

CHAPTER -2

THEORISING WOMEN

This twenty-first century is an era of globalization where we not only reduce the geographical distance between countries and societies but also rewrite the success story of human civilization. But here the question comes, ‘Does this story has a single writer?’ All ‘Others’ are the parameters who only represent that success. When we think about development, naturally ‘Women’ comes to our mind not as a prime source of development but as a tool through which we can map the development itself. It shows real status of women. Aristotle, a great philosopher, father of political science said, ‘The female is as female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities and we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness’. St Thomas considered the femininity as the *‘somniferous virtue Of the poppy’* and Women as ‘imperfect man’ and ‘incidental being’. If we analyze the above statement then we found that Women are not an independent variable rather than dependent variable. She always needs an external support (Men’s support) to explain herself and the time and space where she lives. Is it true to say that she is not a woman but an ‘imperfect man’ or she has ‘natural defectiveness’ due lack of some qualities? What are those qualities which do not permit a woman to claim herself as an independent being? Can women think individually? Does she have any independent intellectual resource which provides a self-explanation to her problems?

In this chapter, I have focused on three dimensions of feminism. The First Section of this chapter deals with the historical evolution of feminist movement in a global scenario. The second section exclusively focuses on the emergence of 'Women-Right' Movement in India. The last section of this chapter is an interdisciplinary analysis on the feminism.

2.1. Feminist Movement: A Global View

Feminism comes from the French word '*femme*', etymologically defines women is a socio-political movement, having its roots in the slogan of liberty, equality, and fraternity of French revolution was formally begun in 19th -20th century. It was coined by utopian socialist Charles Fourier. Jane Rendell used the term 'feminism' 'to describe women who claimed for themselves the right to define their own place in society, a few men who sympathized with them'¹. Though Plato and Aristotle have views on women but it was not self-explainable rather than relational to the then societies but for the first time in this period women consciousness was awakened. On the 5th October of 1789 Women marched towards Versailles was the first conscious political event where they had started to question on the issues regarding freedom in general. It had developed due to the [in]effective impact of the 15th renaissance. Christian de Pisan was the first writer of the 15th century who wrote against the clerics in her *Epitre au Dieu d' Amour*. In this book, she argued that both man and woman have equal intelligence. Marie de Gourney wrote a famous book i.e. *Querelle des femmes* which talked about the debate regarding contemporary criticism about women². She also wrote *Egalite des homes et des femmes* (The equality of man and woman) in 1622. During this period some women like Catherine de Medici, Elizabeth, Isabella, Mm e de Rambouillet and Joan of Arc also reached the place which was previously dominated by men. In theater, the actress started

to pursue their own independent career. At the end of 18th century, the middle class of the society became powerful due to the industrial revolution. Gradually women started to work in different sectors like a man. The deficit of labour makes women independent. By the mid-nineteenth century ladies in Europe, North America and The white – pilgrim provinces of Canada, New Zealand and Australia started to compose together without precedent for social orders and gatherings whose sole reason for existing was to accomplish changes and change in the social, political and financial existences of ladies. Mary Astell wrote *Reflections on Marriages* in this period. After this period *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789)* came which disappointed women and acted as a spark for that big movement. French enlightenment thinker Jean Jacques Rousseau in his book ‘Emile’ had argued different curriculum should be taught on the basis of gender. Boy’s education promoted the natural instincts which made them independent and girls’ study always emphasized their domestic role which had secluded them³. Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *A vindication of the rights of women* to answer the above negligence of women-right by the French revolutionaries and thinkers. Wollstonecraft always demanded the equal right for women, especially in education and employment. Olympe De Gouges had given a *Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Female Citizen*, focusing on the freedom of women. Hannah More wrote a pamphlet viz. *Structures on the Modern System of Female Education in 1799*. She also argued for the same thing. During that period one law was vehemently criticized by feminist thinkers, i.e. ‘*The Napoleonic Code 1804*’⁴. This code provided total legal dominance to the husband on property and children. Some scholar considered these events under the ‘proto-feminism’ period. Feminism has three level or wave of the movement known as

the first wave, second wave and third wave. The first wave had begun in the late 19th century. In Britain feminist activism was influenced by Owenite Socialism. Marion Reid has written *A plea for women* in 1843 where she discussed the difficulties which were faced by women during their education. She has a different view on domesticity. She did not totally reject domestic work as mainstream radical feminist generally. She considered it is unique and noble work which she can bitterly perform by women but she was against the confinement of women into domestic work only. William Thompson published his *Appeal of One Half of the Human Race, Women, against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Restrain them in Political and thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery* in 1825. It was the protest of woman' against the humiliation of one half of the adult portion of the human race. Mill in his book '*The Subjection of Women*' discussed the women position critically. He considered that the subordination of women was both wrong and chief obstacles for the human development. In 1838, Chartism, a local working-class movement were supported by many women organizations. Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized a convention in Seneca Fall in 1848 which played an important role to shape the future feminist movement. The main aim of this convention was to raise an issue regarding the right to vote. The case of Caroline Norton was very important. Norton was an elite woman, humiliated by her husband, raised her voice for her children became a national issue and compel the government to change Infant Custody Act. Florence Nightingale has a different view on women empowerment .according to her unemployment in women occurred due to women are less interested to do work. Later she changed her view and interested in nursing. Harriet Martineau who was a severe critic to Wollstonecraft wrote books on political economy but restricted herself to

criticize. During that period feminist movement was not only Protestant but also constructive in nature. Many philanthropic works had been done by women and their organizations. But the suffrage was the heart of every movement which directly dealt with the rights of women. The movement for suffrage was evolved in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and different Scandinavian countries .Women's Christian Temperance Union(WCTU) encouraged suffrage question in New Zealand , later it joined hand with the Womanhood Suffrage League ,formed by Rosa Scott in 1891.The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was come with the integration of two organization i.e. The National Woman Suffrage Association and American Woman Suffrage Association. National Women's Party (NWP) created a strike in USA outside the White House. They were carrying banners and writings regarding the undemocratic practices done by the government over ladies in America. They needed to point out to the globe that they were living in terribly dangerous things additionally to persuade leaders of the planet that there was no dreams and happiness within the land of dreams. On the opposite hand, Germany and few other countries already created a step within the freedom of lady. They granted ladies Suffrage, freedom and social rights. In that amount, lady establishments and organizations altogether over the planet started to speak regarding lady rights to vote and specific her thought etc. Among them; the National Women's Party in USA, that thought of as extralegal party since it absolutely was speaking regarding Strange, off-the-wall and peculiar things in step with USA government.

This is why many ladies were inactive even they were white and educated. NWP impressed by radical troublemaker feminist Alice Paul(1885–1977) who needed to

introduce militant techniques to that by doing parades, marches, picketing chiefly the White House further as watch fires to burn President Wilson's speeches (Campbell, 1989). Alice Paul's techniques were resistance however additionally clever and they were a thorn within the facet of Woodrow Wilson who abundant most popular the less radical plans of the National American women's right to vote Association (NAWSA). The first wave of feminism was ready to influence and encourage different feminist movements altogether over the planet and allowed ladies to vote. In the early stages. The first wave of feminism in the USA was interlinking with different reform movements to create lady be ready to involve in operating categories altogether the fields not only politics or choice. This method of feminism additionally supported by Black ladies abolitionists like Maria Stewart (1803–1879) and Frances E. W. musician (1825–1911). They joined this activity for all Negro or as they were line of work her coloured lady. When women's rights activists step by step completed that their efforts were worthless, they began to act otherwise, by creating it a universal contentious issue. In a certain method, those Feminists needed to present proves regarding the importance of women's voting. This activity of finding out equality touched every kind of ladies (educated, uneducated, rich, poor...). And additionally to it, they spoke regarding coloured man rights. During the warfare, I and warfare II lady wasn't permissible to do something while not the management of man particularly publicly places. This domination of man over ladies chiefly existed altogether the fields with no exception. Those activities made individuals decide lady and gave her a conventional image. She was no quite a housekeeper, a mother and a wife additionally to it, the lady was additionally needed to be modest and humble. She was even ignoring her biological weaknesses just like the smaller brain and

a additional fragile physique, that she was alleged to shield so as to confirm her generative talents. Those forms of segregations created women's rights activists argue that girls ought to in real time gain the proper to vote not just for her except for man also. Moreover, if she got her rights like choice and dealing she would be in a position to perform their roles as mothers and housewives even higher. Women activists therein amount were attempting by all the means that to create individuals feel and bit the suffering of lady therefore, they were manufacturing when a replacement idea like "equal-opportunities feminism" or "equity feminism", and is characterized by the lack of distinction and differentiation between sex and gender. Additionally, to it, biological variations were the most vital and basic ideas associated with social gender roles wherever as some anti-feminism failed to settle for those ideas as valid reasons for discrimination. In this wave, writer Virginia Wolf wrote a notable book regarding ladies rights "*A Room for One's Own*" (1929) during which she helped Wollstonecraft et al to make a new road for lady to vary her life. This idea of giving lady a replacement image and place began to unfold altogether over the world; it affected to the USSR, Russia and Germany. In Britain, National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) came under the headship of Millicent Fawcett. It emphasized on the notion of capability in the selection of Suffrage. Different countries across the world formed many organizations for the same cause. Anita Augspurg and Lida Heymann established The German Union for Women Suffrage in 1902. The International Women Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) formed in Berlin in 1904. It also started its journal *Jus Suffragii*. Many newspapers like *Foreword* openly supported this cause. New Zealand was the first country who gave women to the

voting right. The first wave of feminism consisted largely of White, middle-class, well-educated women (Campbell, 1989) and always gave importance to the equal treatment.



(Women were picketing in front of white house The First Wave, source- History of feminism)

Second Wave Feminism was started with a local protest by the women of Atlantic City against a beauty contest. Gradually it spread one corner to another corner of the world. During this period a voluminous detailed study was written by famous existentialist political theorist Simone De Beauvoir i.e. *Le Deuxieme Sexe* (The Second Sex) in 1949. It was an inspirational logical text which compelled the then feminist activist and thinker to think differently. Beauvoir argued that women is always considered as ‘the other’ and have no relational identity which always defined in terms of men’s attitude. A woman for her is a constructed identity, imposed by the society. Beauvoir always criticized the feminist who advocated the promotion of feminist qualities because she believed that it encourages dichotomy which believes the distinctive dominance on basis of physical

features. Norway enforced equal pay system in 1958 and also a new model of taxation which reduced patriarchy in production. On the one hand, Royal Commission was formed in Canada and on the other hand, reforms occurred in marriage act in France in 1965. Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique* was come in this decade. It contained the hesitation of middle-class suburban white housewives. She argued that paid employment was a tool which reduced housewives' life. Her central argument revolves around the role of the woman within the family. She also established National Organisation of Women (NOW) in 1966. It organized a protest march of 10000 people in 1978 to reform in the constitution. Now it has more than five lakh members in it. In Britain also movement was started for the equal pay . Germaine Greer wrote *The Female Eunuch* (1970) which challenged the orthodox idea of 'natural dependence'. Rowbotham's *Liberation and New Politics* and Mitchell's *Women's Estate* were the informative books, discussed about the emergence and importance of Pan-feminist movements and its impact on the patriarchy. Jill Johnston started another movement i.e. Lesbian Feminism or Lesbianism. The supporters of this movement were primarily lesbian and declared themselves as the core of the feminist movement because they believed that their very existence was a threaten to patriarchy. Another variation to the feminist movement occurred when Susie Orbach's argument came in 1981. She argued that Fat or obesity is a Feminist issue. It was supported by another writer Naomi Wolf in her book *The Beauty Myth* (1960). Brownmiller's detailed study on rape *Against Our Will* was enlightened new notion to see women problem. It revolutionized the belief system 'force is virtue'. It was against the rape culture. She considered rape was a conscious move of male community by female community. During this period UN gave more importance to women and their problems.

UN declared 1975 as International Women's Year. Second Wave Feminism revealed the secrecy of family and the oppression occurred inside families. It considered family as the basic institution or the very fundamental source from which was started and later spread across the world. It is the family who provides scope to other institutions like workplace, society to suppress the women both socially and psychologically. The more interesting thing was that this institution was ignored by the government or the state at large in the name of privacy or more particularly liberal individualism. But this is not the full truth. It considered that family was a basic unit individualism rather than the individual as the basic unit of individualism. So this movement involved govt. to think politically about women who live in the family. Women issues are not personal family issues rather than it is a political issue of the state itself which should be addressed. Therefore the slogan '*personal is political*' was popularized during these movement. It encouraged the belongingness which promotes 'universal sisterhood'. In this movement, Radical feminist also came with its all vigour. Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* and Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* was published in 1970⁵. These severely criticized the liberal reformist notion of feminism.



(PACE protest The Second Wave, Source- www.theodysseyonline.com)

The third wave feminism has emerged with a statement of Rebecca Walker, 'I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the Third Wave'. It has a different viewpoint which criticizes the second wave. It did not believe in common identity what the second wave feminist believed. It believed in the 'intersectionality' and 'layers of oppression'. According to the women have different experience in different societies. So the universalization on women identity is a flaw to the movement itself. So demand and mode of protest are varied according to the other factors. Third wave feminism was highly influenced by print and electronic Media and news. Because it did the *glocalization* (Robertson, 1997) of the feminist movement. Indian feminist Uma Narayana stated, 'Third world feminism is not a mindless micking of Western Agenda in one clear and simple sense . Indian Feminist is clearly a response to the issues related to Indian Women'⁶Some scholar consider this period as the backlog of the whole feminist movement.It criticized the 'essentialist' stand of second-wave feminism. It also opposed the universal experience of women which was dominated by the experience of upper middle class white women. This wave emphasized on post-structuralist methodology.



(Thousands of demonstrators gathered for the March for Women's Lives, sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW), in Washington DC, on April 5, 1992. The Third Wave, Doug Mills/AP Source- www.vox.com)

Some new age feminists argued that there is a new wave occurred that is Fourth Wave of Feminism. This wave is generated in the virtual world by using of Social media like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube etc. But there is a less scholarly acknowledgement of this Wave.



(Online awareness for The Fourth Wave, Source- Wikipedia)

2.2. Feminist Movement: An Indian Scenario

The feminist movement in India is older than the popular Eurocentric feminism. In India, this process was initially started along with the process of modernization where intellectuals are not only claimed about women's right but also encouraged women to build their capabilities. Raja rammohan Roy is the pioneer of women's right in a late

eighteenth century. He promoted widow remarriage and abolished Sati Pratha. The first Bengali woman who wrote autobiography is Rassundari Devi. Her autobiography '*Amar jiban*' (1876)⁷ is considered as first feminist literature based on women life. Though many scholars from Bengal has started this but it was spread across India because women are suffered all over the country for same issues. This indirectly affects the development of the country. James Mill described women position as an indicator to the development of a society country. "Among rude people, the women are generally degraded; among civilized they are exalted" (*History of British India*, 1826). He had an emphatic view towards Indian women, influenced by Halhed's *Code of Gentoo* (a translation of Manusmriti). He said, "nothing can exceed the habitual contempt which the Hindus entertain for their women...They are held, accordingly, in extreme degradation"⁸ Another scholar of that time Revd.E.Storrow also criticised women position of India. In his book *Our Indian Sisters* he argued that Indian disunity was due to women's position in her society⁹. Not only British scholars but also Indians criticised the then position of Indian Women. ParthaChatterjee, an eminent post colonialist said, 'Indians pursued science, technology, rational economics and western political forms while regarding the home as the source of "true identity" that needed protection and strengthening, not transformation'¹⁰. But there are also scholars like Swami Dayananda, Iswar CahndraVidaysagar who considered that there is an awakening of 'golden past' i.e. the Vedic period where is women respected. Spiritualist like Kesab Chandra Sen and Swami Vivekananda promoted women education and condemned polygyny and dowry system. Huzurmaharaj's *PremPatra* also talked about women emancipation. R. VR Naidu opposed *devadasis* system. Mahadev Govinda Ranade also worked for the betterment of

the women. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar also worked for widow remarriage. According to him it is permissible in Kali Yuga. Virasalingam, a classical Telegu scholar opened a girl's school. Justice Ranade an eminent jurist for Bombay who worked for women in organizations like Widow Marriage Association and Prathana Samaja. But Historian like Sumit Sarkar has a different view on the above and the other male reformers of 19th century. For him they wanted 'limited and controlled' emancipation of their women¹¹.

But this passivity encouraged a notion of 'new women' in the late 19th century¹². Sarala Devi Chaudhurani of Tagore family is a brilliant example of this kind. Having knowledge in three language viz. French, Persian, Sanskrit along with music, Sarala Devi established herself in the elite intelligentsia. She wrote regularly in her mother Swarnaprabha Devi's Journal which exclusively dealt with Women. There were many organizations who established with a motto to encourage the 'new women' for education in a traditional society. In 1819, Calcutta Juvenile Society was founded with the help of Radha Kant Deb. First boarding school for girls in South India was opened by The Church Missionary in Tirunelveli in 1821. Another major school for girls is Hindu Balika Vidyalaya which is opened in 1849. British Govt. also had an active role in the promotion of women education. Lord Dalhousie said that 'no single change was likely to produce more important and beneficial consequences than female education'¹³. Charles Wood, President of Board of Control issued an education dispatch in 1854 which emphasized on Female education. In 1854, 626 girls' schools were existed with total 21,755 students.¹⁴ Brahma Samaj is one of the pioneer organizations who popularized women education in West Bengal. Kesab Chandra Sen delivered lectures for the importance of women education in spiritual development. They organized a meeting

exclusively dealt with women and their development in 1865. In this meeting women learnt spiritual knowledge along with sewing lessons. Later women education became a cause of the split in BrahmoSamaja. Keshav established a Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya for adult girls. Later it merged with Bethune College where Kadambinin Basu and Chandramukhi Basu received BA degree and became first Women graduates in British Empire. Theosophical Society under the leadership Annie Besant. She was deeply influenced by Madame Blavatsky. Besant wanted that Indian girls should not to be an westernized madam rather than their ideal should be Goddess Durga. Araya Samaj an important hindu reformist organization has established Aryakanya pathasala for education. Famous reformer Mahatma Jyotirao Phule also established girls' school. This personal and public effort has developed a scholarship among women who directly challenged male dominance on the knowledge system. Among the female scholars of 19th and 20th century in India SabitriBaiphule ,PanditRamabai, Mataji Maharani Tapaswini, Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossina, SisterSubhalaxmietc came into lime light in Indian Academia.

Savitri Bai Phule, Wife of Jotiba Phule is a crusader of women emancipation. She was born in 1831 and married Jotiba in 1840 at the age of 9. Though initially she was illiterate but gradually her interest was developed due to her aunt-in-law Saguna who was a maid in British officials and had a little knowledge in English . Savitri and Saguna both started a girls' school in Maharawada in 1847. Later another school was started in Pune in 1st Jan, 1948 by her where she was nominated as headmistress. Some scholars consider it as the country's first girl's school. It was not so easy for a woman of the mid-19th century to run a school for girls. Almost every day she was harassed from within her

community as well as outside of her community. But her determination gave her distinct position in the society. She was honoured as best teacher due to her contribution in the field of education. She was actively participated in the Till-Gul programme, organized by MahilaSevaMandal on 14th January 1852. Not only teaching but also in literary creation Savitri has left her footprints. Her poem ‘*KavyaPhule*’ and ‘*Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar*’ were initially published in 1854 then in 1934 and 1982¹⁵. In her poem ‘*Agyana*’ she encouraged people to fight against illiteracy. She considered Education is the only tool through which social evil can be removed. In her poem ‘*Go, Get Education*’

“Be self-reliant, be industrious
Work, gather wisdom and riches,
All gets lost without knowledge
We become animal without wisdom,
Sit idle no more, go, get education
End misery of the oppressed and forsaken,
You’ve got a golden chance to learn
So learn and break the chains of caste.
Throw away the Brahman’s scriptures fast.”¹⁶

In her collection ‘*Kavya Phule*’, she wrote poem ‘*Golden Chance*’ where she asked the fundamental questions about the very difference between human and animal. She considered Education and schools are the golden chance for the big social change where everyone should participate.

“To attain self-reliance let us pledge
And accumulate a wealth of knowledge
Without learning, life is an animal existence, waste
Don’t rest, get an education, make haste
She put up the question “should they be called animals?”
No knowledge, no learning
No affinity for either
A brain that lies fallow
Should they be called humans?”¹⁷

Savitri Bai Phule’s dedication for the reformation of Indian society was act as a beacon for the future generation to work for the women development.

Another feminist Scholar of that time was Pandit Rambai. She was born in an orthodox Brahmin family. Her father Ram Dongre is a famous Vedic Scholar with an independent will. He taught Sanskrit to his wife and daughter against the will of her community which shows his egalitarian vision. After the death of her parents Ramabai and her brother Srinivas roamed across the country and delivered lecture on the sacred Hindu texts. By seeing her depth in the Hindu Scriptures University of Calcutta honoured her as ‘*Pandit*’ along with highest educational title ‘*Saraswati*’¹⁸. She married to a low caste Shudra boy Bipin Bihari Das Medhavi. It was an inter-caste and inter-region marriage which is an iconoclastic step of that time. At that time she came in touch with Arya Mahila Samaj and worked for the betterment of the women. During that time she presented evidence before Hunter Commission and demanded for the urgent need of Lady Doctors and teachers. After her husband’s and other family members’ death, she accepted baptism and visited abroad with her small daughter Monorama. She wrote books like *Stri Dharma*

Neeti and High Caste Hindu Women to fulfill her financial requirement. Pandit Ramabai established a widow school viz. Sarada Shadan. She also established *Mukti* School at Kedgaon. During famine she took helpless women and children to her organisation and served them. Ramabai considered caste as greatest evil of hindu religion which destroyed the sanctity of Indian Society. Ramabai developed a model curriculum which combined the morality and along with the modern Scientific knowledge. Ramabai faced criticism for the promotion of Christianity but still, her effort for the poor widows and their children are really commendable.

Contrary to the Ramabai's missionary sponsored school, Mahakali Pathshala developed an indigenous way of learning. This school was established by Her Holiness Mataji Maharani Tapaswini in Calcutta in 1893. According to Minna .S.Cowan that was a 'genuine Indian attempt' to teach girl child¹⁹. The founder of the institution though accepted the Western School model but was against of co-education and mono-syllabus. She wanted to revive ancient Hindu glory by preparing girls with nationalistic feelings. The pre-monastic name of Mataji Maharani Tapaswani is Ganganbai. She came to Calcutta to promote such kind of female education which not modern spirit but in style. This method was popularized among middle class Hindu family those who believed that female education demoralized and denationalized the women of this country. She taught girls the sacred literature of Hinduism in Sanskrit and the duties of Women in the family as a wife, daughter and sister. daughter-in-law, mother etc. She also taught them skills like sewing, cooking which is helpful to them when they are entered into *Grihastyashram*. Gradually this school was expanded and reached the number twenty-

three and affiliated to University of Calcutta. Later this really encouraged Bengali women to take part in the national movement of India.

Sister Subhalaxmi is a South Indian Woman who worked for the development of widows and children. Being not a Christian she carried the title of Sister due to the affection and dedication towards missionary work. After completion of her schooling, she joined in Presidency College, Madras University. She ran a widow teacher training school in an old ware house near a beach. This school was funded by British government. The students from this school completed their matriculations and joined in Queen Mary's College i.e. first women college in Madras. Sister Subhalaxmi joined as the principal in the Lady Willingdon Training College in 1922. She also opened Saradavidyalaya, a high School for adult widows. Sister Subhalaxmi was influenced by Religious reformer Ramakrishna and his disciple Swami Vivekananda. She considered both as first among them who concerned about women's question.

Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain was a Muslim woman who worked for the education of Muslim girls. In 1909, she started a female institution in Bhagalpur district of Bihar. Later she closed it due to a family disturbance and went to Calcutta. She opened another school Sakhawat Memorial girls' school in Calcutta, specially designed for the students who practise purdah . This School followed Urdu as the language of instruction. In the curriculum of the school, handicraft, Home science, physical training was included. Rokeya learned English from her brother in the mid night. Later her husband who was an English educated from the west had encouraged her to write essays in English. Rokeya wrote articles in English on women's condition. Gradually she wrote novels, short stories in English . Rokeya pointed out the asymmetrical development of women due to male

honour in her essay '*Ardhangi*', '*Griha*', '*Borka*'. She argued education can ensure the overall development women in her essay '*Sugrihini*'. She wrote a short story viz. '*Sultan's Dream*' which described about a world governed by women and men were in the business of home²⁰. She compiled forty-seven reports on Purdha in the essay '*Avarodhbasini*'. Rokeya criticized seclusion and said, "is not a gaping wound, hurting people. It is rather a silent killer like carbon monoxide gas"²¹

The above examples are the individual efforts by great women but there are organizational efforts to develop the conditions of women. Initially it was evolved from the womb of religion. Kesab Chandra Sen , leader of the BrahmoSamaj established Bharat Samaja where families practiced the lifestyle of the English middle class. Another notable organization of women was Bharat MahilaParishad, a wing of National Social Conference. The members of this organization taught orphans, helping widows, medical relief, abolition of child marriage etc. Gradually the members of this organization had increased. StriZarthosti Mandal was a Parsee women community worked for the philanthropic works. Miss Serenmai M. Cursetjee was the first president of this organization. Anjuman-e-Khawatin-e-Islam was a Muslim women's association in Punjab. Mrs.Pankhurst of the Mian family was the founder member of that organasitation. SaraladeviChaudhurani was critical to the leaders of Indian national congress and demanded for permanent organization for women . She established her own organization Bharat Stree Mahamandal which had its first meeting in Allahabad in 1910.It had opened branches in different cities to promote women education. They considered purdah as hurdle for modern women education. After World War 1 there three important women's organization were emerged in India viz. Women's India

Association(WIA), the National Council of Women in India (NCWI),All –India Women’s conference (AIWC). Women’s Indian Association was started with a motto of female education particularly in English language. Margaret Cousins an Irish theosophist has started this .C. Jinarajadasa played key role for its development. Annie Besant was the first president of this organization. It was politically active during the tenure of Montague as the secretary of the state. WIA has its own journal i.e. *Stri Dharma*. The second women organization with a national base was National Council of Women in India (NCWI). Mehribai Tata popularly known as Lady Tata was the pioneer of this organization. She appreciated the effort of English women to the civic issues but critical to their role towards Indian society. Mehribai wanted to encourage middle class women to talk with poor people and convince them about the ‘disgrace of living on charity’, ‘necessity of self- respecting honest work’²².She strongly opposed purdah, caste system and liquor because these are stumble on the way of social change. She had moral appeal to Male community to raise their voice in favour of women’s freedom and their education. Many Maharanis of these countries had become president, patron of this council .Though it has elitist characteristics but was popularized among poor people due to its philanthropic social works. The third important organization of women was The All-India Women’s conference (AIWC). The first meeting of this organization was held Poona in January Of 1927. In this meeting, eighty-seven members from the local reception committee, fifty-eight delegates from local conference and more than two thousand people as observer.

Gradually women as social oppressed group had prepared to encounter with government machineries for the right. Like the global upsurge, Indian women’s delegation demanded

their right of franchise in front of Lord Chelmsford and Montague. In 1918 the provincial conferences of Bombay and Madras have passed a resolution to remove Sex as disqualification in the proposed bill. The provincial conference of Andhra, the Muslim league, the Indian Home rule league has approved it. Sarojini Naidu delivered a speech in the special session of Congress held in Bombay in August of 1918 which was supported by more than three thousand delegates. Later Saraladevi Chaudhurani presented a resolution in the thirty-three session of Indian national congress in Delhi in 1918. She criticized the, 'fanciful division of intellect and emotion being the respective spheres of men and women'²³. On basis of this demand The Southborough Franchise Committee has accepted the petition on the same year. After that Herabai led this suffrage movement. But some nationalist leader opposed it due the timings of the movement. Women became voters i.e. 8.46 percentages in Madras, 5.03 percentages in Bombay, 2.5 percentages in Punjab and 4.36 percentages in central legislative assembly²⁴. Muthulakshmi Reddy was the first women legislator in the Madras Legislative Council in 1927. But to strengthen this process Begum Shah Nawaz and Mrs.Subbarayan spoke on the women adult franchise at the Round Table Conference. Apart from Women's franchise issue, women had also active participation in the national movement. Manmohini Zutshi Sahgal jailed in Lahore in 1930. Pari Bewa of Odisha was the first women martyr of Odisha who died in the bullet firing. But this process had an early beginning .Women along with men boycotted the foreign goods. They promoted Swadeshi by convincing people about its role in national movement. The cultural clinginess in national movement was due to active participation of women in that movement. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a big iconoclast to destroy the dividing line between male and female in the participation of

national movement. He not only influenced the women but also the guardians of the women, as expressed by his follower Sucheta Kripalini. Shrimati Ambujammal another follower of Gandhi said that Gandhi had equal influence in both man and women. In Bengal women took active participation in the non-cooperation movement. CR Das's wife Basant Devi, niece Miss Sunita and Sister Urmila Devi were arrested due to selling of *khaddarin* public places which encouraged a massive protest against the govt. Gandhi mentioned this event in his magazine *Young India* and encouraged women of other parts of the country to follow the pathways of Bengali Women. Durgabai Deshmukh was an indomitable strong woman who refused to stay with her husband when maturity came and permitted him to marry second wife. She raised five thousand rupees fund from the *Devadasis* for the Mahatma's meeting. She arranged a meeting of 1000 *Devadasis* which attained by Gandhiji. Rajkumari Amrita Kaur was very close to Gandhi. She became her private secretary for sixteen year. SushilaNayar, personal doctor of Gandhiji considered him as her father. Women also took part in Civil Disobedience Movement. Women did picketing and sat in strike in Bombay. Rastriya Stree Sangha declared its aim was *the PurnaSwaraj*. Many women participated in Gandhi's famous Dandi March and collect salt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhaya and Avantikabai Gokhale were the two women who entered the sea beach first and boil the sea water and collect salt. LatikaGhosh formed Mahila Rastriya Sangh in Bengal to mobilize women for political movement. Nari Satyagrah Samiti was established in 1929. In Chittagong women participated in armed revolution. In Odisha, Sarala Devi, Malati Devi participated in this movement. The Jhansi regiment of women in Azad Hind Fauz was great example women's bravery. Laxmi

Saigal an MBBS degree holder became captain of that regiment. Subhas Chandra Bose admitted her dedication in the revolutionary movement.



(Photograph of Indian suffragettes on the Women's Coronation Procession, 17 June, 1911, source- History of Feminism)

After India got independence many structural as well as functional changes occurred both in Indian society and administration. On the same tone, Feminism in India changed its direction. It encouraged participatory effort rather than protestant culture. The Indian Constitution provides equality to all. The Hindu Code was passed which gave more rights to women. Different schemes were developed by the govt. for the betterment of Women and Children. Women directly participated in Politics general and policy making in particular. Vibhla Farooqi had established National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) in 1954. In 1974 *Towards Equality* was published which showed the real picture of women. After that Govt took serious stand on women issues. Ministry of

Educational and Social Welfare appointed committee to check constitutional, social, legal provisions and its impact on the women's life. DrVina Mazumdar was appointed as secretary to this committee. Mrs Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister of India .People compared her as Goddess Durga after the remarks of opposite leader Atalbihari Vajpayee on the victory of Bangladesh war. There are many women who are successful in Indian politics viz. MamataBenarjee of TMC, Jayalalita of AIDMK, Sonia Gandhi of INC, Susama Swaraj, Nirmala Sitaraman of BJP etc. Pratibha Devisingh Patil became first women president in India.Apart from that women like Justice Fatima Biwi, Kirana Bedi, Bachendri Pal KalpanaChawala, Arunima Sinha ,Indra Nooyi, Chanda Kocher, Mary Kom, ManushiChillar are the examples of women empowerment. The idea of feminism was very much influenced by Indian literature.Santharamrau wrote 'Remember for the House', Ruth Prawar Jhabvala' To whom She Will' and 'Heart and Dust' ,Geeta Hariharan ' Thousand faces of Night' are the famous one. Sahshi Despande, Shobha De, Maheswata Devi, Gayatri Spikbak, Manju Kapoor, Arundhati Roy are the novelists who mentioned the ideas of feminism in her fictional writings. Anita Desai mentioned many feminist ideas in her novel ' Clear Light of the Day'(1980) .Gradually feminist literature became autobiographical in nature and giving more importance to the oral histories of the time. A new kind of feminism emerged from the clutches of the caste, known as Dalit feminism. Gopal Guru argued that 'Dalit Women speak differently' (Guru, 1980). According to Rao Dalit Women has Homogenising nature in themselves. In liquor movements of Odisha, Bhotmanges of Khairalanji village of Maharashtra are the examples of Dalit Feminism. Gulaab Gang is a different kind of women reactionary group who worked for rural women's right.



INDIA'S GULAB GANG SHAMES ABUSIVE HUSBANDS AND CORRUPT POLITICIANS. (PHOTO: AMANA FONTANELLA-KHAN)

2.3. Feminism: An Interdisciplinary Framework

Oxford Encyclopedic English dictionary defines Research as, ‘a systematic investigation into the study of materials, sources etc. in order to establish and reach new conclusions’²⁵. We can get knowledge from our experience, reasoning, observation or close analysis. Research is always influenced by paradigms and theoretical approaches such as Structuralism, positivism and post modernism. These categories have their own parameters or conceptual framework to study social issues. Like that feminism is also an approach which has developed its own parameter to study different disciplines in academia.

In the fifties of the twentieth century, C.P. Snow has argued about the methodological distinction that exists between the humanities, social sciences and physical sciences in his book *The Two Cultures*²⁶. Therefore, there are numbers of theoretical dimensions that exist in the humanities for intellectual enquiry, one of them is feminism. Feminist literary has more

critical to the excessive representation of male as hero in literature. According to them mainstream philosophers have constructed female identity as inferior than man. All the adventures, boldness are the success story of male and if there is any adventure related to women has mentioned in the literature then that is surely sexual adventure²⁷. Joan Kelly Godal Points out women's' lives cannot be always be understood through categories developed to make sense of men's lives²⁸. Feminist scholar adopted new way of enquiry known as Gynocentric methodology also known as 'difference feminism' which considered difference in the name of natural distinction as inequalities developed through social construction. Everything related men are the representative of masculinity on the other hand whatever related to women only speaks about subordination. This methodology is influenced by another theory called essentialism. But critic of this method argued that the notion of masculinity is developed categorically. Feminist scholar took White – western- upper middle class man as a unit to universalise the idea of masculinity is not true. Joan Kelly Godal has discussed another three concerns regarding Historiography i.e. Periodization, the categories of Social analysis, theories of social change²⁹. In periodization, he criticised that there is no renaissance ,fo,r wom,en in the period of renaissance. Because the women of freedom is curtailed during that period. He argued that the glorification of a certain period in history occurs on the basis of the benefits of male rather than female. So whenever we study social development in a time framework we should also revisit that period from the women's experience. The second argument of Godal is Sex should be considered as a social category rather than biological category because there is a clear dichotomy is exist in our society in terms of emancipation i.e. bourgeoisies (male) and Proletariats (female) . The "Redstockings

Manifesto” of 1969 maintained that “women are an oppressed class and suggested that the relations between man and women are class relations, that “sexual politics” are the politics of class domination³⁰. The last argument Godal is that there should be a critical enquiry on the changes of Women, occurred during the general changes in mainstream production. Janice Moulton criticized *The Adversary Method* of Social sciences and humanities. In this method when we studied the problems related to certain disciplines i.e. a law, management, politics, we considered aggression as a positive quality. Aggression does not mean physical harm in toto the rather than it deals with ambition, authority, effectiveness, competence. But the problem occurs when this aggression is only considered as natural to one sex i.e. male. This affects the genuineness of the knowledge because this method believed that the evaluation of philosophical work should happen under the spectacles of extreme opposition. This is also criticised by Plato. Plato in his book *Menom* entioned that ‘in order for a debate or discussion to take place, assumptions must be shared by the parties involved’,³¹.

In the nineteenth century, research methods in social sciences have developed by scholars like Auguste Comte, Karl Marx etc... They adopted positivist method of physical science to explain social sciences. They tried to problematise all the social problems with a cause and effect framework. All the social theory had elaborated through an empirical observation and mathematical measurement. But it has faced several critiques. In late 70s and early 80s, it was started with feminist scholars. They are in favour of qualitative methods rather than quantitative one. It surely validates the women experience and values in it. They also criticized the hierarchical relation between the researcher and the research object. “Researcher was often urged to develop a personal relationship with their research

subject, to identify with them rather than objectify them and to rely on their hearts as well as their heads”³². Catharine McKinnon (1982) has considered it as a ‘Consciousness raising feminist method’³³. Feminist scholars have more critical to the discipline of psychology. Weistein in the book *Sisterhood is powerful* has mentioned that psychology is responsible for the creation of Female³⁴. Mainstream psychologist always considered women has inferior psychology than man which is natural but feminist considered it as methodological flaws. According to feminist, inequalities in research also exist in sociology, anthropology and economics. For them sociologist always focused on the social problems related to man only. This is they considered as a negative affection to ‘male social universe’ (Smith.D1990). Anthropology has also androcentric attitude towards its research. It has always an active interest in male practices. It studied the war, hunting minutely rather than child caring. According to feminist, there are certain problems in quantitative research. It always deals with the elitist fancy topic and ignoring the questions of importance to gender. Another criticism to this method is that it has biased research design along with an exploitative relationship between the research subject and researcher. Due to its overgeneralization of findings and objectivity, the solution of the problem became simplistic and supernatural and not real. On the other hand, qualitative research develops a close relation between the research subject and researcher which will helpful researcher to know about the personal life and discover the truth. Feminists also have problematised the existing economics. They argued that the present economics does not carry the etymological meaning of economics. The word *economics* derives from two Greek terms: ‘*oikos*’ means house or home and ‘*nomos*’ means custom or regulation. The aggregate meaning of these terms is the management of

household things. Nowadays mainstream economics is interested only that area which is formally included in the market. Services like cooking, child care, cleaning etc do not come under formal economics. It does not consider these areas as important as the areas like real estate, mining, textiles etc. the reason behind these type of notion is that the former is performed without monetary or any kind of wages. Conventional economics always argued that market is value-neutral and promoting *efficiency, freedom, and fairness*. Feminist scholar severely criticized these three core principles. According to them the efficiency which market is encouraged is only dependent on the production which invariably affected by the availability of resources. So it is a halfway encouragement. The market is often considered as free but still, there are bonded labour, insecurity in different professions, low pay are shown that there is lack of freedom in the market. The market is also not fair because that all group of representation is not there. So there should be reconsideration on the parameter through which we judge our basic principles. Economics as a discipline is not always value-neutral and present only through numerical mathematics. It should be value -laden and considered the nonmarket things. Feminist economists have started to give monetary values to the non - market work which is contested the notion of '*benevolent patriarch*' and '*women of leisure*'. But there is internal criticism to the popular feminist methodologies. Critic argued that the radical feminist negatively criticized the quantitative methods based on data, number, and models. Originally women problem is not generated for the usage of mathematics or value- neutrality. It is occurred due to their approach to see the women issues, not the methods. So there should be an inclusive methodology which carries both figures and experiences. Some scholar also criticised the essentialist of a stand of feminism. They

thought that this notion is developed due to two belief system i.e. over emphasis on contextualism, the natural inclination of feminist towards women issues. Going one step further, Hornsteinn criticised qualitative method as unsystematic and unscientific. She proposed the *phenomological approach*. This approach has three steps. First uncover the structure of experience of the research subject through a psychological tool what she called *imagined variation*. Then in second step researcher should form some ‘analytical categories’. Then at last researcher should draw a conclusion by elucidating the relationship between categories.

If we closely observed the ideas of feminism is totally not a new idea rather than it is a new approach to the old problem i.e. Oppression which has its source in the power politics. It is the voice of the voiceless.

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