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## Rise of the Women's Movement

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18229052>

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### ARTICLE DETAILS

**Research Paper**

**Accepted:** 21-12-2025

**Published:** 10-01-2026

#### Keywords:

*Gender, Feminism, Civil Rights, Movement, Patriarchy, Emancipation, Freedom, Equality, Justice, Humanity, Discrimination, Radical, Revolution, World, Islamic, Purdah, Socialist.,*

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### ABSTRACT

Women's movement refers to the movement that men and women's groups launched to free women from social evils. This movement aimed to bring equality between men and women. The women's movement is also called the women's liberation movement. The women's movement believes in activism or action that wants women to get their rightful status in society. The women's movement struggles to end the oppression of women, which the social institution does. It is like a pressure group, which tells the state that the women have more to interfere in the political and economic affairs of the country. The ultimate of the women's movement is to create an environment through which women can get respect and protection in the private and public sectors. Women's movements, as the struggle in support of social justice, contained it has taken many forms. Fundamentally struggle intended for equality, they have wanted reforms inside the system and, from time to time, they have expected next to alter the system itself, socio-cultural, economic and political. At different periods within different regions of the world, women's movements have been intertwined among the democratic struggles intended for civil rights.

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### Introduction

Before understanding the feminist movement, knowing how a woman is perceived can be helpful. Some say that a woman is just a womb, or some say that despite having an accessory like the Uterus in her body, women have not been confined to any limited context. No one can deny the reality of today's



women's situation in every sphere, like social and cultural. The separate existence of women in the human race is an acknowledged fact. Women are half of humanity; it is a different matter that today, womanhood is in danger. Aristotle has defined women as "a woman becomes a woman only because of the shortcomings of certain qualities. "She is a creature created from the extra bone of Adam. Still, Simone De Beauvoir has criticised this idea and said that, like other human beings, women are also autonomous beings. Still, this organism lives in a world that bunts her ability to transcend and keep her in an eternal state forever.

The development of the women's struggle in the Western country is frequently described as wave of changes, making peaks in the movement. Securing women's right to vote was the main objective of the first wave of feminism that emerged in the west in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The 1960s saw the emergence of the second wave of feminism amid heightened awareness for marginalised groups and against the backdrop anti-war and civil rights movements. The movement's fundamental objective was to empower minority groups more influence over sexuality and reproductive rights. In the early 1990s, the neo-post-colonial and neo-liberal world system gave rise to the third wave of feminism. The third wave of feminism deconstructed the idea of "universal womanhood" through the focus affecting from communal objectives to individual rights.

Women's movement in South Asian Nations has formed distinct identities while challenging various Eurocentric assumptions in Euro-American feminism. South Asian feminism arose as a result of colonialism, and unlike Western feminism, it closely associated gender with race and colonial subjugation. The other discrepancy stems from the prevalence of adversity and poverty in many South Asian countries, as well as women's recognition that women's subjection is primarily the result of little resources.

### **Concept of Feminism**

Feminism is a sociological concept that indicates the social movements arising from the support of equal women's rights for men in every sphere of life. This is an idea that emphasizes the empowerment of women in the intellectual and practical from accepting equality between men and women. It rejects gender discrimination which is the reason for the inferior status of women. This ideology originated from a patriarchal society. Feminism is mainly interpreted in two ways. At first, feminism as a political ideology is a social movement made by women for equality in society and raised voices against exploitation. Second, feminism in the broadest sense is a pool of different but interrelated concepts that are used in the study, analysis and deliberation of the social reality of gender and the origins and effect of



gender equality, the beginning of the history of the feminist movement in France. The French revolution created the first wave of feminism and inspired women to participate in the revolution.

The feminist movement was born to awaken creativity. It is a movement that has arisen against inequalities and exploitations and oppressions, which has been happening for thousands of years with half of the human race (female). Women are subjected to exploitation and oppression at every level, only because they are woman, she has some special needs due to this gender, which has always been ignored. This dissatisfaction wants a change in society. This half of mankind, scattered in society, has now taken the form of a group and today feminists are raising their voices organized on their issues. Feminism is mainly a concept that seeks to change the social, political, and economic status of women. Feminism was born in the search for the identity of women. Although it was born in England from the thinking of Mary Wollstonecraft, but it got empowered by the second wave of women's movement in the 1960s when feminist thinkers gave the ideas of revolutionary change. Ray Strachey says "feminism is nothing but a demand for equal human rights, feminism demand freedom, equality and freedom of justice for the women who have been suffering the slavery of men for centuries."

Feminism originated as a philosophy and movement in the enlightenment period when mankind showed awareness of its rights, and women were always involved in this. Some feminist thinkers like Lady Montague and Marquis de Condorcet campaigned for women's education during this period. The primary scientific society for women was founded in Middleburg in 1785. Mary Wollstonecraft can be called the first emancipation father of the women's movement. In 1792, in her book, she first demanded women's rights. Through this book, she called upon to develop human qualities in women by forgetting gender discrimination. Wollstonecraft challenged men on four points:

1. She refused to accept that women were inferior to men in intelligence or that viscosity, fragility and superficiality were her natural qualities.
2. Men and women are equal in intelligence, so education should also be parted to them equally. Women are not just objects of enjoyment by men, but independent human being who is capable and entitled to intellectual education.
3. Since the equal mentality of men and women is based on the sharing of the right of god given intelligence, the natural qualities of both sexes must also be the same.
4. The fourth point called for equal rights on the basis of equal quality, which later became a cornerstone of the ideology of political liberalism.



Unlike Karl Marx, Frederick Engels attempted to approach the issues of women's subjugation in a more methodical way in his book, *The Family, Private Property and the Origin of the State*, according to Engels, a historical understanding of the issue of women's slavery is necessary. He claimed that in early societies, men controlled the tools outside the home while women controlled the means of production inside the home. More surpluses started to appear in this industry as additional tools and methods of production outside the home become available. Women liberation was not achievable until they gave up household responsibilities' and found employment outside the home because output outside the home has historically been necessary. Men become more powerful economically than women during the appropriation process.

The 1949 publication of Simone De Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex*, offered feminist discourses an entirely new view point. She opposed the prevailing perspectives on women's status, including biological, psychological and historical materialism, on the ground that roles are redefined but women's status is presumed to be fixed. Simone De Beauvoir's asks why women did not protest against their position of subordination.

### **Liberal, Socialist and Radical Feminism**

Although, Kate Millett's book *Sexual Politics*, serves as the foundation for the current form of feminist discourse and later psychological, socialist, radical and post structuralism theories represent a synthesis of ideologies, the movement against women's inequality has a long history. This history includes the pro-feminist thinking of Plato, J.S. Mill, John Locke, Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels. In 1792, In keeping with liberal democratic principles, Mary Wollstonecraft promoted women's equality by inspiring them to see their own potential and generate fresh concepts. The conflict between democratic ideals of freedom and equality and the oppression of women was highlighted by the liberal feminist approach. Evaluating the institution of marriage in light of equality and justice was the aim of liberal feminism. The principles supported women's demands for public involvement, gender equality, equal opportunity, and legal rights.

In 1884 Engels attempted to understand the status of women through the origin of family, property and state. Socialist feminism has been opposed to the capitalist system. However, socialist feminist women contain attempted to understand and replace capitalist patriarchy. Socialist feminist believes that capitalism and patriarchy support each other, even though the patriarchy in the form of male supremacy is pre-existing before capitalism, the operation of capitalism proves to be helpful and that capitalism does



not exist in patriarchy predates capitalism, but it is instrumental in the operation of capitalism and it is not only supported but reinforced by capitalism.

Radical feminism challenges patriarchal values. It condemns any aspects of women's culture that render them inferior, such as laziness, self-sacrifice, and so on. Radical feminism was essential in bringing to light the reality that sexuality and gender have become issues not just in private, but also in public life. This slogan analyzes the link between gender inequality inherent in the structure both inside and outside the home. It asserts that by increasing the scope of the state, women's lives can be reverted to new kinds of male supremacy or gender inequality.

### **Definition of Patriarchy**

An important phase of the women's movement and the feminist dialogue that has emerged from it around the world has been the look for tools and theories for study by which to understand gender inequity in general and the subjugation of women in particular. Almost the first task of feminist discourses was to identify the complex structure of subjugation and to give it an appropriate name. Thus, feminist experts began to use and define the term patriarchy in the mid-eighties of the twentieth century. In a patriarchal society, women are exposed to different forms of patriarchy every moment. Now whether it is a matter of discrimination on various grounds or unreasonable reduction in freedom and a drastic reduction in facilities. The conception of private property has in the way of historical development brought women to a lower position. With the birth of the children being attributed to the sperms of the man more than the mother, the natural rights of the women over the family and clan ended this the authority of men. That began with 'patriarchy', through which a particular group of institutions is now recognized, is defined in the social structure and action in which men had right over women. According to Gerda Lerner, "patriarchy is the expression and institutionalization of male domination over women and children in the family an extension of the social domination of men over women in general." In addition to the control of women's fertility and sexuality under patriarchy, its subordination under men also gives men the ability to control their productivity or labour force. When men and women regard the state of subordination of women as natural and as a result the state of subordination ceases to appear, only then the roots of patriarchy are deeply ingrained and it becomes established as a reality and ideology.

### **Women's Movement as a Sex/Gender Differentiation**

Sex is a gift of nature while gender is a product of human society. Being born as a girl or boy is natural and gender based while identifying a boy or girl as a nature gender originated from the concept. And the



women's movements revolt the same society where valour is considered a masculine quality and crying, shame, decency are considered feminine qualities. Gender upbringing of a girl is done under the gender ideology, doing all the household work, eating less food, not playing with boys outside the house, treading or staying in the curtain is the same thing taught to the girl from childhood. The gender concept has become deeply entrenched even in the upper classes, where words like sportsmanship, lion hearted, chairman, history, sons have become common, while feminist seeks change. When not a sportsman, why not a sportswoman? Why chairperson instead of chairwomen? Today feminist movement is demanding that her story be used in place of history and not her or her instead of him.

The term sex refers to an organic meaning between men and women, while gender is associated with intertwined cultural meanings. The division of labor is likewise based on gender, which has nothing to do with nature. Women perform household chores, and men's jurisdiction extends to the public space beyond the home. Public and private came about as a result. Ruth Biller, Evelyn Fox, Carroll Gilligan, Dorothy Dinette, and Alison Jigger were among the feminist intellectuals. These thinkers believed that gender-based labor, the division of labor based on gender, and, more fundamentally, the issue of sexuality and reproduction should all be viewed outside the context of "biological structure," which is natural and thus thought to be irreversible. In the Feminist agenda these issues are to establish the scope of politics which indicates that it can be changed and should be changed.

### **Thoughts on Women's Emancipation and Subordination in Western Political Thought**

The idea of women's liberation and subjugation in western political thought has been of great importance to western political thinkers because of the events that have created human history. Even if the facts of various thinkers were not implemented automatically, important political and social changes have been inspired by the thinking of these philosophers. The women's movement globally has also been influenced by this idea somewhere. Firstly, the great Greek thinker Plato contemplated women and gave the idea of women in his book *Republic*. Plato introduced the education system as well as a communist system of life to maintain the state on the establishment of justice. In view of the fact that Greek life was male-dominated, the role of women was traditional and consistent, so Plato could easily confine women to the home. There seem to be two reasons for not doing it. First in Greece, in the rise of a dynasty, women had the same share as men, so, Plato politics was also a proponent of not giving equal work to women, but also because of the political and mental turmoil of Greece at that time, women who lived solitarily in homes started being influenced by the ideas of female equality. Out of tradition, he talks about the communism of women. Plato was the first to advocate for including women in politics. Equal



opportunity, parental involvement, and additional sexual notions akin to the most recent radical feminism challenge are all important considerations. However, Plato wrote for enormous state necessities rather than for the preference, needs and aspirations of women.

Aristotle was a critic of women's communalism, but he was also a critic of women's freedom. He described the woman as unproductive. The Male is active while the female is deactive. Aristotle repeated Sophocle's statement that humble silence is a woman's ornament. According to Aristotle, the right place for women would be a house because it has the inherent quality of caring as the wife, mother and home. The man earns and he consumes. Machiavelli saw fate as a woman. They said that luck is like a woman and if you want to have it then immediately take possession of it. Knowledge is an important place in politics, which is capable for man. Whereas the female is a weak creature, which the powerful male must occupy. Thomas Hobbes favoured human equality, he believed, that since women are as capable as men, so they did not need protection, but still believes that the father formed the group. Though on the sovereign succession of the state he chooses the man. Hobbes views of this are a reflection of his male tendency toward politics. Which continue till today?

John Locke did not see a natural basis for patriarchy, but he did believe that women are less than men. According to Locke, the curse led to the first women, who served as the inspiration for both nature and tradition perhaps Locke intended for "the bread to be eaten and retained". However, the idea of the women's secondary status is provided by the first family rather than political society allowing marriage to be accepted on a natural basis. According to Locke, women have the right to divorce their husbands and keep the property they have earned independently.

According to John Stuart Mill, women's status should improve by giving them franchises, education and jobs, thus he took a different position by applying liberal views on this question. The betterment of women was a concern for the entire humanity. In his book, *Subjection of Women* Mill supported equality for women in three important areas and this was in franchise, education and jobs. Mills believed that freedom and equal opportunity is the most valuable rights for women if she gets this and that she does not get a chance to demonstrate their abilities by society. This was the beginning in which for the first time, inequality was introduced as a political problem and at the same, and there was an attempt to find its source and solution in intellectual ways. According to Mill, the rule of men, over women is the result of the emphasis of full force, when we keep three things together first, the natural attraction to the opposite sex, second the complete dependence of the wife on the husband, every right and happiness of her husband is considered as a charity, it's a matter of surprise that if the attraction centre of the man



does not become the centre of feminine education and character building, then the outcome of his wish and his desire can be fulfilled through only social work. Mill believed that women were as virtuous as men and disagreed with the idea that it is natural for a woman to be a mother. These women should decide whether to marry and run a family or to live a job profession. As for Mill, marriage does not give equal rights to women and the law does not even give her the right to children and right to property. A mother cannot become a legitimate guardian of her child unless written in the legacy of the deceased. Mill replaced the traditional role of women in the patriarchal family. They contribute more to the family by holding and rearing children. If she goes out, the work will be damaged. In the book, *Subjection of Women*, Mill confronts his idea of 1832 that in the absence of servants, women should do all their work. If the women have full protection and an equal place in the family, then they will not feel the need to work outside. She chooses her future only when she gets married, to look after the children and the home.

### **Women's Movement in the Western World**

The writing of historiography around the world has been completely male-centred. This is the reason why human history, despite having an equal sharing in the history of man, is negligible in the text of history. No matter how many women fought valiantly for their lives and many men have run away after showing their backs. But still, the women continued to fight for their rights. Women's movement in the western world is often divided into three waves which are as follows.

The first wave is considered to be the beginning of this wave in Britain from Mary Wollstonecraft book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Later the thinking of J.S.Mill, Fredrick Engels also joined it. The famous success of this movement was to give women the right to vote. Women's suffrage was promoted in Britain by the Suffragettes and, perhaps more successfully, the Suffragists. Women over thirty who owned homes were granted the right to vote in 1918 when the Representation of the People Act 1918 was approved. All women over twenty-one were included in this in 1928. With the ratification of the 1919 United States Constitution's 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote in every state, American feminism is said to have ended. While in France they had to wait until 1944.

A new wave of feminist consciousness and activism arose in the 1950s and 1960s, leading to the second phase of the women's movement. In the 1960s, rebellious movements in the United States, Europe, and almost all the world roused to prominence. In Brittan, France, Italy and Germany, the student movement, neo-left and the working-class movement were particularly influential. Such progress was made in the economic, social, and educational fields which were unprecedented in human history. The demand for female labour also increased as a result of the industrial revolution the scope of vocational and



educational options for women increased as well as discrimination in every field. This increased awareness among women about gender-based injustice and also increased organization to fight against it. Birth control pills made a significant contribution to the foundation of the women's movement. Although women gained a lot by participating in these struggles, on the other hand, the increasing realization of their secondary role in these movements made the political consciousness of women sharper. Generally, male agitators did not support the demand to give more importance to the issue of female agitators and many times openly ignored and ridiculed their concerns. Such negative experiences encouraged women to envision a separate autonomous movement solely driven by women and devoted solely to their liberation struggle, and on issues such as male supremacy, sexism, and patriarchy and women expression to be considered deeply.

The media played a decisive role in garnering support for women's issues and their perspective to reach the masses. In 1968, 200 feminists opposed the Miss America contest; in France in 1972 about 300 French women published a public statement in a regional newspaper in which they wrote 'I had an abortion.' Celebrities such as Simone De Beauvoir were also involved in this latter. State and government departments also had to advocate for many issues. In the 1970s, countries like Britain and Italy started campaigning for pay for domestic work, so that society knows that domestic work is not worthless. The characterisation of the women's movement can be done on the strength of the broad issues raised by it, which include women's paid and unpaid work, equal rights in employment and education, sexual harassment and domestic violence, right to birth control, and abortion etc. were the well-known campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s. As personal as the movement, it is political and many of these slogans became famous and popular. The women's movement developed a new language against the prevailing beliefs of politics.

### **Issues of Women's Rights in Socialist Countries**

With the third International Conference held in Moscow in March 1919, the organised movement of women in socialist countries started. It was only after the success of the Russian Revolution of 1917 that the government issued certain decrees related to legal marriages, and registers for children and families. The Family Code Act was enacted in Russia in 1918. Till 1970, 53% of the workers and farmers in the whole of the country were women. Many in the Soviet Union accepted the production and resurgence and women as part of the state ideology, provision was made which would remove the obstacle of women, to support women, public centers were opened for the care of mothers and children, full salaries in maternity leave were arranged.



The condition of women in China was the victim of exploitation, they had neither property, no land right and they were completely subordinate to men. The May 4<sup>th</sup> movement was the first movement for women's liberation in China. This called for early emancipation of women through education and economic self-reliance. The first regional movement of 1931-1934 passed laws on women's equality.

Judith Stacey said that throughout the period of the Chinese revolution, policies and programmes of the communist party changes paths as needed between the wars of class and gender. In the 1940s, women were introduced in the labour force due to the lack of male labour force. A bill was introduced in the 1930s that abolished polygamy, child marriages, female childbearing, and infanticide, allowed men and women divorce, remarriage, succession and property rights were granted. During the great leap forward, many eateries were opened in rural communes, giving freedom from cooking, and washing, the party's main organisation for women formed as a pan-China democratic institution.

### **Various Manifestations of the Women in Islamic Countries**

The status and role of women does not differ from society, both of which are determined by the history of political, social and economic development of the people in the society. Muslim women's struggles have also played an important role in Islam at the Asian Continental level. Islam has considered being the worthy of respect through *Shariah* Laws in the social structure and the rights given to women are also clearly mentioned in it, but under the guise of these laws, the fundamentalist forces of Islam have made Muslim women by imposing all kinds of restrictions and they were put under house arrest in a way. *Purdah* system, triple Talaq and recognition of polygamy are such laws which do not fit anywhere in the present social structure but still persist. The voices of women against them are ignored. Often this protest is buried at home and it is all in the name of honour and respect. In some Islamic countries, women raised their voice for their freedom by throwing the burqa as a symbol of their captivity and isolation. As a voice against the feudal system, many well-known women came in front of the people without burqa. Rani Suraiya of Afghanistan and Rani of Iran came out of the screen in the 1920s and 1936 respectively.

The national movement against Zionism for Palestinian women provided the context in which the struggle for women's emancipation began to take root. Palestinian women dressed in heavy cloaks and locked in cars, which first came out in 1921 to protest against Zionism against orthodoxy and religious norms. Eight years later in 1929, the first Palestinian Arab Women Conference was attended by two hundred delegates. In the opinion of Matiel Mogannam, attending the conference was simply a great



audacity in terms of traditional restrictions. Until then, traditionally Arab women in Palestine were barred from participating in any movement that brought them into the public eye.

The women's movement intensified its activism during the time when Magazines novels, articles, and journals were published to discuss women's subjugation. For example, Egyptian women read with great interest the slogan of fundamental and legal reform in Turkey. The earliest magazines were the Egyptian Magazine *Alfatah* (1892), the Turkish Weekly *Newspaper for Ladies* (1895), Iranian women's magazine *Knowledge* (1906). In 1899, in the book *Women Liberation* by Qasim Ameen of Egypt (the father of the Arab women's movement) Amin criticised the evils ongoing in the society from a feminist perspective such as polygamy, the purdah system, and women's society.

## Conclusion

The women's movement's main objective is to establish conditions that will allow women to be treated with respect and safety in the public and private spheres. Women's movements have existed in various forms as a campaign for social justice. Fundamentally the struggles were for equality; supporters wanted systematic changes and occasionally hoped to alter the socio-cultural, economic and political system. Women's movements have been entangled with the democratic fight for civil rights at different times and in diverse parts of the world. In the modern day, they are seen as the main component in the battle for human rights. As a result, there have been variations in the direction taken by the women's movement. Consequently, the issues and strategies used have been diverse at different times and in other places.

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