

History of feminism and its theories

Dr. Laxmidevi Y

Assistant Professor, Women's Studies Department, Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura, Karnataka, India

Abstract

Feminism is related to women's thoughts and concerned with access and equal opportunities for women. Feminism is the idea that women should have political, Social, Sexual, intellectual and economic rights equal to those of men. It involves various movements theories and philosophies. All concerned with issue of Gender differences. That advocates equality for women and the campaign of women's rights. In this paper I Covered What is Feminism, history of Feminism and Feminist theories.

Keywords: feminism, gender, wave

Introduction

Feminist theory seeks to analyze the conditions which shape women lives and to expose cultural understandings of that it near to be a woman. Theory for us is not and abstract intellectual activity divorced from women lives but seeks to expert I the conditions under which those lives are lived.

Thinking as feminism it involves challengingly much of what has wanted as knowledge. Women have more often been his objects of knowledge the produces of it. A result much knowledge often world has been produced by men framed by 0000 location in society as men. The term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed that at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism involves political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference, as well as a movement that advocates gender equality for women and campaigns for women's rights and interests. Feminism brings many things to philosophy including not only a variety of particular moral and political claims, but ways of asking and answering questions, critiques of mainstream philosophical views and methods, and new topics of inquiry. Feminist contributions to interventions in mainstream philosophical debates are covered in entries under "Feminism, interventions". Entries covered under the rubric "Feminism, topics" concern philosophical issues that arise as feminists articulate accounts of sexism, critique sexist social and cultural practices, and develop alternative visions of a just world. In short, they are philosophical topics that arise within feminism.

Although there are many different and sometimes conflicting approaches to feminist philosophy, it is instructive to begin by asking what, if anything, feminists as a group are committed to. Considering some of the controversies over what feminism is provides a springboard for seeing how feminist commitments generate a host of philosophical topics, especially as those commitments confront the world as we know it.

History of feminism

The history of feminism can be divided into three waves. The

first feminist wave was in the nineteenth and early twentieth century's, the second was in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third extends from the 1990s to the present. Feminist theory emerged from these feminist movements. It is manifest in a variety of disciplines such as feminist geography, feminist history and feminist literary criticism.

Feminism has altered predominant perspectives in a wide range of areas within Western society, ranging from culture to law. Feminist activists have campaigned for women's legal rights (rights of contract, property rights, voting rights); for women's right to bodily integrity and autonomy, for abortion rights, and for reproductive rights (including access to contraception and quality prenatal care); for protection of women and girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape; for workplace rights, including maternity leave and equal pay; against misogyny; and against other forms of gender-specific discrimination against women.

Feminists and scholars have divided the movement's history into three "waves". The first wave refers mainly to women's suffrage movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth century's (mainly concerned with women's right to vote). The second wave refers to the ideas and actions associated with the women's liberation movement beginning in the 1960s (which campaigned for legal and social rights for women). The third wave refers to a continuation of, and a reaction to the perceived failures of, second-wave feminism, beginning in the 1990s.

First Wave

First-wave feminism refers to an extended period of feminist activity during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the United Kingdom and the United States. Originally it focused on the promotion of equal contract and property rights for women and the opposition to chattel marriage and ownership of married women (and their children) by their husbands. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, activism focused primarily on gaining political power, particularly the right of women's suffrage. Yet, feminists such as Vulturine de Cleyre and Margaret Sanger were still active in campaigning for women's sexual,

reproductive and economic rights at this time. In 1854, Florence Nightingale established female nurses as adjuncts to the military.

In Britain the Suffragettes and possibly more effectively, the Suffragists campaigned for the women's vote. In 1918 the Representation of the People Act 1918 was passed granting the vote to women over the age of 30 who owned houses. In 1928 this was extended to all women over twenty-one. In the United States, leaders of this movement included Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony, who each campaigned for the abolition of slavery passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (1919), granting women the right to vote in all states.

The term first wave was coined retrospectively after the term second-wave feminism began to be used to describe a newer feminist movement that focused as much on fighting social and cultural inequalities as political inequalities. First wave feminism mainly focused on Voting Rights and Property Rights.

Second Wave

Second-wave feminism refers to the period of activity in the early 1960s and lasting through the late 1980s. The scholar Imelda Whelehan suggests that the second wave was a continuation of the earlier phase of feminism involving the suffragettes in the UK and USA. Second-wave feminism has continued to exist since that time and coexists with what is termed third-wave feminism. The scholar Estelle Freedman compares first and second-wave feminism saying that the first wave focused on rights such as suffrage, whereas the second wave was largely concerned with other issues of equality, such as ending discrimination.

The feminist activist and author Carol Hanisch coined the slogan "The Personal is Political" which became synonymous with the second wave. Second-wave feminists saw women's cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked and encouraged women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and as reflecting sexist power structures. Second wave feminism mainly focused on Sexuality, Family, The workplace harassment, Reproductively rights, defector inequality and official legal inequalities, domestic Violence and marital rape issues.

Third Wave

Third-wave feminism began in the early 1990s, arising as a response to perceived failures of the second wave and also as a response to the backlash against initiatives and movements created by the second wave. Third-wave feminism seeks to challenge or avoid what it deems the second wave's essentialist definitions of femininity, which (according to them) over-emphasize the experiences of upper middle-class white women.

A post-structuralist interpretation of gender and sexuality is central to much of the third wave's ideology. Third-wave feminists often focus on "micro-politics" and challenge the second wave's paradigm as to what is, or is not, good for females. The third wave has its origins in the mid-1980s. Feminist leaders rooted in the second wave like Gloria

Anzaldua, bell hooks, Chela Sandoval, Cherrie Moraga, Audre Lorde, Maxine Hong Kingston, and many other black feminists, sought to negotiate a space within feminist thought for consideration of race-related subjectivities.

Third-wave feminism also contains internal debates between difference feminists such as the psychologist Carol Gilligan (who believes that there are important differences between the sexes) and those who believe that there are no inherent differences between the sexes and contend that gender roles are due to social conditioning. Third wave feminism mainly focused on Feminist sex wars, sexuality and pornography.

Feminist Theories

Liberal Feminism

- All people are created equal, women are essentially the same as men
- Based upon principle of equality of opportunity and freedom
- Gender not determined by sex
- Inequality stems from unequal participation in spheres outside of the family, primarily education and paid labour force
- Seek social changes that will create a meritocracy where social rank is based on merit and in which hierarchy and inequality are both inevitable and acceptable
- Faith in rationality
- Education is means to change
- Oppression of women is not a structural feature of capitalist economic system
- Look to state to bring about women's liberation through legislative measures - equality through law
- Programs advocated include affirmative action, equal opportunity employment, employment equity, pay equity, parental leave, subsidized daycare
- professional and middle-class women
- National Action Committee on the Status of Woman (N.A.C.): umbrella organization representing hundred feminist-oriented women's group
- National Organization of Women (N.O.W.)

Marxist Feminism

- Primary source of female oppression is the capitalist economic system, i.e. inferior position of women linked to class-based capitalistic system and family structure within this system
- Women's subordination was a consequence of the introduction of private property, women became the property of men and the first oppressed class
- Women's oppression caused by their economic dependence in the family but also in the work force, this keeps an exploitable reserve labour force
- Women have always had unpaid work (housewife) and most low paying and boring jobs
- Women must have equal participation in the economic production process
- Propose wages for housework, developing a system for paying women directly for their household work
- Sexuality is to feminism what work is to Marxism
- working class women

Socialist Feminism

- Integrate issues of gender and class, i.e. unite concepts of patriarchy and capitalism, seeks to eliminate both class and gender oppression
- Women's oppression caused by their economic dependence
- Economic production systems of sexuality, childbearing and childrearing, care of other members of family and sick, and gender socialization must all be looked at
- Investigate interface between women's paid labour and domestic labour lives
- Traditional sexuality script is emblematic of gender power relations
- Abolition of gender and class are goals where socialism will only occur with the liberation of women and women's liberation will only occur under socialism
- working class women

Radical Feminism

- Women live under conditions of inequality in most systems of economic production regardless of whether capitalist, socialist or communist
- Gender is the fundamental form of difference, little emphasis on class or ethnicity
- Patriarchy, women's oppression and domination by men, is the fundamental oppression and at the root of other isms
- Patriarchy pervades public world of formal economic production processes but also private worlds of family, marriage, sexuality and biological reproduction
- Introduced the phrase the personal is political and then also the political is personal
- Social change is necessary in both private and public worlds
- Seek to replace existing gender roles with androgyny, any resulting differences would then be human not gender differences
- Some focus specifically on the male physical, psychological and social control of female sexuality as the basic cause of female subordination
- Some focus on the tyranny of reproductive biology from which women must be liberated, and thus they seek to eliminate biological sex as basis of social differentiation
- First to introduce the following as feminist issues: reproductive and contraceptive rights, abortion, reproductive technologies, sexuality expression and experience, sexual and physical violence against women (rape, sexual harassment, incest, pornography and domestic violence).

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 sexist aggression. This study reveals the growth of Indian Feminism and its development.

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