

# **FEMINISM**

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## Feminism history and perspective – from history to herstory

Feminism is a collection of movements and ideologies aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights for women. This includes seeking to establish equal opportunities for women in education and employment.

The history of the modern western feminist movements is divided into three "waves". Each is described as dealing with different aspects of the same feminist issues. The first wave refers to the movement of the 19th through early 20th centuries, which dealt mainly with suffrage, working conditions and educational rights for women and girls. The second wave (1960s-1980s) dealt with the inequality of laws, as well as cultural inequalities and the role of women in society. The third wave of feminism (late 1980s-early 2000s (decade)), is seen as both a continuation of the second wave and a response to the perceived failures.



Feminism is a perspective that explores the connectedness of concepts that other theorists simply do not discuss or even contemplate.



# ***The 3 movements***

➤ ***First wave movement*** : The incidents that are included in the history of feminism first movements starts from 1809 married women property law in US till 1928 the right to vote was granted to all UK women equally with men in 1928. There are exactly 69 incidents defined within the first feminism wave movement.

## ***Most Important incidents***

Russia: In 1913 women observed their first International Women's Day on the last Sunday in February. Following discussions, International Women's Day was transferred to 8 March and this day has remained the global date for International Women's Day ever since.

England: In 1918 Marie Stopes, who believed in equality in marriage and the importance of women's sexual desire, published *Married Love*, a sex manual that, according to a survey of American academics in 1935, was one of the 25 most influential books of the previous 50 years.

Germany: in 1919 granted women the right to vote

England 1919- Nancy Astor became the first woman to take her seat in the House of Commons.

China: The first female students were accepted in Peking University, soon followed by universities all over China.

## ***Second wave movement***

The incidents included in the second wave of feminism movements are started from 1963 the report of the American Presidential Commission on the Status of Women which caused the enacting of equal pay act till 1980s feminist sex wars last incident the Japanese Equal Employment Opportunity Law of 1985, prohibits gender discrimination with respect to recruitment, hiring, promotion, training, and job assignment. There are 104 incidents included in the second wave of feminism movements.

### ***Most Important incidents***

1966 Twenty-eight women, among them Betty Friedan, founded the National Organization for Women (NOW).

1969 The American radical organization Redstockings organized.

1973 The American National Black Feminist Organization was formed

1977 the Canadian Human Rights Act was passed, prohibiting discrimination based on characteristics including sex and sexual orientation, and requiring "equal pay for work of equal value"

1980 The second wave began in the 1980s in Turkey and in Israel.

## ***Third wave movement***

The incidents that consists in the third wave of feminism starts from 1991 published of an article by Rebecca walker American feminist "Becoming the third wave" following establishment of riot girl movement in Washington and continuing till now , the latest famous incident were the slutwalk incident Toronto, on 3 April 2011 and globally the slutwalk issue is spreading. Slut walk was incident that Toronto police stated women are victims because they are walking and wearing like sluts that had created too many challenges and spreading on media over the world. There are exactly 31 incidents in the third wave of feminism movement

### **The most important**

1994: The Gender Equity in Education Act became law in the U.S. It banned sex-role stereotyping and gender discrimination in the classroom

1994: The Violence Against Women Act became law in the U.S

1995: The Fourth World Conference on Women was held in China

2007: The Gender Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2006 came into effect in the United Kingdom

2008: Norway requires all companies to have at least forty percent women on their boards

# Feminism ideologies

- **Liberal feminism** seeks individualistic equality of men and women through political and legal reform without altering the structure of society.
- **Radical feminism** considers the male-controlled capitalist hierarchy as the defining feature of women's oppression and the total uprooting and reconstruction of society as necessary.
- **Conservative feminism** is conservative relative to the society in which it resides.
- **Libertarian feminism** conceives of people as self-owners and therefore as entitled to freedom from coercive interference.
- **Separatist feminism** does not support heterosexual relationships.
- **Lesbian feminism** is thus closely related. Other feminists criticize separatist feminism as sexist.
- **Ecofeminists** see men's control of land as responsible for the oppression of women and destruction of the natural environment; ecofeminism has been criticized for focusing too much on a mystical connection between women and nature.
- **Materialist feminisms** grew out of western Marxist thought and have inspired a number of different movements, all of which are involved in a critique of capitalism and are focused on ideology's relationship to women.
- **Marxist feminism** argues that capitalism is the root cause of women's oppression, and that discrimination against women in domestic life and employment is an effect of capitalist ideologies.

- **Socialist** feminism distinguishes itself from Marxist feminism by arguing that women's liberation can only be achieved by working to end both the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression.
- **Anarchic**-feminists believe that class struggle and anarchy against the state require struggling against patriarchy, which comes from involuntary hierarchy.
- **Black and Postcolonial** feminisms pose a challenge "to some of the organizing premises of Western feminist thought." During much of its history, feminist movements and theoretical developments were led predominantly by middle-class white women from Western Europe and North America.
- **Womanism** emerged after early feminist movements were largely white and middle-class.
- **Postcolonial** feminists argue that colonial oppression and Western feminism marginalized postcolonial women but did not turn them passive or voiceless.
- **Third-world** feminism is closely related to postcolonial feminism. These ideas also correspond with ideas in African feminism,
- **motherism, Stiwanism,** femalism, transnational feminism, and Africana womanism
- **Lipstick** feminism is a cultural feminist movement that attempts to respond to the backlash of second-wave radical feminism of the 1960s and 1970s by reclaiming symbols of "feminine" identity such as make-up, suggestive clothing and having a sexual allure as valid and empowering personal choices

# Main Discourses of Feminism

## **Sex industry**

Opinions on the sex industry are diverse. Feminists are generally either critical of it seeing it as exploitative, a result of patriarchal social structures and reinforcing sexual and cultural attitudes that are complicit in rape and sexual harassment or supportive of at least parts of it arguing that some forms of it can be a medium of feminist expression and a means of women taking control of their sexuality.

## **Pornography**

The "Feminist Sex Wars" is a term for the acrimonious debates within the feminist movement in the late 1970s through the 1980s around the issues of feminism, sexuality, sexual representation, pornography, sadomasochism, the role of transwomen in the lesbian community, and other sexual issues. The debate pitted anti-pornography feminism against sex-positive feminism, and parts of the feminist movement were deeply divided by these debates.

## ***Prostitution and trafficking***

Feminists' views on prostitution vary, but many of these perspectives can be loosely arranged into an overarching standpoint that is generally either critical or supportive of prostitution and sex work. Anti-prostitution feminists are strongly opposed to prostitution, as they see the practice as a form of violence against and exploitation of women, and a sign of male dominance over women.

## **Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is a social system in which the role of the male as the primary authority figure is central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women, children, and property. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege, and is dependent on female subordination. Most forms of feminism characterize patriarchy as an unjust social system that is oppressive to women. As the feminist and political theorist Carole Pateman writes: "The patriarchal construction of the difference between masculinity and femininity is the political difference between freedom and subjection."

**Sexism-** the idea and doctrine that believe women are made just for sex

# Globalization of the feminism

Immediately after the war a new global dimension was added by the formation of the United Nations. In 1946 the UN established a Commission on the Status of Women. Originally as the Section on the Status of Women, Human Rights Division, Department of Social Affairs, and now part of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In 1948 the UN issued its Universal Declaration of Human Rights which protects "the equal rights of men and women", and addressed both the equality and equity issues. Since 1975 the UN has held a series of world conferences on women's issues, starting with the World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico City, heralding the United Nations Decade for Women (1975–1985).

Feminism has shown, and continues to show, that poverty is very much a feminist issue. Whilst the inequality exists in wages and on the work floor, women will find it a greater struggle to reach out of poverty. Whilst they are kept in poverty, they remain powerless, and men continue to oppress them.

Maintaining a high profile of gender inequality and its wider implications remains the core principle of Feminist movements. New campaign and protest groups continue to grow from Feminist principles.

# Reactions to feminism

Different groups of people have responded to feminism, and both men and women have been among its supporters and critics. Among American university students, for both men and women, support for feminist ideas is more common than self-identification as a feminist. The US media tends to portray feminism negatively and feminists "are less often associated with day-to-day work/leisure activities of regular women.

## Pro-feminism

Pro-feminism is the support of feminism without implying that the supporter is a member of the feminist movement. The term is most often used in reference to men who are actively supportive of feminism. The activities of pro-feminist men's groups include anti-violence work with boys and young men in schools, offering sexual harassment workshops in workplaces, running community education campaigns, and counseling male perpetrators of violence. Pro-feminist men also are involved in men's health, activism against pornography including anti-pornography legislation, men's studies, and the development of gender equity curricula in schools. This work is sometimes in collaboration with feminists and women's services, such as domestic violence and rape crisis centers.

## **Anti-feminism**

Anti-feminism is opposition to feminism in some or all of its forms. In the nineteenth century, anti-feminism was mainly focused on opposition to women's suffrage. Later, opponents of women's entry into institutions of higher learning argued that education was too great a physical burden on women. Other anti-feminists opposed women's entry into the labor force, or their right to join unions, to sit on juries, or to obtain birth control and control of their sexuality.

**Herstory** is history written from a feminist perspective, emphasizing the role of women, or told from a woman's point of view. It is a neologism coined in the late 1960s as part of a feminist critique of conventional historiography, and refers to history (reinterpreted as "his story") written from a feminist perspective, emphasizing the role of women, or told from a woman's point of view. The word history—from the Ancient Greek, or *istoria*, meaning "a learning or knowing by inquiry"—is etymologically unrelated to the possessive pronoun *his*.

The herstory movement has spawned women-centered presses, such as Virago Press in 1973, which publishes fiction and non-fiction by noted women authors like Janet Frame and Sarah Dunant.

# Women global status

- Majority of 1.5 billion people in the world living on \$1.00/day or less are women.
- In most countries, voting rights have only been awarded to women in the last 30 years
- 15% of the world's lawmakers are female (2003)
- Men In US - 71% of computer scientists; 74 % of doctors, 64% of college professors, 77% of architects, 90% of engineers : UN
- In Ethiopia, women and girls are viewed as the property of male family members who may exchange them as they wish.
- Handing over girls and women to rival partners to settle conflicts by establishing a blood tie still in Afghanistan, Pakistan ...
- The World Health Organization reports that 40-70% of women murdered in the US, Canada, Australia, and Israel were killed by their husbands or male partners

- Leading women's rights organization in Pakistan concludes that 80% of women or more experience domestic violence .
- Israeli women are not allowed to divorce their husbands if the husband refuses but husbands may be granted a divorce if the wife refuses.
- Honor Killing: a man is obliged to kill a female relative if does something believed to tarnish the honor of the family—unmarried women who have sex, marital infidelity or suspected infidelity, seeking a divorce, flirting, being raped, dating without parental approval all qualify.
- UN estimates about 5000 deaths from honor killings annually, Pakistan, about 2 killings daily.
- Rape is a threat to women everywhere: in the US, 74 women are raped every hour, 1 in 4 women in her lifetime. In India, a woman is raped every 35 minutes and 1 in 10 reported to police
- WWII—Moroccan soldiers rape Italian women, Japanese soldiers raped Korean women, Nazi soldiers raped Jewish women
- 1990s: Bosnian Serbs raped between 20,000 and 50,000 Muslim women in the former Yugoslavia

- An estimated 250,000 to 500,000 women and girls were raped during a civil war in less than 100 days in Rwanda in 1994.
- In 2003, reports from Liberia, Zimbabwe, and Burma indicate that government soldiers used rape to terrorize and control groups that oppose the government.
- Effect of prostitution overlooked by governments in Thailand, Korea, and the Philippines who use prostitution to boost their economies and militaries
- Sexual tourism: Thailand, Brazil, Hungary, tourism based on the travel of men from first world countries to third world countries to buy cheap sex from “Exotic” women.
- In the United States, a woman is raped every three seconds, a woman is abused every 18 seconds, and four women are killed by their boyfriends or husbands every day.
- One in six American women* are victims of sexual assault, and one in 33 men.
- Two thirds of all illiterates are women.
- Women and children comprise eighty percent of all poverty population.

The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says, "It's a girl."

*Shirley Chisholm*



# Conclusions

- Gender differences in socialization within the family and elsewhere traditionally operated to the disadvantage of female who were dissuaded from opting for meaningful careers
- The traditional allocation of roles within the family whereby females take disproportionate responsibility for housework and childcare is determined not by biology but by limited female employment opportunities outside the family and by the existence of patriarchal power within the family.
- Many household tasks provide few opportunities for individual creativity.
- Even well qualified professional women will find their career prospects more limited once they take time out from work to care for young children.
- Even when women are employed full-time outside the home this may mean also that they are obliged to undertake the so-called "triple shift" of employment, housework/childcare and emotion work.
- Patriarchal power ensures that major family decisions are taken by males rather than females.

- The existence of "empty shell marriages", high rates of divorce and considerable levels of domestic violence show that family relationships are often far from harmonious.

- Limited educational opportunities and gender discrimination at work mean women's employment opportunities are worse than men's. Women tend to be horizontally segregated in a range of poorly paid occupation such as secretarial work, shop work, cleaning and hairdressing and caring professions such as teaching, nursing and social work which are not especially well paid. When they are employed in potentially well paid professions such as Law or Medicine they will tend to be vertically segregated at the lower levels of these professions. They are also unlikely to be employed in skilled manual occupations such as plumbing or engineering.

- They may also be victims of routine sexism in their daily lives and feel obliged to concern themselves excessively with their appearance.

- We might conclude that there is much truth in this but that gender inequalities are still substantial.

Feminism may be described as a body of thought which suggests that women have been and are disadvantaged in both past and contemporary societies. Feminists emphasize the extent to which societies are in several respects patriarchal: that is, societies are dominated by men who oppress and exploit women.

There are several varieties of Feminism but all stress the exploitation of women. They argue that it is vital to clarify the meanings of the concepts of sex and gender respectively; that powerful processes of gender socialization operate to the disadvantage of women; that female students have been disadvantaged in education (and to some extent still are, despite their recent relative improvement); and that women are exploited at work, in the family and in society generally where they may often face sexual harassment and/or male violence.