



Research Paper

Feminism and its Marxist perspective

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Abstract

There is not a single interpretation of the phrase that is recognised and agreed upon by all people. The term "feminism" and how it should be used is the subject of much discussion. As a social movement, feminism has been calling for political and economic equality for a very long time. Empowerment of women based on equality in social and cultural contexts Outlining, securing, and defending the equal rights and opportunities of women were the primary goals of the document. A political movement as well as a philosophical theory, feminism advocates for women's rights to be treated on par with those of men. This article examines feminism in all of its myriad guises, as well as the Marxist ideology that underpins feminism. The information in this article comes from reputable sources.

Keywords: *Feminism, Marxism, Patriarchy, Phallocentrism.*

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Although the term "feminism" is in widespread use today, there remains a blurring of what exactly "feminism" means. As a result, many unnecessary controversies have been created. Some confusion remains about feminism's ideology and program. Many people think that "feminism" means "freedom." Many people understand feminism to be a fantasy of the West. In fact, a web of ambiguity about feminism has enveloped people's minds. (Dr. Adhikari Arup, 2021)

It is difficult to give a coherent and clear idea about feminism. Because feminism is not a single specific concept, generally speaking, feminism is a political, economic, cultural, and social movement that seeks to eliminate those systems, organizations, and attitudes that promote or attempt to maintain male dominance. Feminism seeks to revise and correct all those patriarchal ideas that denigrate women's moral, social, economic, and almost all other kinds of experiences and rights. Feminism is about speaking out against traditional patriarchal norms, not about passionate rebellion against society or the arbitrariness of freedom. Feminism is not a movement against men but against patriarchal norms. Kanak Mukherjee, president of the West Bengal Democratic Women's Association (WBDWA), stated, "The women's movement is not against men. The social system that subjugates women and subordinates women to men is against the class-divided social system; the feudal capitalist class is against the exploiting class of society, the capitalist landlord. (Mukhopadhyay, 1986) Therefore, to know about the true nature of feminism, its ideology, and its program, one has to go deep into it. Simone de Beauvoir said in her book "The Second Sex," "No one is born a woman; some become one." (Simone de Beauvoir, Parshlev, 1949) That is, a child is born with female organs by natural law. But at the time of birth, he does not know whether he is male or female. After that, the society imposes its code of conduct restrictions on her and constantly wants to make her understand that she is a woman. She is socially feminised by dressing her up, applying various creams to keep her skin soft, tying her hair, playing with dolls, cooking, telling her not to go out alone, not leaving her hair open, and making her aware of her exterior when she is a little older. It taken Thus, what was a mere biological or sexual difference between men and women, over time, turned into gender discrimination.

Misogyny can be found in literature, philosophy, music, religion, behavior, conversations, and stories. Here are some ways to describe it:

In the traditional social system, women's rights, honor, and merits are seen as much smaller than those of men.

It has been said that women's work in the home, like cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children, the elderly, and the sick, has no moral or social value.

In the traditional system, women are considered to be morally inferior to men.

Independence, control, mental toughness, logic, Sanskrit, independence, etc. have been seen as more masculine, while interdependence, togetherness, dependence on nature, peace-loving, passion, teamwork, etc. have been seen as more feminine.

Masculine styles of moral judgement that emphasise rules, totality, and neutrality are more supported. On the other hand, moral judgements that emphasise qualities such as relationship, specificity, and attachment have been denigrated.

The above analysis clearly shows how much women are looked down upon in a patriarchal society. Girls will be like this, and boys will be like that; if they're too different, it's deviant, an idea that's been ingrained in the brain for thousands of years. As a result, patriarchy has created a visible display of inequality and deprivation toward women. To understand the true nature of misogyny's seemingly invisible fury, one must understand the difference between sexual identity and gender identity. Feminists today always separate these two issues. Sexual identity is the inevitable consequence of biological causation, which is determined by certain organs or characteristics inherited at birth. Male and female identities are determined by the genitalia and some related physical characteristics and genetic makeup. Gender identity, on the other hand, is not a biological thing; it is a social construct. Every society expects certain behaviours from men and women and therefore sets separate codes of behaviour and conduct for men and women. This gender identity starts at birth. In general conversation, behavior, literature, philosophy, poetry, and music, this socially constructed discrimination of gender identity continues.

The concept that men and women are different in ways that aren't natural was invented by a patriarchal society, and women typically exhibit characteristics that are diametrically opposed to those that society regards to be masculine.

Bride-killing is the final result of unjust male dominance. Women don't notice that the appearance of men's hostile behaviour ever changes. If there is rape, there is murder of the bride; if there is murder of the bride, there is sexual assault at work, and so on, one after the other. This discriminatory behaviour towards women is sometimes obvious, sometimes hidden. This discriminatory behaviour operates mainly on three levels. The levels are: (1) sexism, (2) patriarchy, and (3) phallocentrism.

First-level misogyny works through men's use of ritual. Sexism is the strategy of criticising women through speech, behavior, attitude, theory, etc. Making indecent comments to girls, physically and mentally harassing them, unnecessarily beating wives, and raping and murdering brides are all forms of sexism.

The third level of misogyny works in a subtle way. This level of misogyny is called patriarchy, which seeks to establish male dominance at the level of thought. There is an implicit male bias in the logic and theorising in literature, philosophy, religion, etc. Today's feminists believe that philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Kant, and even Advaita Vedanti Shankaracharya admitted male centrism.

In the context of the above discussion, it is seen that social norms, customs, and rituals—even literature, philosophy, and religion—have a hostile attitude towards women everywhere. Analyzing different layers of history, it is seen that women have been physically and mentally neglected and oppressed in patriarchal society for ages. As social civilization progressed, social reformers became aware of the discriminatory relationship between men and women, as well as the injustice done to women. Many have come forward or are coming forward in support of girls. As a result, there has been a lot of change in the attitude towards women at the level of social thought and consciousness. Women have now made a lot of progress in education, politics, employment, and other social spheres. The long-standing monopoly of men is now seen in many cases as being accompanied by the dominance of women. But despite this, discrimination between men and women still exists. Even today, the secret grip of male supremacy and its resulting misogyny continues. The recent picture of misogyny is clear only by looking at the various media outlets. On the front pages of newspapers almost every day, there is news of such and such women being raped. Even today, little girls are being sold in the body trade. Girls are still subjected to sexual harassment on the streets and in the social institutions in the villages. The various laws for girls will remain empty gestures unless social consciousness is developed and appropriate conscious social contexts are taken into account. In this context, we may mention a few quotes from S.C. Dube's book *Indian Society*: "Even after forty years of independence, one still constantly learns about dowry-related killings and the burning of brides. Other forms of lesser violence include: heaping humiliations on the wife and her paternal relatives; forcing the wife to do too much work with little rest; failing to provide her with adequate nutrition; and mentally torturing her on multiple counts. All of these are examples of lesser forms of violence. Despite the fact that things are getting better, women with high levels of education and good salaries are not immune to this kind of mistreatment". (Dube, 1990). It is important to remember here that the quote in question has to be understood in the context of misogyny in India. Although these words are applicable to many other states as well, they mainly refer to the discrimination of women in Indian society.

Different ideologies have interpreted the issue of women's discrimination in different ways and have indicated its solutions accordingly. Existentialism, humanism, biology, psychoanalysis theory, liberalism, radicalism, Marxism, etc. have all looked at women's discrimination in different ways and how to end it. The Marxist theoretical framework will be used as a lens through which we will attempt to throw light on various aspects of discrimination against women and how to address them.

According to Marx's conflictual historical materialism, the problem of misogyny must be understood in conjunction with the problem of the exploited supply class. Marx's historical analysis has shown that the progress of this society is possible through class struggle, and only when private ownership is abolished through class struggle will a communist society be established where there will be no class discrimination. According to this materialist conception of history and this historical analysis of the progress of human society, the exploitation of the proletariat by the exploiting class (the bourgeoisie) is not long-lasting, just as the neglect of women in patriarchal society is temporary. The proletariat and the way women are treated and treated like second-class citizens will end when class struggle comes to an end for good.

Marxism is the only theory that shows, through historical and scientific analysis of the neglected condition of women, that full emancipation of women is possible only in a non-exploitative communist society. Hence V. E. Leylin called Marxian theory "omnipotent." (V.I.Lenin, 2010) This all-powerful Marxist theory shows through historical analysis that women have not been subjugated to men since the beginning of human society. But the idea that human society was patriarchal from the beginning is completely wrong. Using historical terms, Marx's theory demonstrates that, while the foundation of marriage and family systems in pre-civilization appeared to be immoral, there was no place for gender discrimination, and there was a family system in which the criterion for determining the social position of a son or daughter was maternal identity, and matriarchy was the basic foundation of society. As a consequence of this, it is clear that women held extremely prominent and respected positions in the purportedly archaic society. [Citation needed] The worship of goddesses and the prevalence of goddess idols are indicators of matriarchy and can be found in the poetry, epics, and sculpture art of a variety of countries.

How matriarchal society and the family system evolve into patriarchy and subsequently lead to gender inequality is clearly identified in Marxian theory. Analyzing the course of history, Marx showed that as the progress of civilization increased the development of society, it also created a breeding ground for exploitation, oppression, and discrimination in society. That is, the nature of society and civilization is not one-sided or one-dimensional; its character is dialectical and simultaneously additive and subtractive. This two-dimensional dialectic of civilization is the reason for the crisis of character in society. In a society dominated by communism at its infancy, the concept of private property did not exist. The progressive development of private ownership at one level of society made the division of labour a prerequisite for social organisation. The decentralisation of manufacturing results in increased speed and a more competitive mindset. As a result of this, the accepted matriarchy and mother's rights are lost and replaced by male supremacy and patriarchal discipline, and this thought creates gender inequality. Feudal and capitalist social systems are characterised by gender inequality. The rights and dignity of women are enshrined in the secret trap of patriarchy and the retreat of women from the practical sphere of society into the home.

Through historical analysis, Marxism has shown that the root cause of women's subjugation is the class system. Subjugation and exploitation of women have been seen in various forms through various stages of class exploitation. And at the root of this exploitation is the introduction of private ownership. With the emergence of private ownership, one class of men usurped that right of ownership and began to exploit other classes of men as their slaves, both physically and mentally. At that time, women were pushed into the domestic work of male-dominated families. Woman became subservient to man for her sustenance. As a result, the fate of women became united with that of the exploited male class. Along with the exploited male class or the working class at different levels of class society, the women's community has also been exploited in different ways. In slave societies, feudal societies, and capitalist societies, exploited men of the working class and women of all classes have been exploited in one way or another. And in the Puni Badi social system, this level of exploitation goes to extremes. Therefore, according to Marxian theory, it is not possible to establish a balanced, normal, spiritual relationship between men and women if the structure of a puritanical society is not removed. A socialist proletarian system is needed for the full liberation of women. Full emancipation of women is possible in a socialist society. And here, the problem of women's emancipation is inextricably linked with the problem of proletarian emancipation.

Marxian analysis showed that only the abolition of private ownership of capital would end class exploitation. And with the end of that class, the exploitation of women will end. The complete emancipation of the exploited women's society is only possible if capitalism is abolished and socialism is established through the revolution of the working class. When the socialist system was established in Russia following the November Revolution of 1917, it took the form of the full emancipation of exploited women's society. From the beginning, Leylin raised the question of the emancipation of women along with the emancipation of the proletariat. In her words, "The proletariat can never be fully emancipated unless it can establish emancipation for women."

(Engels Fredarich, 1974) At this stage, certain restrictions on intermarriage based on caste, caste, etc. arose, and the practise of joint marriage began to disappear. In the third stage, human society enters the age of civilization. From this time on, people began to move towards the practise of art culture. During this period, a marriage system emerged, and polygamy and slavery began to be considered unethical in society.

Engels' above analysis of social evolution suggests that men and women had equal rights at the primitive level of human society. But today we live in a civilised society where capitalism prevails, where monogamy is followed in the eyes of the law by taking advantage of property rights, patriarchy, and gender inequality, but in practise polygamy has become the perfect nature of men. As a result, women are oppressed financially, physically, and mentally. On the other hand, despite protesting the cruel and economic system of capitalist society, the women's society does not receive justice. If a woman leaves a legally recognised marriage to pursue another path, she is condemned and scorned by society. In this way, the existence of women in a male-dominated society and a capitalist society is endangered. Therefore, the abolition of the capitalist social system and the establishment of a communist society are necessary for the liberation of women. From Marx's historical analysis, we see that the overthrow of the capitalist social system is possible only through the revolution of the proletariat. And if the capitalist society is ousted, a communist society without class exploitation will be established. And in that classless communist society, the proletarian working class will be liberated from the subjugated status of women.

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