



Feminist consciousness: A study of second wave feminism in America

Manisha Rani

Dept. of English, S. D. College, Barnala, Punjab, India

Abstract

Feminism is widely used concept now a days. Feminism is a range of political, social environment that is used to express the equal opportunities to all the men and women. Feminism in America is divided into four parts: First wave feminism, Second wave feminism, Third wave feminism, Fourth wave feminism. In 19th century, Feminism is emerged out of anti-slavery movement in which women were active. Here the main purpose of this study is to analyses the position of women in early 19th century that is in the Second wave feminism and how their condition was described in the works of many American writers and how women were objected to the media image and their talents and capabilities were ignored.

Keywords: feminism, opportunities, anti-slavery, capabilities, contemporary

Introduction

The contemporary woman's movement is generally considered to be arisen in the 20th century which refers to the equal political, social rights for all the woman. Feminism means to define the woman's right which is defined as the total freedom of the woman called "NEW FEMINISM" which is used to solve many problems of woman regarding the domination by the society. In traditional times, women were considered just as to be treated as wife and mother who kept under supervision. She is given no right to vote or indulge herself in any job. If she does a job, she is given a very low income. They are oppressed on the basis of sexual morality, reproduction form etc. the various steps were taken to solve these problems. Feminist activist campaign for women rights such as in the property and to enter in the contracts. Feminist theory which emerged from new feminism aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by analyzing the women social role and lived experiences. Status is very wide term which includes all the aspects of human life and all the ideas which denotes the equal distribution of rights among all the men and woman. In ancient times, the birth of a son was given more importance and daughters were denied from all these

possibilities. Women were regarded as passive and dependent while men were regarded as active and independent.

Second wave feminism

Second wave feminism is a feminist theory that began in the early 1960s in America. It spreads throughout the country very rapidly which defines the position of women in accordance with man. Their domestic and household duties which were their main works were uplifted by the American writers. They issued a large number of problems related to:-

The rights of women in the workplace

Improved sexual freedom

The role of women in the home

Fair employment opportunities for married women

Equal pay for equal work

Reproductive rights

Second wave feminism gave way to legal victories as

Civil Right Act Of 1964" which describes not to do any discrimination on the basis of color, religion and sex.

Equal pay act of 1963 which demands that all the laborers' if there is a male or female should be given equal pay.

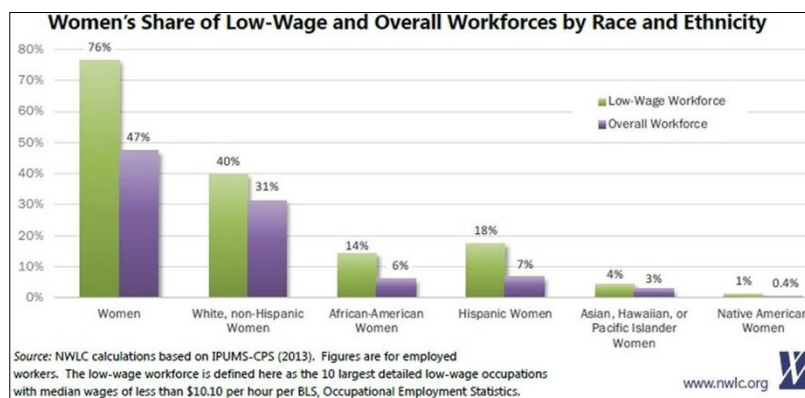


Fig 1

Review on feminist consciousness

Friedan Betty (1921) ^[5]

Betty Friedan is the leading figure of feminism. Her book "The Feminine Mystique" belongs to the second wave feminism. In it she describes "the problem that has no name" widespread unhappiness of woman in the early 1960. Women got married at an early age. They had no right to get education. Then, Betty discussed with another feminist that "the role of a woman is not only of a mother and wife but also something above from it. Which helped in the foundation of National Organization for Woman (NOW), the most influential organization. It was the only moment to gain recognition from the political establishment. It gives the motivation to a large group of women. Friedan offers a new life plan for woman. She wants American woman to take certain steps:

- Friedan asks women to say no to continue their life as married, motherhood.
- Friedan advises women to take housework as a consumer image not as a career.
- Women must gain education to become a part of society.
- American women should speak out for maternity leave.

Millet Kate (1934) ^[6]

Kate has been described as "a seminal influence on second wave feminism". Her best book is "Sexual Politics" defines if one group roles another group. Then it becomes a major part of political ideology in which male plays the supreme role. They are suppressed by rape, beating and murder. She has defined the word "Patriarchy" means sexual domination of female by male. She has given eight factors influencing Patriarchy:

Ideological
Biological
Sociological
Class
Economic and education
Force
Myth and religion
Psychological

Firestone Shulamith (1945) ^[7]

Shulamith is the central figure of second wave feminism. In her work "The Dialectic of Sex": The Case for Feminist Revolution. Here she wants to combine the oppression of dialectics and apply it on the woman. She says "Sexual oppression is very harmful and it will be changed". Male are always the upper hand. So, she wants the end of "Sex Class System" which will help every woman to be free to do work. Firestone's aims here is "to re-analysis in feminist terms" which based on Freud's theory that relate to sexuality and its oppression within the family system: the incest taboo and the resulting Oedipus and Electra complexes. She says that "the difference lies only in that radical feminism does not accept the social context in which repression must develop as immutable".

Other American second wave feminist writers are

- Gloria Steinem
- Germaine Greer

Current scenario of feminism in America

According to De Las Festes "The position and status of woman has been widely changed. This is to analyses from the APAGS(American Psychological association of Graduate Students).Approx.75% of students in the graduation are women which means that women has been given opportunities to learn education."

According to Hasan

"Feminism empowerment means to achieve the goals and it is the positive force in their life."

Conclusion

So, Feminism is an alertness of women's position in society and it deals with the change of position of women among the men in the society. They tried to give equal chances to women. There should be no discrimination on the basis of sex. Feminism which began in the early 1960 gave a way to set the position of women as women. She wants to analyses that a woman also wants "something more than anybody else". Civil right act of 1964, Equal pay act helped in banning the sex discrimination in employment. The Feminist Movement helped the widowed woman. Many opportunities were given to the few divorcees. They were given social benefits.

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