

FEMINISM

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**Abstract:**

The website dictionary states feminisms is a theory of the political economic and social equality of success. This word was coined in the year 1885 and said to be organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests. Roxanne Dunbar 1968 stated it has must which is to be assisted by women....as the bases of revolutionary social change. There are three terms which require clarity in relation to their differentiated meanings. The first term is femaleness, the second felinity and the third is feminism. The term female focuses on physical and biological differentiation between man and women, which provides genetic variations necessary for reproduction and hereditary purpose. The Basic principles of Feminism are it is a philosophy which shares the progressive thought since the enlighten of the principle equal work of all human beings. The unequal treatment of women was simply because of their sex. Therefore, it was based on the sexism. Sexism carries the same basic meaning for all the feminists. Femenity is always associated with weakness, helplessness dependence, passivity, docility, subservience. Femenity, womanhood is a concept which has its roots in patriarchy which is Historical and social system. According to deconstructionists all systems and concepts are arbitrary, tentative and open for deconstruction. Culture plays a vital role in our country. The status of women in any nation portrays the progress of the particular nation. Indian women from the Vedic period to present status of achieving economic independence were yet due to many social, religious, cultural and political demands, still bound by shackles of certain tradition and rituals which distort her image. The influence of women was marked in every page of Hindu History, right from the most remote period. Literary women scholars like Apalla, Godha, Ghisa, Rousha, Vishwarhara, and others were all known and acknowledged for their intellectual and literary abilities.

Keywords: social equality, revolutionary. Femenity, Culture, etc

We talk of revolution, political, economical and yet greatest revolution in the country is one that effects improvement in the status and living conditions of its women.

-Jawaharlal Nehru

Introduction:

The website dictionary states feminism is a theory of the political economic and social equality of success. This word was coined in the year 1885 and said to be organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests. Roxanne Dunbar 1968 stated it has must which is to be assisted by women...as the bases of revolutionary social change. According to the Oxford dictionary, the term feminism was first coined by French dramatist Alexander Dumas. The term combined the French word for women 'Femme' and 'Isme' which referred to a social moment or a political ideology Barbara Berg defines Feminism as a very broad moment embracing numerous phases of women's emancipation. Barbara Berg propounded that he gives freedom to decide her own destiny, freedom from sex-determined role freedom from society's oppressive restriction, freedom of expressions of thoughts completely so that she can convert it into action. For action to be followed she should be very conscious of the injustice of sufferings incurred to women and girl child.

The word feminist was invented by a socialist of France by name Charles Fourier in the 19th century. The term was used for asking franchise and was later extended to describe a particular strand in the women's moment that stressed the uniqueness and difference for women rather than seeking equality, even to the extent of claiming superiority of women over men. Judith Astellara observes this moment as

Feminism is a proposal for social transformation as well as a movement that strives to end the oppression of women...as a movement, feminism as a long history of rebellion, more or less organized but always having an expression, opposition to the social institution that made possible inferiority of the women.

There are three terms which require clarity in relation to their differentiated meanings. The first term is femaleness, the second felinity and the third is feminism. The term female focuses on physical and biological differentiation between man and women, which provides genetic variations necessary for reproduction and hereditary purpose. The term feminist refers to the social and cultural construction of women wherein they are shaped differently not only in terms of representation of body but also in relation to institutionalized role programs and conformity of certain cultural practices.

Feminism is an ideology which was evolved in the 18th century. The evolutionary changes of Feminine, Feminist, and Female as a registered protest or moved to the phase of 'self-discovery'. Thus, feminism is an ideology prepares a position which emphasizes the

equality of 'gender' and stresses the maximization of the potential of women and it is a preparation for 'personal transformation'. The personal transformations are sought to be achieved by confronting patriarchal structures pervasive in most societies. Beauvoir points it is not only patriarchal but also the institution of marriage which is a site of oppression wherein women were expected to submit physically and mentally to the male demands.

Feminist criticism is not a unique feature of a 20th-century phenomenon. It has antecedents going all the way back to ancient Greece. In the Middle Ages, Christine de Pisan had the courage to enter into debate with male critics. The Renaissance witnessed feminist Aphra Ben and Anne Bradstreet.

Freedom of mind was pioneered by Aphra Ben. This concept of freedom of mind was borrowed by Virginia Wolfe, Wolfe notes of her own circumstances that when she began to receive fixed income through inheritance. This initiated a temperament of her entire outlook towards men. In 'A Room of one's own' she raised a number of concerns that remained a central theme of feminist. The 'Room' of the 'books' title is skillfully used metaphor around which the entire text is woven. The most obvious claim of women must have money and room of her own if she was to write fiction.

19th Century witnessed female literary figures both Europe and America ranging from Jane Austen to Emily Dickson. The early 20th century encompassed the theories of female literary tradition theories of sexuality and sexual difference. Psychoanalysis and Marxism influenced the literary world to the maximum. Gender's role became the key concept of writing. The major accomplishment was the rejection of notions of objectivity and neutrality. Traditional attitudes toward women were under attack 'legal and educational battles were fought. David Boucher in his Feminist Challenge writes "women liberation is a label which has been used by the media." And Feminism includes any form of the opposition of social, personal, or economic discretion which women suffer because of their sex. The feminists of 1970, understood the deep structures of male power, or patriarchy, many of them believed antagonism between sexes was deeper than the division between races and classes Feminism as a radical protest against female condition began in America and became a strong point of debate for the entire world to follow is a concept. The female abolitionists exposed some of the men's deepest prejudices. Efforts were made to prevent women from speaking in public. The growing intellectual interest of questioning can be partially attributed to 'Simon De Beauvoir's "The Second Sex". The influence of this book was that feminists subsequently attacked as one which blamed women for their own oppression. But at least in America, it had changed the lifestyle. In 1969 the divorce reform act had removed many of the degrading and unequal restrictions on women and women seeking to free themselves from bad marriages. It is said that women should make little resistance and men should have both power and will. It is observed that , the Marriage bond can only be sacred when women are

brought up to be the companion of men rather than a mistress. Otherwise, women are reduced to being mere sexual objects because of their economic dependence.

The Basic principles of Feminism are it is a philosophy which shares the progressive thought since the enlighten of the principle equal work of all human beings. The unequal treatment of women was simply because of their sex. Therefore, it was based on the sexism. Sexism carries the same basic meaning for all the feminists. the goal of feminism according to Faye Powel "became to eliminate, sexist oppression, imposed by patriarchal society and discrimination against women on the job, in the home and in all areas of women's lives. Feminism declares women's issues as political issues and to be a feminist is to define those issues as political issues.

French Feminism was drawn from the revolutionary atmosphere of students and workers in France. Jacques Lacon and Jacques Derrida ideas were heavily improvised in the workers. The relational Feminism led to the paradoxical doctrine of equality in difference. The concept of womanly and manly nature of a sharply defined sexual division of labor or the roles in the family and society were depicted in the works.

Jasbir Jain says in critiquing the plight of women in society, we can aim at those women who are denied of Liberty in all aspects political, economical including freedom of action. Women should make little resistance men should have both power and will. Marriage bond can only be sacred when women are brought up to be the companion of men rather than a mistress. women are reduced to being mere sexual objects because of their economic dependence.

Rousseau's categorizes men and women by saying:

Women have most wit men have most genius

Women observe, men reason, women were made of feel, man to think.

Jayita Sen.Gupta in his novel 'Feministic Perspectives of Toni Morison, Michele Roberts, and Anita Desai describes. ' The patriarchal order has always imposed silence on women and it was referred to be the most desirable virtue. Women transgressing the patriarchal margins were outlaw women who were to be punished and abhorred for their claim of their subjectivity."

The transgressive .women is also referred to as devils or witches. The splitting of feminine identity is a patriarchal stereotype.

Tappan Biswal in his 'Human Rights and Environment' said "man is a most intelligent animal. He could change the course of rivers including Technology and animals added to it by enslaving women and this tool he used as the ideology of PATRIARCHY".

Feminity is always associated with weakness, helplessness dependence, passivity, docility, subservience. Feminity, womanhood is a concept which has its roots in patriarchy which is Historical and social system. According to deconstructionists all systems and concepts are arbitrary, tentative and open for deconstruction. Thus, feminity which is aimed at docility, modesty, chastity, sacrifice on the part of women, is also open for deconstruction. Feminist maintain that women are not mentally different since birth. The female child is biologically different. The patriarchal society conditions them to their will and wish.

The female thought has identified the relationship between patriarchy and gender as crucial to the subordinate position almost for more than 200years. Patriarchy precluded women from having a legal and or political identity. By defining patriarchy one can understand not only the explanation of patriarchy but also how society functions and how it controls women.

Patriarchy has been derived from Patriarch which denotes any of certain high ranking bishops in hierarchical churches. In that case, the word refers to the seat and domain. An Anthropologist would view it has relatively narrowly as a society in which men are recognized and dominant element of our society. Patriarchy has developed the 'the mindset' of man. The mindset is that they want women to be their objects. The real community would mean people living and working together with cooperativeness. Whereas the aim of patriarchy is the opposite, it gives subordinate identity to the opposite sex. When man discovered paternity, they acted to claim the power to monopolize women claim children as their offspring. Feminism agrees that patriarchy necessarily denotes oppression and suppression

Feminist View Of Patriarchy:

Liberal Feminists would desire to be free from the oppressive patriarchal gender roles. They state and stress women are placed in acceptable roles that are inculcated feminine deals.

Radical feminist looks at seeking the root cause of women oppression. The patriarchal theory maintains that the primary element of patriarchy is a relationship of dominance where one party is dominant and exploits 'the other' party for their own benefit. The other is women generally. The radical feminist theory of patriarchy provides the basis for more description rather analytical.

Marxist Feminism looks up to the question patriarchy in the workplace. They give too much importance to economic factors whereas patriarchy is a value system sustained through the interplay of a combination of social, political and economic factors.

Social feminist challenge the ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy. They believe in class, race, ethnically and religion divides women, they all experience the same expression of oppression simply being women. They believe in ending oppression is to put an end to class and gender.

Structure of Patriarchy:

Wally points out there are different forms. Basically; they are 'within private and public structures'. The private arena is being 'home' where women are controlled by men. In the public patriarchy, it excludes women from the public arena using structures to subordinate them. In its public manifestation patriarchy excludes women from the arena using structures to subordinate them. Patriarchy is primarily maintained by a process of conditioning. The inequality aspect becomes a role to play by the male. The women work at home is exploited with the aspect of patriarchal power. The domesticated women are exploited within the family again by the exercise patriarchal power. Direct pressure is applied through ritual, tradition, law, and the language, custom, etiquette, education, and division of labor determine what part women shall or shall not play and female everywhere is subsumed under male.

Existing sexuality is a symptom of a patriarchal society. Sexual violence is tolerated by women who are treated as sex objects. Prostitution which is the oldest profession became a symbol of male power.

Patriarchy as a Part of Culture:

Culture plays a vital role in our country. The status of women in any nation portrays the progress of the particular nation. Indian women from the Vedic period to present status of achieving economic independence were yet due to many social, religious, cultural and political demands, still bound by shackles of certain tradition and rituals which distort her image. Vedas have implanted the idea of women being loving, caring, and accepting roles without a whisper. The role of Indian women has ranged from deity to devadasi, from pure to vulgar, from Supreme Being to downtrodden. The ideology of Pathivratha which has been proclaimed through mythological references of Vedas. Epics like Sita, Savithri, and Damayanthi is a contagious system of oppression which exploits a girl in the patriarchal system to old women from her possession of womb to tomb.

Jayithi Sengupta observes the patriarchal order has always imposed 'silences' on women and it was referred to be the most desirable virtue. Women transgressing the patriarchal margins were outlaw women who to be punished and abhorred for their claim of their subjectivity.

Ram Ahuja observes women status in 'double roles' and of different schools. One school held women in pivotal possession and it is said in Mahabharata the male husband characters' should serve his wife and adore her. At the same time the second school which considers women to be weak minded, unworthy of being trusted. They were regarded as means of satisfying physical desires of men, to serve them, and to secure the progeny. From the early stages, women were regarded no better than chattels and slaves. The home was a place of production, women were made as sex objects, they are not allowed in participating in the

political system, and they should not enter stabs, even inheriting property, .women's rights were limited.

Mary Wollstone was the first women to give voice to the feminist mindset. She wrote three hundred pages appeal 'A Vindication of the rights of women', which is a classic of feministic thought. In her long essay at length, she argued that feminity was a construct and that were born equal but taught to be subordinated, weak and feather-headed. She also acknowledges that women are sexual beings ...but so are men. Men are required as much as women, to put duty over sexual pleasures. She proclaims women should think democratically, participate in the public world, and equalize men in work, in education and productive life outside the home.

The feminist movement pioneered by Wollstonecraft spread through Europe, to the U K, in the 1880s and to the U S A in 1910s. The feminist feelings were reawakened in 1960,s by Behaviour's "The Second Sex"and "Betty Friedan's "The Feminist Mystique". Betty Friedan 's book was an attempt to release the woman from the guilt of their needs not fitting the standards set for feminism fulfillment by the society so as to help them lead perfect lives as individuals.

Elaine Showalter traces the development of feminist criticism and gynocritics which is no longer a new longer a new term. The major concern of gynocritics is to restore and formulate a female tradition.Many feminists claim that violence against women is a result of a deeply enhanced patriarchal culture that encourages and rewards male domination.In a patriarchal culture, women are found at their most vulnerable and men at their worst. Violence is a force, which injures or abuses. Violence can take various forms like Psychological; sexual, economic and domestic etc.....

Feminists' theories acknowledge alcohol to be one of the important factors for aggressive behavior and it becomes a base for the creation of a belief that men can use violence to 'control'women. Gender is another element of patriarchy is an issue of debate in feminism or its discrimination. Gender is a creation of patriarchy. Gender has been defined by the patriarchal fathers as a 'social and cultural construct'while sex is a biological phenomenon; the attributes of masculine and feminine are constituted through gender paradigms which are to give sense identity. It is a base for suppression and oppression. A woman's experience of life as a number of gender-associated problems. Gender discrimination is based on norms of feminity and masculinity. Gender equity came to be viewed at only as a justice issue, but also as economically prudent strategy. Gender equity came to be viewed at as not only as justice issue but also economically prudent strategy. Despite the cultural variation, there is a consistent difference between women's and men's gender roles based on power.The power imbalance that defines gender relations influence women's access to act and control over resources, their visibility, and participation in social and political affairs and their ability to realize their fundamental dynamics at lower levels of analysis.

The growth of girl in India mainly depends upon her relation to the family as a duty. She is identified by the society for her physical appearance as she grows the status in the society is firmly established. Gender roles are enacted and learned within the context of complex family roles.

Jasbir Jain comments on gender as:

The relationship between men and women in one
Which are ordinary works across other binaries?
Inside/outside, old/young, rich/poor, physical/
Emotional, white/black, and less content with
Different kinds of belongings and companionship
And love within the category of desire is a
Dominant one and companionship understanding
And children also enter into this relationship. There
Are then the relationship between father, mother, and son
Which brings into play a whole lot of emotions-
known and unknown?

Socialization plays an important role in the development of human personality. The child's first human relationship is with immediate members of his family. He first learns from those who are immediately in charge of him, his mother, his nurse, or his father etc... Thus, the man regards his conduct by actions at first purely instinctive but increasingly conscious, perhaps purposive. It is evident that socialization plays an important role in the construction of gender and bridges the link between social values and paradigms of male domination. Gender is very instrumental in influencing the girl's and boy's psyche since it begins in early childhood.

The traditional concept of ardhanareshwara or the bisexual image of Siva Paravathi transcends the barrier of sexual selfhood in creation. In early Vedic age, the male-female divinity held sway and each God was closely linked with his '*Shakti*' or the female principle. The goddess is *shakti* and she vibrates energy. The god was energy and goddess was formed the through alone he could pour himself and find expression.

The Rig-Vedic period speaks of a life of freedom and strength lived by man and women as equal partners in great risk of home and nation building. Women were considered 'fit' to impart religious instruction to her children. Monogamy was the prevailing condition of the

married state. *Swayamvara* was practiced which is the free choice of husband by grown-up maiden was the accepted rule.

In childhood, women should be under her father's control; in youth under her husband's and when her husband is dead, under her sons, she should not have independent.....

(The Law of Manu5:148)

The restrictions of women's freedom are imposed in-laws of Manu (200B.C to200 A.D) which articulates the women's position in relation to her male relations. First by her father, then her husband and finally her son. Manu groups women with '*sudras*' where women are denied of education. Women as wives were not allowed to access to education and fine arts. So, in the later Vedic period women became inanimate objects who followed five paces behind their men..... They were asked to be gentle, patient and gracious.

The influence of women was marked in every page of Hindu History, right from the most remote period. Literary women scholars like Apalla, Godha, Ghisa, Rousha, Vishwarhara, and others were all known and acknowledged for their intellectual and literary abilities. The Mahabharata which was considered as Panchama Veda describes in detail several women's scholars like Shiva, Sandih, Sharvarnavathi, Sulma, Dharani, Naina and Vedavathi. A man could not undertake any 'religious duty' without his wife. Divorce was not permitted and there is evidence to show widows marriages prevailed. 'Sati' did not exist in Vedic age women has complete control over there 'Parnaiya' and no one has the right to take away 'Sridhana'

Marriage or domestic life became 'Compulsory'. According to "Hindu view of life", 'Man' has a duty towards ancestors, in his worldly life and his duty to the needs of the spirit, whereas a women's traditional task is too strictly to help a man to accomplish his duties. To a woman, her husband is 'her lord'. The women are gratifiers of man's wishes.

During the Atharvana period, people preferred the birth of a son and were highly welcomed. It was a strong belief that a son would save his father from the hell called '*Punnama Narakam*'. As stated by Manu the women's destiny is depended upon man. According to the scholars of Manusmrithi was the earliest which dealt with social philosophy, perpetuating a dependent role of women.

There may be several opposition theories but I feel it can be concluded that feminism does have a complex of ideas about women, specific to or emanating from feminists. *Jawaharlal Nehru was right when he said real empowerment of women in a country comes when there is an improvement in the status and living conditions of its women.*

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