



# Perception and change made by rise of feminism in today's world

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## ABSTRACT

Feminism has changed with time and continues to influence modern civilizations all over the world as a social and political movement that promotes gender equality and women's rights. This abstract offers a summary of the feminist perspective and its development in the modern world while highlighting important themes, difficulties, and advancements. The historical background of feminism is first discussed, from the early waves in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to intersectional feminism today. It emphasizes the fundamental tenets of feminism, such as gender equality, women's empowerment, and social justice, and shows how these tenets have expanded to cover a variety of concerns, including gender-based violence, reproductive rights, and rights for LGBTQ+ people. then discusses the difficulties that feminism is currently facing, such as opposition, reaction, and misconception. It recognizes the various feminism-related viewpoints and criticisms, including the necessity for intersectionality and inclusivity within feminist groups as well as false notions of man-hating or exclusionary ideology. Additionally, we will talk about the advancements and successes of feminism in the modern world, such as governmental changes, social movements, and cultural transformations towards more gender-inclusive practices and policies. It draws attention to how technology, social media, and online activism have shaped current feminist discourse and encouraged greater engagement. In order to confront gender inequality, encourage social change, and advance women's rights in the modern world, it is important to emphasize the continuing relevance and significance of feminism. It emphasizes the necessity of continual initiatives to fight structural discrimination, advance inclusivity, and create a more equal and just society for people of all genders.

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## Introduction

Women's rights and gender equality have come a long way thanks to the late 19th and early 20th century movement known as feminism. Nevertheless, despite the advances made in the struggle for gender equality, there are still many different perspectives on feminism in the modern world. Encouraging gender-neutral language and behavior while dispelling gender-based preconceptions about men and women. People of all genders can be themselves in a society that is more welcoming and inclusive of them without fear of discrimination or judgement, according to feminists. Some people think of feminism as a counterproductive movement that aims to destroy societal norms and traditional values. These people could think that feminism is no longer required because women currently have equal rights and opportunities. They could consider feminists to be unduly militant or confrontational, and they might perceive the movement as a danger to their own morals and principles. In addition, others believe that feminism is a movement that ignores the interests and rights of males in favor of focusing only on the rights of women. They might think that feminism is divisive, excludes people, and causes more issues than it fixes. Since many years ago, feminism has been a hotly debated subject, and it is now more crucial than ever to understand how it is perceived. While some might contend that feminism is no longer important to achieve gender equality, others contend that it still is. There is no questioning the significant advancements made by women in recent years. Women can vote, run for office, and pursue jobs that were long thought to be exclusively for men in many regions of the world. Nevertheless, despite these improvements, women continue to confront numerous obstacles, including the gender pay gap, underrepresentation in leadership roles, and various forms of discrimination. The emergence of woke culture and third gender identity has spurred several discussions worldwide that have led to the attribution of pronouns and the definition of identity. Although there are encouraging initiatives and laws to improve the outcomes of equality in society and the workplace, it still appears to be a long shot from where we are. In addition, we'll examine how young people perceive feminism and its developments while examining how this attitude has altered the relationship between men and women in society, the workplace, and families.

## Methodology

This study with a descriptive analysis of the history of feminism and evolution along with how it has changed the course of its nature and how the people have seen it. With ongoing gender issues and identity crisis emerging as a new trend, will feminism be withheld with the third gender? The descriptive research will be based on secondary as well as critical and observational methods to further study the perspective of feminism.

## Evolution of feminism

With successive waves and movements promoting gender equality, opposing patriarchal norms, and addressing the intersections of gender with other forms of oppression, feminism has developed and grown over time. The crucial phases of feminism's development occurred in waves throughout history. A timeline of significant feminism-related events is provided below:

The first wave of feminism, which spanned the late 19th and early 20th centuries, concentrated on women's suffrage, or the right to vote, as well as their legal and political rights. The Declaration of Sentiments was issued at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, and the United States' passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 1920 gave women the right to vote.

The second wave of feminism, which spanned the 1960s through the 1980s, was distinguished by a larger focus on social and cultural issues, including reproductive rights, job discrimination, and gender roles. Feminist activism was influenced by the Civil Rights Movement and anti-war movements of the time. The release of Betty Friedan's "The Feminine Mystique" in 1963, the founding of the National Organization for Women (NOW), and the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling, which legalized abortion in the United States, were significant events that occurred during this time.

The recognition that gender oppression overlaps with other forms of oppression like race, class, sexual orientation, and disability led to the development of intersectional feminism in the 1970s, which has gained popularity in recent years. The proponents of intersectional feminism call for a feminism that is inclusive and intersectional, emphasizing the particular struggles and experiences that women from various backgrounds confront. The Combahee River Collective Statement, released in 1977, highlighted the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. Another significant occurrence during this time was the #MeToo movement, which gained steam in 2017 and brought attention to sexual harassment and assault in a variety of industries.

The third wave of feminism, which appeared in the 1990s and the early 2000s, was distinguished by its emphasis on individuality, variety, and inclusivity. The goals of third-wave feminism were to question gender expectations, value intersectionality, and give women the power to create their own identities and experiences. The Riot girl movement, which promoted feminism through punk rock and DIY aesthetics in the 1990s, and the incorporation of online activism and social media in feminist organizing were significant occurrences during this time.

Global feminism (from the 2000s to the present): In recent years, global feminism has been more well-known for exposing the fact that gender discrimination is a worldwide problem and promoting the rights and welfare of women and other marginalized genders. Global feminism has put emphasis on problems including violence against women, human trafficking, and worldwide inequity and discrimination based on gender. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals were established in 2015, with gender equality listed as one of the goals, and major events during this time included the global Women's Marches in 2017 and subsequent years, which promoted women's rights all around the world.

Noting that feminism is a broad and multifaceted movement with various viewpoints, philosophies, and methods is crucial. The chronology shown provides a broad overview, but it's crucial to understand that feminism continues to alter and expand as new problems and obstacles appear and as many voices and viewpoints contribute to the cause.

### **General views and perception**

There are several perspectives on feminism in the globe today. Some believe that because women have made significant progress towards achieving equality, the movement is no longer essential. They contend that fighting for equal rights is no longer necessary because women now have access to the same opportunities as men. However, a lot of people contend that gender equality is still far from being achieved. They think that in order to combat the different forms of prejudice that women still experience today, feminism is still necessary. They draw attention to the fact that there is still a sizable gender wage gap and that women are still underrepresented in numerous industries, including STEM and politics. Additionally, others contend that the way feminism is now seen is incorrect. They contend that men are frequently left out of the discussion and that it is frequently perceived as a movement that is just for women. This view of feminism may be detrimental since it may widen the gap between men and women and make it more difficult to attain gender equality.

The idea that feminism is solely a movement for white, middle-class women is another difficulty for the movement today. This misconception ignores the fact that achieving gender equality for women from marginalized groups has far greater difficulties. A key component of contemporary feminism is intersectionality, which acknowledges the variety of types of discrimination that women experience.

In conclusion, there are different perspectives on feminism in the modern world. While some contend that it is no longer important to attain gender equality, others disagree. It is crucial to acknowledge that there are still numerous obstacles for women to overcome and that full gender equality is still far from being attained. Men must be involved in the discussion as well as acknowledged the difficulties encountered by women from marginalized areas. We can only attain actual gender equality by cooperating.

### **The sensitivity**

For a variety of reasons, feminism continues to be a touchy and divisive subject today. First off, they don't really comprehend what feminism is. A common misconception about feminism is that it aims to raise women above males rather than promote gender equality. This misperception could cause people to resist and be against the movement.

The second is a fear of change. Many individuals are content with the status quo and worry that any change, like advocating for gender equality, will upend their way of life. This anxiety may result in opposition to feminism and a reluctance to embrace its objectives.

Thirdly, feminism questions long-standing gender roles and expectations that have been instilled in society since ancient times. Some people may feel uneasy, threatened, or defensive as a result. For instance, it may be viewed as a threat to established gender roles to question the notion that men should always be the main breadwinners or that women should handle the majority of domestic duties.

Fourthly, there is a propensity to discount people's experiences if they don't fit the narrative that is prevailing. Feminism has come under fire for being overly preoccupied with the experiences of white, middle-class women while ignoring those of women from underrepresented groups. People who feel that their experiences are not being acknowledged or taken into account by the feminist movement have responded with resistance and criticism.

Last but not least, the media has contributed to the perpetuation of unfavorable preconceptions of feminists and the portrayal of feminism as a radical movement out to subvert conventional values. This inaccurate representation of feminism can cause resentment and opposition to the cause.

### **Gender roles and responsibilities**

Indian societies have always been dominated by gender roles. Men were supposed to provide for and protect their families in traditional Indian society, while women were responsible for taking care of the home and the children. Religion, culture, and social standards all served to cement these roles.

For instance, Hinduism, the country's official religion, has traditionally emphasized that males should be the head of the home and that women should serve them. Numerous Hindu books, such as the Manu smriti, an ancient Hindu legal document that outlines the obligations and responsibilities of men and women, are reflective of this philosophy. The text asserts that a woman's primary responsibility is to serve her husband and that she should be under a man's authority at all times.

Similar to this, Indian society has traditionally thought that males should be the main breadwinners and women should be in charge of the home and raising the children. Due to this, women's labour is underestimated and underpaid, and they are also denied opportunities to further their education and professions.

Traditional gender roles are still widespread in many areas of India, despite recent improvements in gender equality, with women making substantial gains in school, politics, and the workforce. In the workplace, in the classroom, and in public places, women continue to experience discrimination and harassment. The cultural traditions are deeply ingrained in society and frequently unable to be changed in order to further the common good. From within the nation, it is painful to watch the suffering and how we regard it as a routine event that only serves as a headline for the media, and then everyday life carries on as usual, unaffected.

Based on a poll conducted by the Pew Research Centre between November 2019 and March 2020 at the height of the covid epidemic, men outnumbered women in the study, which included a total of about 30,000 samples. The propensity for hiring male employees is still prevalent, which frequently prompts the question, "Why are women not paid equal salary as men?" The response to this is, "If women are paid less than men, why don't they take over all the jobs?" In my opinion, men and women are two distinct species of beings with distinct biological and physical characteristics, and the way that men have developed in society and the family has given rise to the patriarchal belief system.

### **Alignment with LGBTQ+**

Feminism and LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and other identities) rights frequently coincide and have many of the same ideals in common. Regardless of a person's gender identity, sexual orientation, or other kinds of identity, both movements support equality, acceptance, and empowerment of all people.

At its foundation, feminism is a social and political movement that aims to eradicate gender inequality as well as oppression and discrimination based on gender. It questions conventional gender roles and conventions, promotes women's rights, and speaks out against sexism, misogyny, and other types of gender-based discrimination. As identities overlap with one another and with gender to produce various types of oppression and discrimination, feminism also acknowledges the intersectionality of identities such as race, class, sexual orientation, and disability.

Similar to this, LGBTQ+ rights movements aim to advance equality, acceptance, and protection of LGBTQ+ people's rights. This involves fighting against prejudice, stigma, and violence towards LGBTQ+ people as well as promoting equal rights in areas including marriage, work, housing, healthcare, and adoption. The campaigns for LGBTQ+ rights also acknowledge the interconnectedness of identities and the ways in which LGBTQ+ people may experience prejudice and marginalization due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, and other intersecting characteristics.

Equal rights and acceptance for marginalized groups, such as women and LGBTQ+ people, require social, political, and legal reform, according to both feminist and LGBTQ+ rights movements. They frequently collaborate to fight systematic oppression, promote inclusive and affirming attitudes and behaviors, and spread knowledge about the struggles and legal rights of people who are subjected to discrimination because of their gender identity, sexual orientation, or other characteristics.

While feminism and the LGBTQ+ rights movements may share certain objectives and advocate for similar causes, it's crucial to remember that they are two separate groups with separate histories, issues, and priorities. In conversations and actions concerning marginalized groups' rights and experiences, it's crucial to hear and prioritize the voices of feminists and members of LGBTQ+ communities. Respecting diversity, inclusivity, and intersectionality is crucial in advancing social justice and human rights for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, or other identities.

The LGBTQ+ community in India faces unique challenges and opportunities. While there have been significant advancements in recent years, including legal reforms, increased visibility, and growing social acceptance, LGBTQ+ individuals in India continue to face discrimination, stigma, and violence based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

One of the key milestones in the LGBTQ+ rights movement in India was the historic decision by the Supreme Court of India in 2018 to strike down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which criminalized consensual same-sex relationships. The decriminalization of homosexuality and the protection of LGBTQ+ people's rights in India were both significantly advanced by this judgement.

The social acceptance and inclusivity of LGBTQ+ people in India still faces difficulties, notwithstanding the legal advancements. In many facets of life, including family, education, career, healthcare, and housing, discrimination, prejudice, and stigma still exist. LGBTQ+ people may encounter bullying, harassment, and violence in addition to being rejected by their families, being socially isolated, and facing prejudice when attempting to access essential services.

In India, activists and organizations are still working to advance LGBTQ+ rights and foster social acceptance. To combat discriminatory attitudes and practices, advance inclusivity and acceptance, and guarantee equal rights and opportunities for LGBTQ+ people in India, they take part in advocacy, awareness-raising, and community-building activities.

### **Challenges and progress**

The condition of feminism in India, includes the obstacles faced and the accomplishments made in expanding women's rights and gender equality in the nation.

## Challenges:

- Gender-based violence: India has a difficult time addressing gender-based violence, which includes domestic abuse, sexual assault, rape, violence related to dowries, and other types of violence against women. These problems significantly impede India's efforts to progress feminism.
- Traditional gender roles and prejudices still exist in many areas of India, which restricts women's chances and supports gender discrimination. It can be difficult to challenge and change deeply rooted attitudes and practices that discriminate against women since they are frequently ingrained in social, cultural, and religious norms.
- Intersectionality: Feminist movements in India face difficulties due to intersectional discrimination, which refers to the overlapping of different forms of discrimination such as caste, class, religion, and sexual orientation. It might be difficult to address the intersectionality of many forms of discrimination and to advance inclusive feminism that takes into account the experiences of all marginalized groups.
- Patriarchal norms: Patriarchal norms and power structures still have a significant impact on a number of facets of Indian culture, such as the family, marriage, workplace, politics, and government. Feminism in India faces a huge challenge in dismantling deeply ingrained patriarchal norms and challenging current power systems.

## Progress:

- Legal changes: India has made considerable strides in addressing gender inequality and violence against women. To combat gender-based violence and discrimination, laws including the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal Act, and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act have been passed.
- Programmes for women's emancipation: The Indian government, NGOs, and other organizations have put in place a variety of programmes for women's emancipation, including initiatives for political involvement, employment, and access to healthcare and education. These initiatives have helped advance gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Feminist groups and activism have been essential in opposing patriarchal norms, promoting policy reforms, and bringing attention to gender-based violence and discrimination in India. Feminism has advanced significantly in India thanks to activists, groups, and people fighting for women's rights.
- Changing social views: As knowledge of gender inequality and violence has grown in India, there has been a progressive change in social attitudes towards gender equality. A large number of people and groups are opposing traditional gender roles and stereotypes and pushing for gender equality in many areas of life.
- Women's accomplishments: India has seen major advancements for women in a number of areas, including politics, business, education, sports, and the arts. Women's accomplishments and success stories inspire people, show how far we've come, and help alter how society views women's rights and skills.
- Health and well-being: With programmes like the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, which offers financial support for maternal healthcare and nutrition, and the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign, which aims to promote gender equality and the value of the girl child, there has been an increased focus on women's health and well-being in recent years.

India has a long history of gender inequality that has been shaped by a variety of social, cultural, religious, and economic forces, including:

- i) Vedic Period (1500 BCE–600 BCE): Men predominated in family, community, and religious rites throughout the Vedic period in India, which was characterized by a patriarchal culture. The majority of women's responsibilities were domestic in nature, and they had little opportunity for education, property ownership, or decision-making.
- ii) Mediaeval Period (600 CE – 1200 CE): During the mediaeval era in India, patriarchal standards were further reinforced by the authority of Islamic kings and their customs and practices. Women had few possibilities for education and their status was largely dictated by their duties as wives, mothers, and daughters.
- iii) Colonial Period (1600 CE – 1947 CE): The British East India Company colonization of India in the 17th century, followed by the British Raj colonization in the 19th and early 20th centuries, had a significant impact on gender relations in India. The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act of 1856, which made Hindu widow remarriage lawful but yet subject to social stigma, was one of many laws and policies that marginalized and subordinated women during British colonial rule.
- iv) After India acquired independence from British rule in 1947, attempts were undertaken to alleviate gender inequity through constitutional provisions and legislative reforms. This period is known as the Independence and Post-Independence Period (1947 CE and after).
- v) The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005, and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act of 2013 are just a few of the laws that have been passed to safeguard the rights of women. The Indian Constitution guarantees equal rights and opportunities for men and women.

## Perspective and views

Another misconception about feminism is that it just affects women and has no relevance to or value for males. Feminism, on the other hand, acknowledges that achieving gender equality involves the combined efforts of all genders and that it is a social issue that affects everyone. By opposing harmful gender norms, addressing privilege, and supporting the rights and empowerment of all genders, males can also be feminists and contribute to promote gender equality.

Feminism promotes gender equality and the overthrow of oppressive systems that place restrictions on opportunities and rights based on gender. It is frequently misunderstood to be about the idea that women are superior to males. It aims to address and combat gender-based inequity and discrimination that both genders must deal with.

Feminism is a Western idea: Feminism is frequently misunderstood as a Western idea that is irrelevant to or inapplicable to non-Western civilizations, including as India. Feminism, however, is a broad and inclusive movement that has developed in a variety of historical, social, and cultural contexts, including those in India. The special gender-related difficulties experienced by women and other marginalized genders in these situations are addressed by feminism in India and other non-Western societies, which is formed by distinctive socio-cultural processes.

Cultural or religious perspectives that have a particular way of seeing gender roles and relationships can often give birth to negative attitudes towards feminism. Some people can perceive feminism as being in opposition to their cultural or religious values, which would result in negative perceptions or resistance to feminist concepts.

**Fear of Change:** Because feminism frequently questions established society norms, customs, and power structures, it can be disconcerting for certain people who are averse to change. They could react negatively to feminism because they think it threatens or upsets the existing quo of established gender norms. Misperceptions or unfavorable perceptions may result from ignorance of feminist concepts and movements or from a lack of exposure to them. People who personally discriminate against women or feminism may have unfavorable opinions on it.

## Results

Has the standard of equality been built up to men in the society so much as to how the rising feminism has tried to match up with the criteria setup by men. Gender equality is a fundamental human right and is enshrined in numerous international and national laws, conventions, and declarations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the United Nations, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030. Apart from that, in India there has been numerous steps for gender equality throughout history ranging from the constitution on equality for all the citizens, child marriage prohibition, protection against domestic violence acts, maternity benefits, dowry prohibition acts, sexual harassment act, and in recent years the transgender persons act and medical termination of pregnancy act for equality laws in India.

The biological difference lies in each individual meaning that even human beings with the same sex/gender have different capabilities and limitations, no two lives are the same which is no exception for even twins who share similar biological DNA. It is also not safe so say that either men or women have it easier in life rather than the other. There are also question arising out of the evolving feminist view, which is 'do women want to be treated as men?'. The sole purpose of this question is that even though we stated that 'no gender has it easier than the other', in a civilized society, women are treated rather lightly compared to the average man. Some people may hold negative or misconstrued views about feminism, perceiving it as a movement that promotes the superiority of women over men or as being anti-men. This could be due to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, or misrepresentations of feminism, as well as societal and cultural biases against gender equality.

## Discussion

Due to the western influence, the world has faced a crisis of identity and feminism is being viewed as an object to favor women's development only. The fore-front goals were to close up the gap between men and women in the society. In some ways the trans community has been exploiting the cause and further push to favor or should we say to normalize the confusion caused by exploiting the rights of women as their own. Apart from that there have been numerous cases of women being favored because of their gender in cases of divorce, custody, domestic violence, abuse etc. One of the things I feared for the future is a time when men won't be able to freely live without being misconceived to suspicious behavior, because from the looks of it, women want to dominate the society, but that is not a case for all. They say 'chivalry is dead, but somehow the laws are molded to oppress men and their freedom. While preaching equality, there are double standards, the idea of taking down each other to feel superior. This doesn't change the fact that society revolve around patriarchy for centuries, but it was also men who gave the chance to rise, to liberate from social crutches. Another question I have is, 'will the rise of feminism oppress the freedom of men?'

## Conclusion

The feminist worldview, which promotes gender equality, questions gender stereotypes, and addresses many forms of oppression and discrimination, continues to be a strong and important influence in modern culture. The feminist perspective has contributed to beneficial developments and advancement in the modern era, but it also continues to encounter obstacles and chances for growth. Positively, feminism has advanced gender equality in many areas of life, including the workplace, education, politics, and social conventions, by making considerable achievements. Many of the obstacles to the growth of women and gender minorities have been addressed and removed, giving them greater visibility, representation, and chances in leadership positions. The concept of intersectionality, which recognizes the connections between gender and other social categories including race, class, sexual orientation,

and ability, as well as the ways in which many types of oppression cross and compound, has gained more attention and understanding thanks in part to feminism and their viewpoints have also questioned conventional gender norms and expectations, promoted gender fluidity and inclusivity, and encouraged a variety of expressions of gender identity and sexual orientation. This has expanded debates about and campaigning for reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and other problems relating to gender and sexuality as well as the acceptance and acknowledgment of non-binary, genderqueer, and transgender people. However, the feminist viewpoint still faces obstacles in the modern world. Sexual harassment, assault, and domestic violence are just a few examples of the widespread gender-based violence that still exists today. In addition, the gender pay gap and occupational segregation are still major problems in many parts of the world. For marginalized communities within feminist movements, intersectional forms of discrimination, such as racism, ableism, and discrimination against LGBTQ+ people, provide extra obstacles. In addition, there is persistent opposition to feminist advancement, including efforts to roll back women's rights and undermine gender equality.

In conclusion, the feminist viewpoint is still important and relevant in the modern world. Even if there has been progress, achieving complete gender equality and social justice still faces many obstacles. Within feminist movements, it's critical to keep spreading awareness, fighting for legislative reforms, encouraging inclusivity, and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups. The feminist perspective may continue to make a positive difference in the world today and in the future by identifying and addressing intersecting forms of oppression and working to create a more equitable and inclusive society.

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