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The 'Domestic Sphere' in a New India

Context

- The **discourse on women's empowerment in India has long been entangled with political agendas, cultural ideologies, and economic structures.**
- In recent years, particularly under the current regime, **the rhetoric of nari shakti (women's power) and women-led development has gained prominence** in public narratives.
- Yet, **beneath this rhetorical veneer lies a glaring contradiction:** the persistent neglect and devaluation of women's lives and labour within the domestic sphere.

Rhetoric versus Reality

- The **invocation of women's empowerment by political leaders often stands in stark contrast to regressive positions** on issues central to women's autonomy.
- The statement by the RSS chief in August 2025, urging families to have at least three children for the survival of civilization, exemplifies this contradiction.
- Here, **women are reduced to instruments of reproduction**, with little recognition of their agency.
- **Such remarks not only trivialize women's individuality but also reinforce the patriarchal notion** that women's primary role is biological rather than social, economic, or political.

Violence and Silence in the Home

- The **statistics are harrowing: from 2017 to 2022, an average of 7,000 women per year were killed in dowry-related incidents**, totaling 35,000 deaths.
- Beyond this, **the National Family Health Survey-5 reports that nearly one-third of women experience intimate partner violence**, yet only 14% report these crimes to the police.
- A third of all crimes against women fall under domestic violence.
- **Despite these realities, the ruling establishment has avoided confronting patriarchal violence**, treating it as a private matter rather than a structural injustice.

The Gendered Burden of Work

- The **Time Use Survey (TUS) 2024 sheds light on another dimension** of the domestic sphere: the invisibilised labour of women.

- **Women between ages 15 and 59 show stark inequalities** in participation across productive and unpaid activities.
- While **only 25% of women are engaged in employment-related activities** for an average of five hours daily, a staggering 93% undertake unpaid domestic work, averaging seven hours daily.
- **In addition, 41% provide unpaid caregiving services**, spending 2.5 hours daily.
- In contrast, **men's engagement in domestic work and caregiving is negligible**: on average, men contribute 26 minutes to household tasks and less than 16 minutes to caregiving per day.
- This **disparity reveals the entrenched gendered division of labour**, where women shoulder the dual burden of productive and reproductive work.

State Narratives and the Glorification of Inequality

- The **government's framing of the TUS data further illustrates the institutionalization** of gender bias.
- **In February 2025, the Press Information Bureau hailed the findings as evidence of the Indian social fabric**, celebrating women's disproportionate role in caregiving as cultural virtue rather than systemic inequality.
- The **meagre contribution of men to domestic labour was presented as a positive feature** of family life.
- This **deliberate glorification of inequality transforms structural oppression** into cultural pride, shielding patriarchal norms from critique.

Capitalism and the Invisible Subsidy

- The **invisibility of women's unpaid work is not merely cultural**, it is economic. A 2023 State Bank of India study estimated that monetizing unpaid domestic work would add over 7% to India's GDP, amounting to ₹22.5 lakh crore annually.
- Yet, **because women's work is excluded from wage structures, it serves as an invisible subsidy** for both the state and capital.
- **Minimum wages are calculated on the basis of male subsistence**, presuming that women's unpaid labour will sustain families.
- In this way, **patriarchy and capitalism converge**: patriarchal norms naturalize women's unpaid contributions, while capitalist structures profit from their undervaluation.

The Way Forward: Towards an Alternative Vision

- Confronting this systemic injustice requires interventions that span cultural, social, and policy domains.
- First, **violence within homes must be treated as a structural issue**, with proactive legal and social mechanisms to protect women.
- Second, **women's equal right to work must be affirmed**, with guarantees of equal pay.
- Third, **universal childcare and eldercare facilities provided by the state can redistribute caregiving responsibilities**.

- Fourth, **robust public investment in healthcare and education** can reduce the domestic burden on women.
- Fifth, **cultural narratives must be transformed** to normalize the equal sharing of domestic responsibilities, challenging the glorification of inequality.
- Finally, **frontline scheme workers in care services must be recognized as government employees** entitled to fair wages and benefits.

Conclusion

- The **domestic sphere is neither private nor apolitical**, it is a contested site where power, ideology, and economics intersect.
- The **glorification of women's unpaid labour as cultural virtue**, the silence on domestic violence, and the undervaluation of care work **all reveal a systemic effort to subordinate women while profiting from their contributions**.
- **True nari shakti lies not in symbolic slogans but in confronting the material, cultural, and political realities** that define women's lives.

The 'Domestic Sphere' in a New India FAQs

Q1. What contradiction exists in the government's rhetoric on women's empowerment?

Ans. The government promotes slogans like nari shakti and "women-led development," yet it ignores or reinforces regressive practices that restrict women's autonomy in the domestic sphere.

Q2. Why is silence on domestic violence significant in the current political context?

Ans. Silence on domestic violence reflects an ideological choice, as addressing it would challenge patriarchal structures that the ruling establishment seeks to preserve.

Q3. What does the Time Use Survey (2024) reveal about gendered labour?

Ans. The survey shows that women spend significantly more time on unpaid domestic and caregiving work than men, who contribute only minimal hours to such tasks.

Q4. How does the state justify undervaluing women's unpaid work?

Ans. The state frames women's disproportionate role in care work as part of the "Indian social fabric," turning inequality into cultural pride rather than acknowledging it as systemic injustice.

Q5. What alternatives are required to address these inequalities?

Ans. Legal action against domestic violence, equal pay for women, universal childcare and eldercare, investment in health and education, cultural shifts toward shared domestic work, and fair wages for scheme workers.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Iran and India, Ancient Civilisations and New Horizons

Context:

- The world is in a period of transition marked by a crisis of the Western-led international order. Once dominant, the U.S. and its allies now face serious challenges.
- Repeated violations of international law, trade wars, unchecked use of force, weakening of global institutions, media manipulation, and environmental destruction point to a deeper systemic crisis.
- The West's traditional tools of dominance — financial control, technological monopoly, human rights conditionalities, and media influence — are steadily losing effectiveness.
- This article highlights how the shifting global order, marked by the decline of Western dominance, opens new horizons for ancient civilisations like India and Iran.
- It explores their shared values, resilience, and strategic partnerships in shaping a just, multipolar world through South-South cooperation, BRICS, and initiatives like INSTC, while addressing global crises, the Palestine struggle, and U.S. interventions.

India and Iran: Civilisational Partners in a Rising Global South

- The Global South is forging a new path of independence, rooted in local models, indigenous technology, and stronger security.
- Ancient civilisations like India and Iran play a unique role in this transformation. Historically, both influenced global culture through statecraft, literature, philosophy, and art, while upholding values of peace, diversity, and spirituality.
- Despite colonial exploitation, external interference, and economic pressures, neither has compromised its independence or identity.
- Today, their shared values and resilience are vital in confronting global crises.
- By deepening **South-South cooperation**, advancing initiatives like **BRICS** and the **INSTC**, and upholding moral principles, India and Iran can help lay the foundation for a just and humane world order.

Palestine, Iran, and the Global South's Struggle for Justice

- The Palestinian struggle embodies the Global South's resistance against Western hypocrisy, supremacy, and occupation, symbolising the right of all nations to resist domination.
- Similarly, Iran's defence of peaceful nuclear energy reflects the South's broader right to development, making it a stronghold for international law and diplomacy.
- In this context, multilateral platforms like **BRICS offer an alternative to Western economic dominance** by promoting de-dollarisation and inclusive growth.
- The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) goes beyond trade, serving as a civilisational bridge connecting Eurasia, the Caucasus, India, and Africa, while fostering stability in West Asia.

India, Iran, and the Vision of a Just Global Order

- In West Asia, U.S. interventions have long undermined regional security by backing Israel and fueling instability in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Iran.
- Similarly, in South Asia, Washington has alternated between fighting and empowering terrorist groups to suit its interests.

- At this turning point in history, ancient civilisations like India and Iran, with their traditions of wisdom, independence, and partnership, can shape a new order based on justice, equality, and respect for human dignity — an order where nations define their own destiny rather than serve the powerful.

Conclusion

- India and Iran, through civilisational wisdom and strategic cooperation, can guide the Global South toward a multipolar world rooted in justice, equality, and shared human dignity.

Iran and India, Ancient Civilisations and New Horizons FAQs

Q1. What marks the current global transition described in the article?

Ans. The global order faces a crisis as Western dominance weakens, reflected in law violations, trade wars, weakened institutions, media manipulation, and environmental destruction.

Q2. How do India and Iran contribute as civilisational partners in the Global South?

Ans. Both embody cultural resilience, peace, and diversity. By strengthening South-South cooperation and initiatives like BRICS and INSTC, they help shape a humane world order.

Q3. Why is the Palestine issue central to the Global South's struggle?

Ans. The Palestinian struggle symbolizes resistance against Western hypocrisy and domination, representing all nations' right to resist occupation and uphold justice and independence.

Q4. What role does Iran play in defending the Global South's rights?

Ans. By safeguarding its peaceful nuclear program, Iran defends the South's right to development and strengthens international law, diplomacy, and collective resistance against dominance.

Q5. How can India and Iran lead a new just global order?

Ans. Through wisdom, independence, and partnership, they can counter U.S. interventions and build a future based on justice, equality, and human dignity.

Source: TH

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