

# International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

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## **Feminist Movement: Some Philosophical Concepts**

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**ABSTRACT:** The feminist movement (also known as the women's movement, or feminism) refers to a series of social movements and political campaigns for radical and liberal reforms on women's issues created by the inequality between men and women. Such issues are women's liberation, reproductive rights, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, women's suffrage, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. The movement's priorities have expanded since its beginning in the 1800s, and vary among nations and communities. Priorities range from opposition to female genital mutilation in one country, to opposition to the glass ceiling in another. Feminism in parts of the Western world has been an ongoing movement since the turn of the century. During its inception, feminism has gone through a series of four high moments termed Waves. The First-wave feminism was oriented around the station of middle- or upper-class white women and involved suffrage and political equality, education, right to property, organizational leadership, and marital freedoms. The Second-wave feminism attempted to further combat social and cultural inequalities. Although the first wave of feminism involved mainly middle class white women, the second wave brought in women of different social classes, women of color, and women from other developing nations that were seeking solidarity. The Third-wave feminism continued to address the financial, social, and cultural inequalities of women in business and in their home lives, and included renewed campaigning for greater influence of women in politics and media. In reaction to political activism, feminists have also had to maintain focus on women's reproductive rights, such as the right to abortion. The Fourth-wave feminism examines the interlocking systems of power that contribute to the social stratification of traditionally marginalized groups, as well as the world around them.

**KEYWORDS:** feminist, violence, domestic, movement, women, harassment, power, social, inequalities

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

There are people who believe that we do not need feminism today, but nothing could be further from the truth. Women have struggled for equality and against oppression for centuries, and although some battles have been partly won - such as the right to vote and equal access to education – women are still disproportionately affected by all forms of violence and by discrimination in every aspect of life. It is true that in some areas and on certain issues, there have been improvements: for example, in Saudi Arabia women were allowed, for the first time, to vote and run for office in 2015(!). [1,2] However, on other issues there has been little or no progress: for example, there have been insignificant reductions in cases of violence against women. Women continue to receive lower pay for the same work as men in all parts of the world; there are still countries that do not have laws against marital rape and still allow child brides, and practices such as 'honour' killings and female genital mutilation still exist.

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Jokes about feminism and stereotypes about feminists persist, and many of these are also homophobic and assume that being lesbian is something 'bad'. In fact, being a feminist is not something particular to any sex or gender: there are women and men who consider themselves feminists, some are gay or lesbian, some heterosexual, bisexual or transgender - and some may identify differently.[3,4]

The concept of feminism reflects a history of different struggles, and the term has been interpreted in fuller and more complex ways as understanding has developed. In general, feminism can be seen as a movement to put an end to sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression and to achieve full gender equality in law and in practice.[5,6]

There have been many extraordinary women who have played an important role in local or world history, but not all of these have necessarily been advocates of women's issues. The women's movement is made up of women and men who work and fight to achieve gender equality and to improve the lives of women as a social group. In most societies, women were traditionally confined to the home as daughters, wives and mothers, and we are often only aware of women in history because of their relation to famous men. Of course many women throughout history did in fact play an important role in cultural and political life, but they tend to be invisible. An organised women's movement only really started in the 19th century, even though women activists and the struggle for equality have always been part of all human societies.

One of the early pioneers, who thought and wrote about women as a group, is the Italian writer Christine de Pizan, who published a book about women's position in society as early as 1495. Christine de Pizan wrote about books she had read by famous men, who wrote books about the sins and weaknesses of girls and women, and questioned whether women were really human beings at all, or whether they were more similar to animals. Christine de Pizan's work offers a good example of the early stages of the struggle for women's equality.[7,8] However, she was very unusual in being able to read and write, which was not at all common for women of that time.

In later history, women took part in the French revolution from the very beginning: the demonstrations that led to the revolution started with a large group of working women marching to Versailles to demand not only food to feed their families, but also political change. However, the French Revolution did not lead to proper recognition of women's rights. For that reason, in September 1791, Olympe de Gouges wrote the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen, in response to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and with the intention of exposing the failure of the French Revolution to recognise gender equality. As a result of her writings de Gouges was accused, tried and convicted of treason, resulting in her immediate execution.[9,10]

The women's movement began to develop in North America, mainly because women there were allowed to go to school earlier than in Europe - and women who can read and write, and who are encouraged to think for themselves, usually start to question how society works. The first activists travelled around North America and fought for the end of both slavery and women's oppression. They organised the 'First Women's Rights Convention' in 1848, and continued to campaign to improve the social position of all women. The movement also began in Europe with the same broad aims: activists collected signatures demanding that working women should receive their own wages and not their husbands', that women should be able to own a house and have custody of their children.

### First wave of feminism

The fight for women's right to vote in elections is known as the 'suffragette movement'. By the end of the 19th century, this had become a worldwide movement, and the words 'feminism' and 'feminist movement' started to be used from that point on.

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This first wave of feminism activism included mass demonstrations, the publishing of newspapers, organised debates, and the establishment of international women's organisations. By the 1920s, women had won the right to vote in most European countries and in North America. At around the same time, women became more active in communist, socialist and social democratic parties because increasing numbers of women began to work outside the home in factories and offices. Women were first allowed to go to university in the early 20th century, having both a career and a family. In certain countries, when fascist parties gained power the feminist movement was banned.

Women started organising again after the end of the Second World War, and they soon gained equal political rights in most European countries, with women's emancipation becoming an important aim and most women being allowed to take on full-time jobs, divorce their husbands and go to university.[11,12]

Second wave of feminism



In Western Europe and the USA, the feminist movement was resurgent by the 1970s. Although this second wave of feminism aimed to achieve 'women's liberation', different groups had different ideas about how this should be done. Liberal feminists wanted better equality laws and reform of institutions such as schools, churches and the media. Radical feminists argued that the root cause of women's inequality is patriarchy: men, as a group, oppress women. They also focused on violence against women by men and started to talk about violence in the family, and rape. Socialist feminists argued that it is a combination of patriarchy and capitalism that causes women's oppression.

The second wave of feminism also resulted in new areas of science: women's studies became a discipline to be studied at university, and books began to be published about women's achievements in literature, music and science, and recording women's previously unwritten history.[13,14]

Finally, the women's movement played an important role in the drafting of international documents about women's rights, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women .

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### Third wave of feminism

The third wave of feminism mainly refers to the American movement in the 1990s, and was a reaction to the backlash of conservative media and politicians announcing the end of feminism or referring to 'post-feminism'. The term 'backlash' was popularised by Susan Faludi in her book *Backlash. The Undeclared War against Women*, published in 1991, and describing the negative reaction of the patriarchal system towards women's liberation. This was hardly a new phenomenon: women's movements had always been met with antagonism. However, in the 1980s, institutionalised forms of attacks on women's rights grew stronger. The third wave of feminism can be characterised by an increased awareness of overlapping categories, such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation. More emphasis was also placed on racial issues, including the status of women in other parts of the world (global feminism). This was also a moment when a number of feminist non-governmental organisations were established, but focusing on specific feminist issues, rather than claiming to represent general feminist ideas.[15,16]

Third wave feminism actively uses media and pop culture to promote its ideas and to run activities, for example by publishing blogs or e-zines. It focuses on bringing feminism closer to the people's daily lives. The main issues that third wave feminists are concerned about include: sexual harassment, domestic violence, the pay gap between men and women, eating disorders and body image, sexual and reproductive rights, honour crimes and female genital mutilation.

### Cyberfeminism and networked feminism (fourth-wave feminism)

The term cyberfeminism is used to describe the work of feminists interested in theorising, critiquing, and making use of the Internet, cyberspace, and newmedia technologies in general. The term and movement grew out of 'third-wave' feminism. However, the exact meaning is still unclear to some: even at the first meeting of cyberfeminists The First Cyberfeminist International (FCI) in Kassel (Germany), participants found it hard to provide a definition, and as a result of discussions, they proposed 100 anti-theses<sup>52</sup> (with reference to Martin Luther's theses) on what cyberfeminism is not. These included, for example, it is not an institution, it is not an ideology, it is not an -ism.

Cyberfeminism is considered to be a predecessor of 'networked feminism', which refers generally to feminism on the Internet: for example, mobilising people to take action against sexism, misogyny or gender-based violence against women. One example is the online movement #metoo in 2017, which was a response on social networks from women all over the world to the case of Harvey Weinstein, a Hollywood producer who was accused of sexually harassing female staff in the movie industry.[17,18]

### Women's rights are human rights

Why do we need women's rights, when these are simply human rights? Why do we need human rights treaties about women's rights, when we have already general human rights instruments? Almost everywhere in the world, women are denied their human rights just because of their sex or gender. Women's rights should not be seen as special rights: they are human rights enshrined in international human rights treaties and other documents, and include such rights as freedom from discrimination, right to life, freedom from torture, right to privacy, access to health, right to decent living conditions, right to safety, and many others. However, there are also human rights instruments that take into account the specific situation of women in society with regards to accessing or exercising their human rights, or which aim to protect them from violence.

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## II. DISCUSSION

One of the underlying issues that continues to plague women in the United States is misogyny.

This is the hatred of or, aversion to, or prejudice against women. Over the years misogyny has evolved as an ideology that men are superior to women in all aspects of life. There have been multiple movements to try and fight this prejudice. The feminist movement (also known as the women's liberation movement, the women's movement, or simply feminism) refers to a series of political campaigns for reform on a variety of issues that affect women's quality of life. Although there have been feminist movements all over the world, this section will focus on the four eras of the feminist movement in the U.S. [19,20]

Feminist theory is a type of conflict theory that examines inequalities in gender-related issues. It uses the conflict approach to examine the maintenance of gender roles and uneven power relations. Radical feminism, in particular, considers the role of the family in perpetuating male dominance (note that "radical" means "at the root"). In patriarchal societies, men's contributions are seen as more valuable than those of women. Patriarchal perspectives and arrangements are widespread and taken for granted. As a result, women's viewpoints tend to be silenced or marginalized to the point of being discredited or considered invalid. Peggy Reeves Sanday's study of the Indonesian revealed that in societies considered to be matriarchies (where women comprise the dominant group), women and men tend to work cooperatively rather than competitively, regardless of whether a job would be gendered as feminine by U.S. standards. The men, however, do not experience the sense of bifurcated (i.e., divided into two parts) consciousness under this social structure that modern U.S. females encounter .

Patriarchy refers to a set of institutional structures (like property rights, access to positions of power, relationship to sources of income) that are based on the belief that men and women are dichotomous and unequal categories of being. The key to patriarchy is what might be called the dominant gender ideology toward sexual differences: the assumption that physiological sex differences between males and females are related to differences in their character, behavior, and ability (i.e., their gender). These differences are used to justify a gendered division of social roles and inequality in access to rewards, positions of power, and privilege. The question that feminists ask therefore is: How does this distinction between male and female, and the attribution of different qualities to each, serve to organize our institutions (e.g., the family, law, the occupational structure, religious institutions, the division between public and private) and to perpetuate inequality between the sexes [21,22]

One of the influential sociological insights that emerged within second wave feminism is that "the personal is political." This is a way of acknowledging that the challenges and personal crises that emerge in one's day-to-day lived experience are symptomatic of larger systemic political issues, and that the solutions to such problems must be collectively pursued. As Friedan and others showed, these personal dissatisfactions often originated in previously unquestioned, stubbornly gendered discrepancies.

Many of the most immediate and fundamental experiences of social life—from childbirth to who washes the dishes to the experience of sexual violence—had simply been invisible or regarded as unimportant politically or socially. Dorothy Smith's development of standpoint theory was a key innovation in sociology that enabled these issues to be seen and addressed in a systematic way by examining one's position in life .She recognized from the consciousness-



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raising exercises and encounter groups initiated by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s that many of the immediate concerns expressed by women about their personal lives had a commonality of themes.

Smith argued that instead of beginning sociological analysis from the abstract point of view of institutions or systems, women's lives could be more effectively examined if one began from the "actualities" of their lived experience in the immediate local settings of "everyday/ everynight" life. She asked, [23,24]"What are the common features of women's everyday lives?" From this standpoint, Smith observed that women's position in modern society is acutely divided by the experience of dual consciousness (recall W.E.B. DuBois' double consciousness). Every day women crossed a tangible dividing line when they went from the "particularizing work in relation to children, spouse, and household" to the institutional world of text-mediated, abstract concerns at work, or in their dealings with schools, medical systems, or government bureaucracies. In the abstract world of institutional life, the actualities of local consciousness and lived life are "obliterated" . Note again that Smith's argument is in keeping with the second wave feminist idea that "the personal" (child-rearing, housekeeping) complicates and illuminates one's relationship to "the political" (work life, government bureaucracies).[25,26]

Recall that intersectional theory examines multiple, overlapping identities and social contexts (Black, Latina, Asian, gay, trans, working class, poor, single parent, working, stay-at-home, immigrant, undocumented, etc.) and the unique, various lived experiences within these spaces. Intersectional theory combines critical race theory, gender conflict theory, and critical components of Marx's class theory. Kimberlé Crenshaw describes it as a "prism for understanding certain kinds of problems."

### III. RESULTS

The National Conference of Autonomous Women's Movements represents a wide participation of various women's organisations belonging to diverse streams ranging from radical to pure feminist groups, urban women's groups as well as rural women's organisations, feminist intellectuals and women writers etc. The overwhelming majority of these women's groups are NGOs or NGO-backed. Some of these organisations have done exemplary work in many specific areas concerning the women's movement.[27,28] The National Conference has, over a decade and a half, succeeded in giving some sort of national character to the grassrootist women's groups. The first national-level conference of autonomous women's groups took place in Bombay in 1980, in the context of the then anti-rape campaign. The autonomous groups were defined as, "those who had created their own space as distinct from women's wings of established political parties, state supported women's groups as well as mixed organisations of men and women". According to a note circulated by the National Coordinating Committee — a body that prepares for the national conferences — on the eve of the Fifth National Conference held at Tirupathi, the First Conference was attended by around 200 women from around 38 organisations. The focus of the conference was rape and other forms of atrocities on women though various other issues related to the women's movement were also taken up.

The second conference was also held in Bombay in 1985 in which around 380 women from 56 organisations took part. This time the conference was not limited to some specific issues but was called to discuss the perspective of the women's movement and laid the ideological basis for the autonomous women's movement. Feminism was declared to have provided many of these organisations, "not only a structural critique of society and of patriarchy, class, caste et al, it has also evolved into a way of life, another way of looking at world, another mode of weaving theory with

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praxis". Therefore, it is claimed, that "in strategising for change, we have attempted to personalise politics and politicise the personal. This has meant confronting patriarchy within the family, social institutions, religion and the state as well as challenging core values like authoritarianism, aggression, competition, hierarchy and centralization". On this basis, all issues like personal laws, dowry, rehabilitation centres for women in distress etc., were discussed.

There was an attempt to broaden the participation for the 3rd National Conference held at Patna in 1988. Since the venue was the capital city of Bihar, participation of our women's organisation could hardly be ignored. Hitherto the conference participants were only small women's groups. But this time the powerful left-led mass women's organisations, especially our Pragatisheel Mahila Manch, was targeted for interaction. Many of these autonomous women's groups had earlier participated in our National Women's Conference organised in Calcutta.

Hence they made a departure from their position on not allowing women's organisations associated with political parties, made a welcome exception to the left-led women's organisations and only rightwing parties were restricted from participating. The feminist perspective was sought to be imposed on all the participants through a draft as the basis of participation. Yet, because of the overwhelming participation of women from our side, the conference was projected as an all-IPF show by the media. Far from the feminist perspective influencing the women's movement led by Marxist-Leninists, many autonomous group activists left with good impressions about our movement. A section of the conference still tried to challenge our participation opposing politics of any kind and our comrades rightly challenged the participation of foreign-funded groups.[29]

Around 760 women from 101 organisations from 16 states participated in the Patna conference. The topics discussed were violence on women, health, ecology, religion, culture, communalism and patriarchy etc. Anyway, for the first time, the autonomous women's conference took up for serious discussion the struggles of the rural women, their role in the agricultural labourer and peasants movement and the feudal violence on rural women etc.

The 4th Conference was held in Calicut in 1990. A National Coordination Committee consisting of representatives from different organisations was formed to prepare the conference agenda, from which we were excluded. It was decided to exclude the women's organisations led by left/ML parties a gain. However the conference made a different departure from its 'autonomy' criteria this time. Under the pretext that "various national, international and government agencies had formed organisations which employed women as well as activists from the movement and these organisations were taking up issues concerning women in different forms", various governmental organisations, apart from NGOs, were also allowed to participate officially.

The Conference this time had strong anti-left overtones and in a left stronghold it created only a negative impact. Ajita, a romantic revolutionary of yesteryears and later a ML renegade, was the main local organiser. Since we still wanted to work with the autonomous stream despite differences we decided to send a delegation of women comrades from different states. They were not allowed by the organisers to participate in their official capacity but only as individuals. Thus though the Calicut Conference was a step backward there was progress in certain other respects. Besides women-specific issues like rape, domestic violence etc., the autonomous women's movement was also addressing issues like environmental degradation, housing and development policies. Despite the aversion for politics, the focus on issues like communalism and state violence was objectively forcing the movement to articulate its response to the events in mainstream politics.

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Despite the participation of 2890 women from 113 organisations, the Conference could not have much impact on Kerala. The background paper of the NCC sums up the Calicut experience thus: “The heterogeneity of organisations like governmental and non-governmental, autonomous and far-left led to sharp contradictions emerging, leading to debates in perspective and ideology, and posing a challenge to the women’s movement”! There were also sharp internal differences among autonomous groups. The venue of each conference was a serious bone of contention. Each NGO-backed women’s group fought for organising the Conference in its own area. Membership of the NCC was another area of contention.[30]

The venue of the next conference was Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. Meanwhile a powerful mass women’s movement independent of the autonomous women’s groups had developed in Andhra — the anti-liquor agitation — which was led primarily by the Marxist-Leninist forces. The autonomous women’s movement is relatively more comfortable with the ML-led women’s groups in Andhra than with us because of the shared grassrootism. Anyway, we were not invited for the conference. In view of the upsurge in women’s movement in Andhra, the 5th National Conference was organised in Andhra. Before the conference some feminist groups based in Hyderabad joined issue with a leading intellectual associated with the ML movement to prepare the ideological climate for the conference. But there was repetition of Patna in Tirupati and the ML-led women’s organisations prevailed. On the positive side there was a greater focus on communalism and New Economic Policy. Though about 3000 women participated in the conference the Conference of Autonomous Women’s Movements was by now a truncated organisation with many prominent autonomous groups not participating in it.

Despite our dissociation with these conferences we continued cooperation with many autonomous groups, we took part in the North Zone Conference of the Autonomous Groups and many of them were invited to participate in the first All-India conference of our women’s organisation.

Gender oppression is central to feminism. Feminists give primacy to fighting the hierarchical and oppressive relationship between the sexes to achieve gender equality. Class, caste and communal oppressions are fitted into this paradigm. With this point of departure, their primary emphasis in practice shifts to gender-related issues like rape, dowry, dowry-killings and other forms of domestic violence, the unequal division of labour at home, the regulation of fertility and women’s control over her body, the repression of women’s sexuality and the commercialisation and commoditification of their sexuality etc.

Many autonomous groups have done pioneering work in all these areas and have made impressive advances in mobilising women to fight on all these issues. It must be admitted that we are still lagging behind in these areas. We also started late on such issues. Though there can be no two opinions on the need for women’s organisations, whether autonomous or radical, to take vigorous initiatives on all these issues, there is a difference over priority and emphasis. We stand for organically combining gender-related issues with basic class-related issues within the mass women’s movement. And then there is a sea of difference in the theoretical approach towards these issues. Feminists have never been able to convincingly explain how they can fight gender inequality inside the family in isolation when this institution of family itself is an inalienable part of an oppressive, uncivilised and barbaric social order of a class society.



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There are differences within the autonomous stream itself on this. Rajani Desai has argued in one of her pamphlets, “the overriding fact still remains that most men still do not fashion even the so-called men’s world and most women share their lives with these most men”. She adds : “The feminist trend tends to see the contradiction between men and women as antagonistic. Further, it tends to equate the oppression by the man in the family with the oppression by the exploiter at the place of work, and it represents both as equal ‘enemies’” (Rajani Desai, SulabhaBrahme and SharayuMhatre-Purohit in “The Material Basis For Women’s Liberation — Against the Current Trend in the Women’s Movement).

We have already seen how the Conference of Autonomous Women’s Movements define autonomy. They equate government with political parties in general and then they equate all political parties irrespective of whether they are right or left. They don’t bother to see whether a given political party fights for the emancipation of women or goes against it. They don’t make any distinction between the class character of different political parties just as they don’t recognise class differences among women. In this context let us quote Rajani Desai again: “Women do not form a class by themselves but form a part of each economic class. And for this reason, despite superficial similarities, the demands of one class of women can never be the same as those of another. That is why different political parties have different lines on the question of women’s rights. Each party approaches this question in keeping with its ideological orientation. Therefore, women’s movement comprises a variety of trends. Indeed, there cannot be a single autonomous women’s movement, because there is not an objective common material base on which it can be propelled forward. The bourgeois and reformist points of view on the women’s question either ignore or play down the class roots of this question. They reduce this problem to one of relationships between man and woman”.<sup>[31]</sup>

Though the autonomous women’s conference has subsequently relaxed their condition on governmental women’s organisations, for obvious compulsions, they have gone back to their hostile position on left-led women’s organisation. This shows that their claims of democracy, pluralism, and avoidance of competition and aggression within the women’s movement etc., are bogus. In trying to place themselves in the middle between the right and the left they only reveal their own petty bourgeois class character which explains their ideological hostility towards the left. But communists cannot be wished away from the democratic struggles with impunity. Objectively they are part and parcel of every democratic movement and are in the van of every democratic protest. The democrats can ignore them only at the cost of lapsing into deep sectarianism and compromising their own professed democratic credentials.

For them the question of autonomy from foreign funding is, however, beyond debate. The absurdity of taking funds from the imperialist government agencies and on the other hand railing against their neocolonialism doesn’t strike them. Some radical feminists take a grim view of the foreign funding. To quote Rajani again : “The feminist trend today is proliferating and being nurtured by heavy foreign financing — directly, and indirectly (through the Government of India). It would be naive to ignore the role of the huge foreign funding for the ‘women’s cause’. It would also be naive to imagine that it is free of its own ideological weightage in a situation where a ‘target-oriented’ approach effectively means that women get a share of the non-opportunities. It can only be aimed at diverting people’s attention from the main fact of non-development, want, and non-opportunity, and a desire to divide people (in this case, division between men and women) in their fight over the crumbs. This, needless to say, aptly suits the interests of our rulers who, therefore, support these programmes wholeheartedly”.

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The feminists reduce the question of politics to the level of Foucaultian micro-politics — personalise politics and politicise the personal. Personalising ‘politics’ depoliticises the person. And politicising the personal — interpreted as confronting patriarchy within the family, social institutions, religion and the state — reduces every political conflict to the level of a gender conflict. Not only the conflict within the family is put at par with the conflict in every other social institution but all these conflicts are attributed to the basic gender divide. Communalism is bad because communalists are men! There is violence on women because state institutions are ‘manned’ by men! If a private and ‘personal’ issue like domestic violence or rape is brought out into the open as public crimes and made into a political issue then that is most welcome. But the feministic approach to politics is not limited to this positive side. Their own practice runs counter to this anarchic log-jam. Their own opposition to communalism and NEP takes them into the thick of the ma(i)nstream politics. Despite the feminist fetters and attempts by the NGO ideologues to confine all these movements to the well-programmed grassrootist limits, objectively the movement breaks out of these restrictions.

The impact of the feminists’ call for politicising the personal and intensifying the gender conflict within the family on their own following is difficult to gauge. Here too Ms. Desai has something to say : “... the specific methods of resolving their contradiction with men are distinct. They are primarily those of discussion, persuasion and collective assertion — not of combat which characterises their confrontation with their employers and exploiters. Even if women (and progressive men) may collectively beat up the occasional incorrigible male among their men folk, this is the exception that proves the rule of the general method of persuasive correction and self-correction of others”.<sup>[20]</sup>

It is because of their limited view of politics, the sincere attempts by the feminists to link up with other mass movements suffer from a serious structural flaw. They only land up with the dalit, tribal and other groups floated by their NGO ‘brethren’. Unlike the left parties they are not able to lead a mass following among women workers, agricultural labourers and peasants. Abstracting out the question of political power from such movements they lapse into all sorts of developmentalism and rehabilitationism, of course, from within the narrow gender point of view. To quote Rajani again : “ ... to single out women to examine the impact of development on them can in certain situations prove diversionary ... So also does the attempt to build up an autonomous women’s movement. And both, by being diversionary, could go against the long-term interests of women” Well, we can go on debating these differences and they are not to be resolved overnight. But considering the overall weakness of the women’s movement of all shades in India and the gravity of the challenges like communalism and NEP will it not be proper that communists and feminists should take a new look at each other and in spite of all the differences find out ways of cooperating.<sup>[30]</sup>

### IV. CONCLUSIONS

The feminist movement has experienced rapid growth and increased visibility during the last few years. Existing groups such as the National Organization of Women (NOW) have grown and new groups such as the National Women's Political Causes have been formed. Organized women played an active role in both the Republican and Democratic conventions.

The feminist movement has had several obvious manifestations. Media exposure of the movement has not only increased but it has also changed in nature. Articles about the feminist movement frequently appear in a broad

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spectrum of newspapers and magazines. Initially such articles were covered as special or feature news, however, they are now covered as straight news. Even more significant is the establishment of a national feminist magazine, Ms. the effect of the feminists is also reflected by the fact that the Equal Rights Amendment has been ratified by 21 state legislatures, and is before many more.

While the media reflects the views of national spokeswomen such as Germaine Greer, Betty Freidan, and Gloria Steinem, attitudes and opinions of women in general toward the feminist movement are not easily assessed. [31]

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