

**VARIOUS MODES OF FEMINISM- AN OVERVIEW****K. SELVAM<sup>a1</sup> AND SEBA SUSAN JOHN<sup>b</sup>**<sup>a</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of English, Periyar Maniammai University, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India<sup>b</sup>Research Scholar (Part Time) – English, Periyar Maniammai University, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India**ABSTRACT**

The word 'Feminism' seems to refer to an intense awareness of identity as a woman and interest in feminine problems. Recent form of feminism that came to existence after 1960s has become an evolving socio-political movement. It is a theoretical project, which aims at understanding the power structures in the society, male domination, social practices and social institutions, which are instrumental in assigning a marginalized position to women. Feminist theory also devises the strategies to transform the social structures, which can help in the emancipation. Women are not allowed to think freely, the path was not smooth for them to travel. They had to undergo many hardships to enter into the world of art. Feminism is thus a term that emerged long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanding an amelioration in their social position. Even after the word *feminism* was coined, it was still not adopted as a term of identification by many of those who campaigned for women's rights. Thus gender can be seen as an artefact of social, cultural and psychological factors which are attained during the process of socialization of an individual. This paper tries to sketch the various modes of Feminism like Liberal Feminism, Socialist-Marxist Feminism, Radical Feminism, Psycho Analytical Feminism, Existential Feminism, Individual Feminism, Cultural Feminism, Post-modern Feminism and Relative or Rational feminism also its relevance in literature.

**KEYWORDS:** Feminism-Marginalized-Liberal Feminism, Socialist-Marxist Feminism, Radical Feminism, Psycho Analytical Feminism, Existential Feminism, Individual Feminism, Cultural Feminism, Post-Modern Feminism And Relative Or Rational Feminism

The word 'Feminism' seems to refer to an intense awareness of identity as a woman and interest in feminine problems. The subjugation of woman is a central fact of history and it is the main cause of all psychological disorders in society. According to Janet Richards, *"The essence of Feminism has a strong fundamental case intended to mean only that there are excellent reasons for thinking that woman suffer from systematic social injustice because of their sex, the proposition is to be regarded as constituting feminism."*

Recent form of feminism that came to existence after 1960s has become an evolving socio-political movement. It is a theoretical project, which aims at understanding the power structures in the society, male domination, social practices and social institutions, which are instrumental in assigning a marginalized position to women. Feminist theory also devises the strategies to transform the social structures, which can help in the emancipation. The strong wave in the 1960s and 1970s helped to theories a woman's discourse. In 1980s, 'Feminism' concentrated on transforming the individual fields and in 1990s began a major role in directing academic focus on the concern of the so-called 'otherness', differences and questions of marginality. Margaret Homans has rightly pointed out that the concept of feminism raises fundamental queries about reading, writing and the teaching of literature. It operates as an interdisciplinary tool for social and cultural analysis and as a political practice.

Feminism has transformed the precision of life and literature.

Women were not recognized as individuals or autonomous beings. Women had to face many obstacles in the academic circuit, which symbolizes the effects of an educational culture that radically restricts the scope of women's intellectual exposure. Woolf identifies the certain information of being denied access to buildings or ideas as another type of infringement on the freedom of the female mind. This exclusion is a more radical kind of information, one that disturbs not just as a single thought or review but the life-long development of an individual or the historical development of an intellectual tradition.

**VARIOUS MODES OF FEMINISM****Liberal Feminism**

Liberal feminism is the most widely accepted social and political philosophy among feminists. Liberal feminists defend the equal rationality of the sexes and emphasize the importance of structuring social, familial, and sexual roles in ways that promote women's autonomous self-fulfillment. They emphasize the similarities between men and women rather than the average differences between them, attribute most of the personality and character differences between the sexes to the social construction of gender, and tend to promote a single set of androgynous virtues for both women and men.

Liberal feminism has its roots in the writings of, among others, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), and Harriet Taylor Mill (1807-1858). Many writers prior to Wollstonecraft, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), had explicitly argued that men and women were by nature not merely different in kind but different in "natural rank," with women being weaker physically, intellectually, and emotionally (358-61). Men were said to be more rational, women more emotional; their respective educations should reflect these differences. A few philosophers, such as John Locke (1632-1704), had argued that both genders should receive the same education and that they shared equal rights and responsibilities with respect to their children Socialist-Marxist Feminism.

Since the main objective of Liberal Feminism is Men and women are equally rational. They are both therefore qualified to fulfil social and practical roles at any level. The following are the prominent writers of liberal feminism: Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria Stewart, The Grimke Sisters, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem and Molly Yard.

### **Socialist-Marxist Feminism**

A logical way to start is to look at socialism and feminism separately. To begin with, Marxism and feminism have an important thing in common: they are critical ways of looking at the world. Both rip away popular mythology and "common sense" wisdom and force us to look at experience in a new way. Both seek to understand the world—not in terms of static balances, symmetries, etc. but in terms of antagonisms. They lead to conclusions which are jarring and disturbing at the same time that they are liberating. There is no way to have a Marxist or feminist outlook and remain a spectator. To understand the reality lay bare by these analyses is to move into action to change it.

Marxism addresses itself to the class dynamics of capitalist society. Every social scientist knows that capitalist societies are characterized by more or less severe, systemic inequality. Marxism understands this inequality to arise from processes which are intrinsic to capitalism as an economic system.

Feminism addresses itself to another familiar inequality. All human societies are marked by some degree of inequality between the sexes. If we survey human societies at a glance, sweeping through history and across continents, we see that they have commonly been characterized by: the subjugation of women to

male authority, both within the family and in the community in general; the objectification of women as a form of property; a sexual division of labour in which women are confined to such activities as child raising, performing personal services for adult males, and specified (usually low prestige) forms of productive labour.

Socialist-Marxist's represent demarcation between private and public spheres of activity maintained by capitalists for their own interests; the significant writers are: Marx, Engels, Gilman, Kollontai and Eisenstein.

### **Radical Feminism**

Radical feminists argue that men's oppression of women leads logically to other systems of human domination. Man's domination of woman is so intricately woven into virtually all facets of our lives that it thoroughly pervades our sense of what it is to be a woman or to be a man. The systematic oppression of women will require not only legal, political, and economic changes; it will also require a radical reconstruction of sexuality. Radical feminists do not agree with previous political theories in seeing procreation and sexuality as private or personal. They are deeply political in being fundamentally organized by male power, and they argue that the relegation of these issues to the personal realm fulfils the ideological purpose of trivializing them and delegitimizing women's struggles to change those practices.

Here man is the source of all oppression all culture is male dominated: Patriarchal Separate women's culture with separate set of values, which are different from that of man. The prominent writers are: Mary Daly, Andrea Dworkin, Kate Millet, Juliet Mitchell.

### **Psycho Analytical Feminism**

Psychoanalytic feminism is based on Freud and his psychoanalytic theories. However, it maintains that gender is not biological but is centered on the psycho-sexual development of the individual. Women should use different language for themselves based on there on their sensations of their bodies. It should be different from language of men. Women's developmental process is a different that of man.

### **Existential Feminism**

Feminism basically is a politics directed at changing existing power relations between women and men in the society. These relations of power, structure all areas of life—family, education and welfare, worlds

of work and politics, culture and leisure. Women have to assert her autonomy in defining herself against any men. She has to define her own identity, dealing herself a past and creating for her solidarity for other women.

### Individual Feminism

Individualist feminism argues that the slogan "a woman's body, a woman's right" should extend to every peaceful choice a woman can make. The cost of such freedom is personal responsibility and a refusal to appeal to government for privilege or protection. As a school within the broader feminist tradition, individual feminism contrasts sharply with gender feminism both in its theory and its history. Indeed, the two schools define the ideological extremes of the feminist movement. Their differing interpretations of such concepts as "equality," "class," and "justice" stand in opposition to each other and could restimulate what many consider to be a dying movement by breaking through the shell of dogma that surrounds it.

### Cultural Feminism

Cultural feminism is developed from radical feminism. It is an ideology of a "female nature" or "female essence" that attempts to revalidate what cultural feminists consider undervalued female attributes. It is also a theory that commends the difference of women from men. It is based on an essentialist view of the differences between women and men and advocates independence and institution building.

It has led feminists to retreat from politics to life-style. Alice Echols, a feminist historian and cultural theorist credits Redstockings member Brooke Williams for introducing the term "Cultural Feminism" in 1975 to describe the depoliticization of radical feminism.

### Post-modern Feminism

Postmodern feminism rejects a dualistic view of gender, heteronormativity, and biological determinism, pointing to the inseparability of the body from language and social norms. Postmodern feminists argue against the assumption that all women share a common oppression.

### Relative or Rational Feminism

Feminism and rational choice theory have both been hailed as approaches with the potential to revolutionize political science. Apart from a few exceptions, however, work that utilizes these two perspectives rarely overlaps. Feminist and rational choice approaches issue fundamental challenges to

existing modes of political analysis. Although each school is characterized by a diverse range of views, they are united in their efforts to produce better knowledge of the political world. At a minimum, feminist scholars argue that this entails incorporating 'gender' as an analytic category, expanding existing definitions of 'politics,' and generating insights that may be used to pursue some degree of political change

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study shows feminism is a struggle for equality of women, an effort to make women become like men. The agonistic definition of feminism sees it as the struggle against all forms of patriarchal and aggression.

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