity, peace, harmony, and equality in the international system. Additionally, it stands for guaranteeing the comprehensive well-being of marginalised people across state boundaries and invigorating self-reflective processes regarding the hierarchical global system nature of the foreign policy. By introducing an alternative intersectional viewpoint of security from the perspective of the peripherally marginalised individuals, this approach is unique in transcending the traditional limitations of the black box approach towards security in foreign policy analysis, which primarily focused on violence, military force, nuclear weapons, and domination, and thus the feminist foreign policy approach stands for a multidimensional heterogeneous framework which attempts to elevate the rueful experiences and agencies of oppressed women and marginalised groups to combat several destructive forces ranging from racism, colonialism, imperialism, militarism, patriarchy, to heteronormativity ("Raisina 2018").

Taking inspiration from intersectionality, critical feminism, and the race scholarship, the Swedish feminist foreign policy framework places emphasis on resources, the body of rights and liberties, and representation for women and girls across different sectors and fields while attempting to apply systematic gender equality approach in covering their entire foreign policy agenda (Najeeb). Such a unique political framework has found its application in the realm of development cooperation; diplomacy; trade and economic relations; and foreign and security policy. In a similar vein, following Sweden's remarkable advancement, several countries followed its path in conceptualising and implementing gender equality strategies within their foreign policy agendas and development agencies, such as the Republic of Ireland, Japan, Canada, France, the United Kingdom (UK), and Mexico (Baruah). In a historic move, Mexico became the first nation from the Global South to introduce a distinctive feminist foreign policy framework in January 2020, whereby the feminist foreign policy approach is governed by certain

prescriptions like fighting gender-based discrimination and violence; establishing parity within the foreign ministry; visible equity and gender equality; an inclusive gender dimension in the foreign policymaking establishment; and concerted efforts in ensuring feminist integration by covering all areas and aspects of the foreign ministry of Mexico effectively (Kulkarni).

Following the transatlantic route, it is imperative for developing nations of the Global South like India, with deeply rooted gender inequalities and institutionalised patriarchy to gradually veer towards adopting feminist foreign policy approaches by bridging the quantitative-qualitative divide that exists in terms of paper and in reality, which will reorient its domestic policy landscape significantly. While ensuring comprehensive gender parity and gender equality is beyond the possibility frontier for nations like India, a gradualist dynamic policy innovation aiming at human security, peace, ensuring improved access to basic human rights and resource allocation might prepare the foreground for increased female representation in the foreign policymaking domain in the near future (Magan). In the future, more and more nation-states must embrace and implement feminist foreign policy mechanisms in order to necessitate a qualitative leap from conventional militarised responses to humanised responses that encompass the subjective experiences and agencies of marginalised, vulnerable, and ostracised groups and individuals while promoting inclusivity, pluralism, and gender justice in tandem with the highly ambitious goals of the UN's Sustainable Development Agenda (Khullar). Thus, by prioritising humane, rights-based, welfare-oriented, and gender-sensitive policies, nation-states should make constructive commitments with a focus on amplifying women's voices in the mainstream foreign policymaking discourse in order to guarantee the institutionalisation of gender representation (Rathore).

Conclusion

It is imperative for nation-states in a tumultuous geopolitical epoch to internalise, embrace, and enact feminist foreign policies while applying the gender lens to a vast array of issue areas to promote gender inclusivity. As it has been almost universally acknowledged that increased female representation by promoting women empowerment contributes to enhanced governance parameters, improves human development indicators, increases economic growth, and culminates in elevating the overall sense of security and stability in a nation-state; evidences in academic research and public policy suggest that through an increased investment in women's social, economic, and political participation, peace, harmony, and affluence can be guaranteed in the world (Khullar).

The research paper traced the theoretical development and evolution of feminist geopolitics through the lens of critical geopolitics while introducing the concepts of gender, feminism, geopolitics, critical geopolitics, and feminist geopolitics. It highlighted the multiple tenets of the feminist scholarship within the realm of international relations and introduced the concept of feminist foreign policy-making in international relations. Finally, it argued the case for advancing feminist foreign policy-making frameworks by nation-states by taking into account the emerging dynamics and the contemporary state of geopolitical affairs.

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