

## FEMINISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE STATUS OF TODAY'S WOMAN: AN OVER VIEW

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### **Abstract:**

*Women are strangers in the country of men. Gender inequality and the harmful effects of patriarchy are sustaining the wide spread oppression of women across the world. After feminist movement, how much have women's lives really changed? In the West women still come up against the 'Glass ceiling' at work, most earning considerably less than their male counterparts. Feminism provides a personal, philosophic and political means for analysing the realities of women's lives as lived in patriarchal systems. It is not a single line of thought; multiple approaches have been developed that provide diverse avenues for confronting systematic injustices while learning to value ourselves as women. Woman created world that lies beyond patriarchal ideas and institutions. This paper illustrates the very true concept of Feminism and its impact on the status of today's woman in a larger extent.*

**Key words:** *Feminism, Anti-feminism, Misandry, Feminist criticism, Glass ceiling, status of woman in modern world.*

### **Feminism**

The advocacy of women's right on the ground of the equality of the sexes. In other words, Feminism is a range of political movement, ideologies, and social movement that share common goal: to define, establish, and achieve political, economic, personal and social equality irrespective of gender. This includes seeking to establish educational and professional opportunities for women that are equal to those of men. William Golding, the British Novelist, Playwright and Poet opined, that "I think women are foolish to pretend they are equal to men. They are far superior and always have been." If we analyse the quoted lines, it's visible that it's very true.

### **Opposing Sides-Feminism and Anti-Feminism**

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there have been many drastic changes with regards to the political, vocational, and everyday lives of women. The overwhelming response to these changes formed two opposing forces known as Feminist and Anti-Feminist. Feminist supports the belief that women are equal to men in every fact of life. On the other side anti-feminist believe that a woman's responsibility is to be a home maker and to take care of their children and families above other obligation.

### **Feminism And The Feminist Movement**

There is no denying that Feminism had been a rising topic of conversation in the past years, yet it is difficult to find a conversation about it without heavy controversy. Although more than half of the world opines that they believe in the equality for all women, but, literally that's not true.

### **Feminism-Misunderstood by people**

However, radical feminism is not to be confused with misandry, which is the belief that women are superior to men, which in turn contradict what feminism is all about. Literary, misandry is the dislike, contempt or prejudice against men. Radical Feminism- **Radical feminism** is a perspective within feminism that calls for a radical reordering of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts.

First-wave feminism was a period of feminist activity and thought that occurred during the 19th

and early 20th century throughout the Western world. It focused on legal issues, primarily on gaining the right to. Some first-wave feminists pursued the argument of women's innate moral superiority, thus embracing what might be called "difference first-wave feminism." The women's movement of the 1960s and '70s, the so-called "second wave" of feminism, represented a seemingly abrupt break with the tranquil suburban life pictured in American popular culture. Yet the roots of the new rebellion were buried in the frustrations of college-educated mothers whose discontent impelled their daughters in a new direction. In simple terms, third wave feminism is the act of feminism that began in the 1990s and has lived up until current day. Because there are many different portrayals, outlets, angles, and beliefs of feminism today, it is easy to lose the true concepts of what third wave feminism stands for. If first-wave feminists were inspired by the abolition movement, their great-granddaughters were swept into feminism by the civil rights movement, the attendant discussion of principles such as equality and justice, and the revolutionary ferment caused by protests against the Vietnam War. Radical feminism aimed to reshape society and restructure its institutions, which they saw as inherently patriarchal. Providing the core theory for modern feminism, radicals argued that women's subservient role in society was too closely woven into the social fabric to be unravelled without a revolutionary revamping of society itself. They strove to supplant hierarchical and traditional power relationships they saw as reflecting a male bias, and they sought to develop non-hierarchical and antiauthoritarian approaches to politics.

By the end of the 20th century, European and American feminists had begun to interact with the nascent feminist movements of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. As this happened, women in developed countries, especially intellectuals, were horrified to discover that women in some countries were required to wear veils in public or to endure forced marriage, female infanticide, widow burning. Many Western feminists soon perceived themselves as saviors of Third World women, little realizing that their perceptions of and solutions to social problems were often at odds with the real lives and concerns of women in these regions.

The conflicts between women in developed and developing nations played out most vividly at international conferences. After the 1980 World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, in Copenhagen, women from less-developed nations complained that the veil and FGC had been chosen as conference priorities without consulting the women most concerned. It seemed that their counterparts in the West were not listening to them. During the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, in Cairo, women from the Third World protested outside because they believed the agenda had been hijacked by Europeans and Americans. The protesters had expected to talk about ways that underdevelopment was holding women back. Instead, conference organizers chose to focus on contraception and abortion. "[Third World women] noted that they could not very well worry about other matters when their children were dying from thirst, hunger or war.

### **Feminist literary criticism**

It is informed by feminist theory, or more broadly, by the politics of feminism. It uses the principles and ideology of feminism to critique the language of literature. This school of thought seeks to analyse and describe the ways in which literature portrays the narrative of male domination by exploring the economic, social, political, and psychological forces embedded within literature.<sup>[1]</sup> This way of thinking and criticizing works can be said to have changed the way literary texts are viewed and studied, as well as changing and expanding the canon of what is commonly taught. It is used a lot in Greek myths.

Traditionally, feminist literary criticism has sought to examine old texts within literary canon through a new lens. Specific goals of feminist criticism include both the development and discovery female tradition of writing, and rediscovering of old texts, while also interpreting symbolism of women's writing so that it will not be lost or ignored by the male point of view and resisting sexism inherent in the majority of mainstream literature. These goals, along with the intent to analyze women writers and their writings from a female perspective, and increase awareness of the sexual politics of language and style<sup>[3]</sup>

were developed by Lisa Tuttle in the 1980s, and have since been adopted by a majority of feminist critics.

The history of feminist literary criticism is extensive, from classic works of nineteenth-century women authors such as George Eliot and Margaret Fuller to cutting-edge theoretical work in women's studies and gender studies by "third-wave" authors. Before the 1970s in the first and second waves of feminism feminist literary criticism was concerned with women's authorship and the representation of women's condition within literature; in particular the depiction of fictional female characters. In addition, feminist literary criticism is concerned with the exclusion of women from the literary canon, with theorists such as Lois Tyson suggesting that this is because the views of women authors are often not considered to be universal ones.

Additionally, feminist criticism has been closely associated with the birth and growth of queer studies. Modern feminist literary theory seeks to understand both the literary portrayals and representation of both women and people in the queer community, expanding the role of a variety of identities and analysis within feminist literary criticism.

### **Glass ceiling**

Glass ceiling is an unacknowledged barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women and members of minorities. The Oxford English Dictionary notes that the first use of the term was in 1984, in *Adweek*: "Women have reached a certain point-I call it the glass ceiling. They're in the top of middle management and they're stopping and getting stuck. Woman can help themselves to overcome the career hurdles. Today's woman is very much aware of the emergence of new barriers to their progress. Everywhere there is a hue and cry for women right."

### **Impact of Feminism**

Today, a strong woman is a reflection of strong acceptance of feminism. She is aware of her rights. She is everything that we want to see in the person. Often there are many preconceived notions about women who are strong. They are seen as someone materialistic, snob, bossy or worse they are seen as less emotional and money minded. Literally, she is a woman who is strong, independent, and confident and capable enough to take all the challenges.

Today's woman is both confident and comfortable. She is spontaneous and takes leads when planning things. She is self-aware and self-sufficient. She supports and encourages. She is smart enough to balance everything in life. She is ambitious and hard working. She knows the fine line between her personal and professional life. She doesn't believe that she is always right, but she does believe she has a right to her opinions. She wears her heart on her sleeves. She is honest and proud of who she is. She recognizes herself as an asset. She believes in a positive world.

Modern woman, being independent in these days, believes in equality and doesn't shy away from taking control. Equality doesn't come from monetarily stable, but also from the fact that she is a part of decision making and there is constructive communication in the relationship. She is a profound lover of her culture. Today's woman is progressive in thinking, but still, has a deep-rooted respect for her culture.

She has a voice. If women are not given a voice, how can we ever expect to fight the war of equality? Modern woman knows how to stand up and speak for herself and for society. Stepping out of her comfort zone, today's woman is brave to experiment with their looks. Women are always been perceived as the weaker of the two sexes. They are always seen as more inclined towards house hold works, but today she stands tall and proved her capabilities in different fields with a nice and systematic manner. She's taking up job roles that are challenging and unconventional. She prefers to live her life in her own terms. Marriage or no-marriage, kids or no-kids, it's totally her choice. Marriage and motherhood are no more milestones for her to achieve. And there have been women who are thriving in life without being held back by the idea of marriage or motherhood. Also, there are women who chose to be single mothers, proving that women don't need a man to be completed. Today, she is ready to challenge conventions and circumstances. However, there are fields such as politics, education, entertainment world, media, banking, defense, art,

culture and even space in which women often becoming prominent.

Today, she proves herself as an Alfa Woman. She is not associated with the colour 'Pink' but she is experimental. She is bold, fierce, unstoppable, which makes her more beautiful. Above all, she is a systematic, challenging and risk taking woman, who handles her duties and responsibilities in a nice manner. Through her strong will power and endeavour, she turns every dream into reality. Today, she is the woman, who possesses the title “Beauty with Brain”. Literally, she has re-shaped the world by making it a “satyam- sibham-and sundaram one”.

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