

I'm a feminist & I'm proud of it Empower the Women, Develop the Nation

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Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the works of the feminism deal with understanding the reality of *Women Empowerment*. *This article begins with brief background discussion of feminist literary theory to introduce the concept of gender identity*. It makes society safer and more peaceful than the past. There's plenty of research that shows that mixed groups of people with reasonable gender-representation tend to be more harmonical and have less conflict than groups dominated by one gender. Things have changed. Feminism is now less despised because it's more obviously needed .they are also participating in politics and administration but in spite of this amelioration in the status of women, the evils of illiteracy, dowry, ignorance, and economic slavery would have to be fully removed in order to give them their rightful place in Indian society. We know it is a fact that women are intelligent, hard-working and efficient in work and Women's contributions in politics and social services have also been quite significant.

The meaning of Feminism is progress in gender equality .In other words way we can say it Feminism is both an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism in all forms. The origin of feminism could be traced to France when in 1837, Charles Fourier, a French philosopher coined the word in 1910.

Subject Field: *Feminism, Women Empowerment, Feminism gender discourse ,Feminism in literature, Current feminism condition and Literary criticism*

The term "woman movement appears in the late nineteenth century to describe all the public activities of women, whether directly related to feminist goals or not." The International Federation for Research in Women's History (IFRWH), established in 1987. Which proved to be very significant for the progress of the movement .The organized feminism did not really kick off until the first Women's Conference had in Seneca Falls, America, in 1848. To begin with, the Women's Movement evolved out of social reform groups such as the Abolition of Slavery, the Social Purity and Temperance movements (ref.1).

Founder of feminism

Wilhelmina Drucker (1847–1925) was a politician, a prolific writer and a peace activist, who fought for the voting right and right of equality through political and feminist organizations, she founded. In 1917–1919 her goal of women's suffrage was became popular. Feminist literature is based on the principles of feminism. In other words feminism is describe three main waves of conscious female activity have all had their roots in periods of organized agitation for social change --Abolitionism, Progressivism, "the Sixties" -- and each has been shaped by the movements which gave them birth(ref.2).

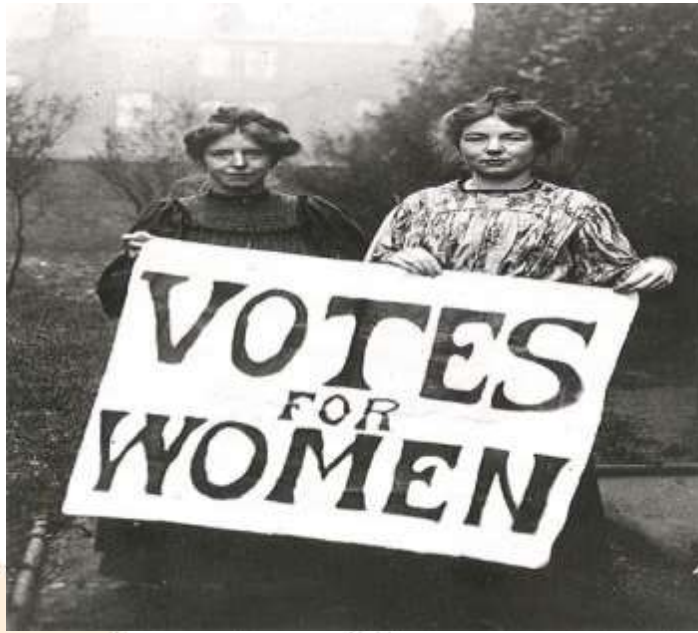
First wave feminism

First-wave feminism refers to an extended period of feminist activity during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the United Kingdom and the United States. Originally it focused on the promotion of equal contract and property rights for women and the marriage and ownership of married women by their husbands. At the end of the nineteenth century, activism focused primarily on gaining political power, particularly the right of women's suffrage, and focused on economic rights of the woman at this time. In 1854, Florence Nightingale established female nurses as adjuncts to the military. It specially focused on legal issues, primarily on gaining women's suffrage .In other words the first way we can say it first-wave feminism involved a wide range of women, some of them belonging to conservatism. Rereading Rachel Moran's article reminded me, sadly, that Betty Friedan was not standing up for the single woman. She insisted on crediting mostly only married women for the success of the first-wave feminism, and bemoaned the "strangely unquestioned

perversion of history that [held that] the passion and fire of the feminist movement came from man-hating, embittered, sex-starved spinsters" (Ref.3).

The first wave of feminism in the United States was characterized by diverse forms of intervention that have continued to inspire later feminist movements. But despite the activist talents of Alice Paul, the organizational skills of Carrie Chapman Catt (1859–1947), president of NAWSA, and the splendid oratory of Anna Howard Shaw (1847–1919), also a former president of NAWSA, however, it was a long struggle before women won the right to vote in 1920 (Campbell, 1989). The struggle went as far back as the Seneca Falls Convention in New York in 1848, during which more than 300 men and women assembled for the nation's first women's rights convention. The Seneca Falls Declaration was outlined by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), claiming the natural equity of women and outlining the political strategy of equal access and opportunity. This declaration gave rise to the suffrage movement (Ref.4).

The problems of underprivileged women became nothing more than just facts and figures on a paper. The feminist discourse became more nuanced and we moved on to talking about issues such as socialization, subtle messages of discrimination, rape culture, glass ceilings etc. So the focus of my feminism was more oriented towards the privileged, urban, educated women who were stuck in traditionalist roles while having modern mindsets. Education is most important part for improvement of woman's condition .



Second wave feminism

Second wave woman 's movement is associated with from bravery and commitment. Second-wave feminism refers to the period of activity in the early 1960s and lasting through the late 1980s. **The scholar Imelda Whelehan** suggests that the second wave was a continuation of the earlier phase of feminism involving the suffragettes in the UK and USA. Second-wave feminism has continued to exist since that time and coexists with what is termed third-wave feminism. The scholar Estelle Freedman compares first and second-wave feminism by saying that the first wave focused on rights such as suffrage, whereas the second wave was largely concerned with other issues of equality, such as ending discrimination.

In the second half of the century, organized campaigns for better education for women, for opportunities to work outside the home, and for reform of laws affecting married women gained strength. Marion Reid's *A Plea for Women* is critical of both men and women for limiting women's roles, education, and the right to vote. The importance of the work of William Thompson and John Stuart Mill is acknowledged, and their central arguments are outlined (Ref-5).

The feminist activist and author Carol Hanisch coined the slogan "**The Personal is Political**" which became synonymous with the second wave. Second-wave feminists saw women's cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked and encouraged women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and as reflecting sexist power structures. Women's movement at that time was relatively quiet. Most women were locked into traditional roles of wife, mother, nurse, teacher, secretary, and other "feminine" activities without the possibility of individual advancement or achievement. Then Betty Friedan, a New Jersey work-at-home journalist and mother, wrote *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and her words sparked many more women into realizing that they wanted the freedom to control their own destinies. Friedan wrote about her own life and the frustrations that many other women were feeling about patriarchal attitudes regarding their roles. She equated American women with the inmates of Nazi concentration camps and evoked strong emotions in men and women, both pro and con. The book became a best seller, and the battle for equality of the sexes was reignited(Ref-6).

Simone de Beauvoir and The Second Sex

The French author and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir wrote novels, monographs on philosophy, politics and social issues; essays; biographies; and an autobiography. She is now best known for her metaphysical novels, including *She Came to Stay* and *The Mandarins*, and for her treatise *The Second Sex*, a detailed analysis of women's oppression and a foundational tract of contemporary feminism written in 1949, its English translation was published in 1953. It sets out a feminist existentialism which prescribes a moral revolution. As an existentialist, she accepted Jean-Paul Sartre's precept existence precedes essence; hence "one is not born a woman, but becomes one." Her analysis focuses on the social construction of Woman as the other. Simone de Beauvoir identifies this as fundamental to women's oppression. She argues women have historically been considered deviant and abnormal and contends that even Mary Wollstonecraft considered men to be the ideal towards which women should aspire. De Beauvoir argues that for feminism to move forward, this attitude must be set aside.



Third wave

Third-wave feminism has its origins in the mid 1980s, with feminist leaders rooted in the second-wave like **Gloria Anzaldua, bell hooks, Chela Sandoval, Cherrie Moraga, Audre Lorde, Maxine Hong Kingston**, and other black feminists, who sought to negotiate prominent space within feminist thought for consideration of race-related subjectivities. Third-wave feminism began in the early 1990s, arising as a response to perceive failures of the second wave and also as a response to the backlash against initiatives and movements created by the second wave. Third-wave feminism seeks to challenge or avoid what it deems the second wave's essentialist definitions of femininity, which (according to them) over-emphasize the experiences of upper middle-class white women.

Early 20th-century feminism' surveys the achievements of women in Britain during this period, including legal and civil equality (1919, the Sex Discrimination (Removal) Act), and the vote. The effects of the First World War on women's expectations and aspirations are discussed. The successful role of women in local government is underlined, as is the importance of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC). The writing and attitudes towards feminism of Rebecca West and Virginia Woolf are examined. Margaret Sanger, Marie Stopes, and Annie Besant and their work in education about contraception, access to birth control, and the pursuit of workers' rights are outlined (Ref.7).

Third-wave feminism is also inspired by new generation of the new global world . A common American term for third-wave feminism is “**grrl feminism**” and in Europe it is known as “new feminism.” This “new” feminism is characterized by local, national, and transnational activism, in areas such as violence against

women, trafficking, body surgery, self-mutilation, and the overall “pornofication” of the media. While concerned with new threats to women’s rights in the wake of the new global world order, it criticizes earlier feminist waves for presenting universal answers or definitions of womanhood and for developing their particular interests into somewhat static identity politics. Third-wave feminism is tied up with the effects of globalization and the complex redistribution of power, which challenge feminist theory and politics. It also mirrors the diversification of women’s interests and perspectives and the breakdown of master stories of oppression and liberation. *For example, postcolonial, third-wave feminism is concerned with establishing a new critical global perspective and creating alliances between black, diasporic, and subaltern feminisms, whereas queer theory and politics create a platform for what has now split into the lesbian, gay, bi-, and transsexual and transgender movements* (Ref.8).



The current situation feminism in india

Today women want equality, education and recognition. Today many acts implemented for woman equality and woman rights ,now a days women have achieved honorable post in all the major fields ,as per the government data After independence, women of India turned to education in a relatively large number. For example in 1901, the literary level of the females in India was just 0.6%, it increased to 39.42% in 1991 and to 64.1 in 2001. Women have all the best birth control options and yet they are the only ones who can decide to say no to an unwanted pregnancy with abortion. Women can also stop their birth control and then force a man to pay for the resulting child. They can force a man to be a father, and then force him to support the resulting child

for 18 years or more, which also supports her. As women have better birth control options and the option to get an abortion, it's important that women cannot force men into parenthood. The feminist movements have also campaigned for the protection of the girl-child and women from sexual harassment, rape and violence within the home. **Further we will discuss some important feminist women and their contributions.**

Leila Seth –Leila Seth was the first woman judge on the Delhi High Court and the first woman to become the Chief Justice of a state High Court. Rupan Deol Bajaj - This feisty woman stood up against sexual harassment. Sampat Pal Devi is the founder of 'Gulabi Gang' dedicated to fighting for equal socio-economic, cultural and political rights for women. Margaret Atwood has always been an outspoken feminist and still encourages women to fight back against oppression that comes with tyrannical rule. She is famous for The Handmaid's Tale novel. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the most famous feminist writers of the 21st century specializing in intersectional feminism. Adichie's also called "voices from the feminist". **Malala Yousafzai fight for woman rights she won the nobel prize. Her famous book 'I Am Malala'**. Feminism in India in 2017 centered on four themes: First, conversations around women safety and universality of abuse; second, setbacks in terms of legislations and repressiveness of the state; third, around initiatives from individual brave women and women groups ranging from petitions to protests; and lastly, through global accolades with their unique symbolic value (Ref.9).

Now we will discuss few Indian feminist writers.....

Meena Kandasamy is a poet, fiction writer, activist and currently one of India's boldest and most badass young voices. She focused on Caste Annihilation Movement. Nayantara Sehgal is focus on political changes, and also she won the Sahitya Akademi award for "Rich Like Us", set between 1932 to the mid 1970's, a time of great political unrest in India. Kamala Das is famous Indian author, her poetry served as an inspiration to women. Jhumpa Lahiri gives a platform to a female voice that has been crushed by the burden of obligations to others. Arundhati Roy is one of India's most feminist author and human rights activist, Roy was awarded the Man Booker Prize for "The God Of Small Things". Kamla Bhasin is a well known developmental feminist activist, poet, author and social scientist. Mahasweta Devi is India's most prominent writer and social activist.

Kamala Markandaya is Focus heavily on the plight of women in rural India, Markandaya's first published novel, "Nectar In A Sieve". Savitribai Phule is describe as "one of the first-generation modern Indian feminists," Sarojini Naidu is the poetess who inspired a whole generation of *women* to participate in the Freedom Movement. Sarojini Naidu is known as sobriquet 'the nightingale of India' (Ref.10).

Works Cited

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Further reference books

1-[The Feminine Mystique](#)

[Betty Friedan](#)

2-[The Second Sex](#)

[Simone de Beauvoir](#)

3-[Sexual Politics](#)

[Kate Millett](#)

4-[The Vagina Monologues](#)

Eve Ensler

5-[The Female Eunuch](#)

[Germaine Greer](#)

6-[A Vindication of the Rights of Woman](#)

[Mary Wollstonecraft](#)

7-[The Color Purple](#)

[Alice Walker](#)

8-[Their Eyes Were Watching God](#)

[Zora Neale Hurston](#)



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