

History (इतिहास) -

Feminism has highlighted ^{on} what it sees as a political relationship between the sexes, ~~the~~ and how it deals with supremacy of men and subjection of women in almost all societies of the world.

Feminism is defined ~~as by~~ ^{the} belief that sexual ~~or~~ ^{or} inequality or oppression can and should be abolished. As such, feminism, is always linked to a women's movement. However, it is clearly not a 'woman's issue', rather it addresses matter of concerns and significance to both the sexes. It tries to broaden political understanding.

- The term 'feminism' belongs to the 20th Century but, feminist views can also be found in different cultures and different time periods.
- Christine de Pisan's Book of the Cities of Ladies, published in Italy in 1405 advocated women's right to education and political

influence.

- It was not until the 19th century that an organised women's movement developed.

① The first wave: -
The first text of modern feminism is

usually taken to be Mary Wollstonecraft's
"Vindication of the Rights of Women" which
was written in 1792, against the
backdrop of French Revolution (1789)

- By the mid 19th century, the women's movement had acquired a central focus. The campaign for female suffrage (rt to vote) drew its inspiration from the progressive extension of the franchise to men. This is referred to as the 'first wave' of feminism which was characterised by the demand that women suffrage was its main goal because it was believed that if the women got right to vote, all other forms of sexual discrimination or prejudice will disappear.
- The women's movement was strongest in those countries⁽²⁾ where political

democracy was advanced.

• In the United States (America), women's movement emerged during the 1840's, inspired partly by the campaign to abolish slavery.

• Seneca Falls Convention was Convention was held in (1848) which marked the birth of American Women's Rights Movement. It adopted a Declaration of Sentiments - by Elizabeth Cady Stanton which drew upon the principles of the American Declaration of Independence (1776)

which mainly called for female suffrage.

The National Women's Suffrage Association, led by Stanton and Susan B. Anthony was setup in (1869) and merged with American Women's Suffrage Association in (1890).

• Similarly, in Britain, an organised movement developed during the 1850's. The British Suffrage Movement adopted increasingly aggressive tactics after the formation of the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903 led by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst.

First wave feminism ended with the achievement of female suffrage which was introduced first in New Zealand in (1893). In United States, the 19th Amendment of the Constitution granted voting rights to women in 1920 and in Britain, the franchise was extended to women in 1918. but, finally they achieved equal voting rights with men in 1928.

(2) The Second Wave — In many ways, winning the right to vote weakened and undermined the women's movement which had given it a clear goal. Furthermore, many believed that by winning suffrage rights, women will achieve total emancipation.

• It was not till the 1960s that it got regenerated with the emergence of 'second wave' feminism.

• It was relaunched by Betty Friedan publication 'The Feminine Mystique' in 1963. • It dealt with the concept of 'the problem with no name' — the

frustration and unhappiness many women experienced as a result of being confined to the roles of housewives and mothers.

- This era witnessed for radical feminist ideas and arguments.
- Books like Kate Millet's Sexual Politics (1970) and Germaine Greer's The Female Eunuch (1970) pushed back the borders of what had been earlier seen to be 'political'.
- The goal of 2nd wave feminism was not merely political emancipation but 'women's liberation', reflected in the ideas of growing Women's liberation movement.

③ Post-Feminism - The era of 1980's - suggesting that the feminist thought has lost its critical edge or that it has achieved its goal.

But, this is not true as feminism, as an ideology, has spread to Third world countries as well in the later half of the 20th century.

- In 1975, Mexico Conference launched International Women's Year and designated the subsequent 10 years as the UN Decade for Women.

- Feminism embraces a broad range of traditions that challenge patriarchal values and conventional political thought. This reflects the breadth and diversity of the modern women's movement.