

## **FEMINISM: AN OVERVIEW**

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### **Introduction:**

It is seen that there have been discussion in broad way on the women centred issues in our society today. The relevancy of such discussion, of course, can't be denied if we look to the present position of women's status in our society right from the traditional phase. Rather we must say that the discussion should be more brood based for making women rights effective today. For any fruitful result that sort of discussion of course should be carried out in a impartial and well thinking manner so that the society can fully realise the issue and move with proper direction for its solution without any contradiction to its counterpart. But, so far our knowledge is concerned, we have not seen any possibility due to some defects within itself, which can't be considered as good sign and may be more harmful for healthy living of women instead of heaving a dignified life. In this essay, we have therefore made an attempt to highlights some major dimensions of women centric issues and problems on the lights of feminist movement today.

The concept of 'Feminism' does not only mean a particular form of opinion, a mere ideology. It really implies the sum total process of human civilisation in the world or in another word we should say 'Feminism' as the way of life and everybody must regard it's as a social being or a member of the human family. The movement for women status, women empowerment women independency etc. are very much inter-dependent and directly concern with human rights. It is therefore pertinent to note that since the women status or women rights as a part of human rights is not a new problem, hence the feminist movement in different shapes should also not be considered as a new phenomenon, though its has become organise and extensive today. It is the fact as the very root of violation of women status was in the heart of traditional society, the source of demand against such violation was also that traditional society itself, though that phase was quite unorganised and scattered.

However, before going to have all these in details we wish to explain a brief about the rights of women. Truly speaking, there is no any separate right as the women rights. All those rights are discussed within the preview of human rights as a general notion. That means the concept of human right implies the equal status of man and women in all phases. That is why many peoples don't ready to accept such type of seperatism in the field of human rights. But in spite of their argument we must confess one thing that women are not given due share for maintaining their status in our society ever since.

### **Feminist Concept in Ancient Time :**

During very ancient time we can't find out a clear picture about the position of women, though the commune age was purely the symbol of equality the status of women, of course that was depended upon the behaviour of individual during the later phase of its development. Even in the Veda -Upanishad, not to mention any other documents; we have not found any tract of such inequal treatment to women though there are clear mentioned about cast division of society. The ethics with strict code of conduct for maintaining

male hegemony in the society have been developed during the latter phase, perhaps the Manu Songhita and Jugini-Tanta etc. are mainly responsible for such doing.

Male supremacy and female dependency on the ground of sex and discrimination or difference of treatment among the various section of people on the ground of caste, creed community are the direct result of the fundamentalistic attitude of people in the leading position determined by religion. We must mention one thing that the neglected position of women in our society has not only hampered the development of personality of women but also hampered the development of the growing children the future generation of our society accordingly.

It is seen that women are quite conscious about their position and also regretfully explain themselves by using some specific term as deprived, exploited etc. it is of course cannot deny the accuracy of the use of such term with their own identity. In the name of economic dependency, Political incapability and physical inability, women are being exploited throughout the history of human civilisation. They are very much deprived of their right to self determination in the name of patriarchalism despite of their great contribution to the real truth of human cavitation and remarkable performance, which prove that women is not less than a man except physical difference. Considering these and also about the potentialities within women some thinkers perhaps raised opinion against such inequality. We have found so many trace of such thinking in the works of Plato, Aristotle etc. Karl Marx and Lenin being the chief exponents of socialism were also very much careful for making equality among man and women for maintaining social justice. Lenin, therefore frankly opined that "The women-the half of the total population- must bring out from the kitchen, if we want to make all-round development of our society".

### **Feminism and Human Rights :**

Though in a nutshell, we must say that both the concept feminism and human rights. are interrelated and product of the same. It is highly believed that for successful implementation of human rights proper step must be taken to make a change to the traditional behaviour about women in this field. With the formation of UNO and "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" made in 10th Dec. 1948 is the great attempt to improve the situation of human status in general and the "Commission on the status of women" in 1946 is the another attempt in this field in particular. Not only these, International Community Under UNO has number of effort, for making improvement of women status with a view to universalise the concept of human rights.

In this regard we may mention to CPRW 1952 DEDAW 1967, IWY 1957, women Decade 1976-85 and the, world conference 1975, 1985, 1995 along with UNDFW 1985 and ITRIAW 1987 etc. as some important achievement in case of women rights so far the international context is concerned.

In conformity with the international endeavours the government of India is also taking some special measures for promotion of women rights in the state. Articles 14,15,16,39 (C), 42 etc. in part III & IV of the Indian constitution have provided clear opportunities to women to maintain equality to with man in different field. Our National Government or the constitution makers are of course very much inspired by some acts of British Government. Prevalence of English education, Inspiration to the movement of some feminist organisation and some enactments i.e. CP Act. 1829, WP Act. 1855, WPR Act. 1937 etc. are the great contribution of British Govt., which creates a favourable atmosphere for feminist movement in the state. Just after independence Government of India also has passed some important acts such as 'Minimum

wage Act. 1948, Maternity Benefit Act. 1961 and Pension Act. 1987, which plays an important role in protection and promotion of women rights.

In this case formation of "National Commission on women" as per provision of Act. 1990 for that purpose is certainly a remarkable achievement of our Govt. This commission has full authority to monitor and supervise the activities of various organisations, agencies and committees formed to look after the women rights. Moreover the commission can study and detect new fields and may suggest the Govt. to take necessary arrangement to serve the purpose.

Besides those above mentioned constitutional, legal and administrative measure at government level, numbers of NGO's, different forms of women organisations in the field of education, socio-cultural, economic and political are also using this humble effort for making feminist movement a strong, so that women status can be uplifted in true sense of the term. But despite of having such recognition, we have not seen any progress of women status, may not be wrong to say that the rate of women harassment in our society is still in increase instead of decrease.

Economic self-sufficiency policy is nothing but only a political slogan, Again the slogan for women's participation in the decision making process is still remain a far cry 33% seats reservation in parliament and state legislature are yet to be in practice. Though it is implemented in Penchant level, benefits are really enjoyed not by women but by the relative male in their name. Under the above situation, question may be arised - why has the feminist movement still not become successful? As a reply to that question, we may perhaps note the following -

- (I) Indifferent and Lethargic spirit of competent authorities or organisation mainly responsible for not having positive result in this field. What have so far made may be considered as levity only.
- (II) Secondly, peoples' faith in religion which is the main cause of such division and discrimination on the ground of race, sex etc. are still not become less than the traditional phase. Religious leaders are grilling such scope to exploit the sentiment of the general masses for their own benefit. It is quite surprise that their force, even in the age of science and the technology for mobilisation and also the unquestioned assimilation of different sections of people are really imparallel and cannot be expected in other field.
- (III) Thirdly, we must say that the attitude of feminist organisations are itself responsible for their in effectiveness. The tendency to feminise the feminist movement, with a view to bring out it form the clutch of male, often not only indulge but also give scope to the male convention list to raise the issue before the male feminist to review and justify their act of demanding equal share of woman. Their talking about distinct female characteristics feminist organisation have been suffering in two main way –
  - (a) The movement has to lost its earlier strength and appeal due to inherent incapability of women to fight against the patriarchy in one hand and
  - (b) On the other hand become antagonist event to the authentic feminist also not to mention the religious minded man in our society who are always with the doubt of losing their hegemonistic identity in reverse form. The act of female favouritism at different level really do no good rather will lead to think and rethink the whole issue deliberately instead of sympathetic support.

- (IV) Above all, the most important causes, in our belief is the absence of effective public media & broad base programme for making people aware of the on-going development in women living in local area are still without preliminary knowledge of feminist movement in the state. The woman living in rural area in general and women of some neglected section of people without proper education are even ready to sacrifice their life in the name of 'Sanskar' of religion. On the other we cannot hope successful movement without their mobilisation.

### **Conclusion:**

Keeping all those above we must conclude that feminism or the feminist movement has yet to overcome numbers of challenges to attain in its goal. But they must be very careful in this regard so that there will be no such new problem again in their way. More particularly the feminist should not try to move instinctively with distinct female identity but should ready to go hand-in-hand with male, irrespective of any other consideration except their sympathetic Outlook to the issue of women status.

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