

ABSTRACT

Does Expanding Frontiers of Civil Society Extend Women Development?

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Abstract: Civil society has significantly emerged as the third sector providing employment opportunities and transacting welfare and development to women. The post liberalization era in the expansion of civil society has been accompanied by the ambit of neoliberal governance through foreign funding as well as neoliberal stipulations largely framing the agenda and activities of civil society organizations with prominent accent on women development in India. However, a critical appraisal of the existing literature on the role of civil society reveals that there is a manifesting hiatus between the claims versus outcomes of the performances of NGOs with regard to women development. Social scientists tend to argue that civil society even though has been less effective in engendering gender equality in economic, familial and community endeavours while on the contrary both the nation state and the transnational organizations have tended to assign higher emphasis and greater space for civil society in gender development and women empowerment. Against the backdrop of skepticism portrayed by social science literature, this study with a neo functionalist approach embarks into the analysis of the opportunities and outcomes generated by civil society organizations and the extent to which it facilitate employment generation and development of urban women in Kolkata.

Key words: Civil society, Women development, Empowerment of Women, Human Resource development.