CHAPTER - I

FEMINISM AS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT FOR POLITICAL RIGHTS
Contemporary feminism has attracted the attention of social scientists, policy makers, administrators, activists and women's organizations. Research regarding modern feminism finds that it is the outcome of 18th century intellectual and industrial revolutions. Before trying to understand the term 'feminism', its origin needs to be noted. The term 'feminism' came into English usage in the 1890's from the French word 'Feminisme'. The term feminism appeared for the first time in a book review in 1895 issue of the British Journal 'Athenaeum', replacing the term 'WOMANISM'. That is why feminist movements during the 19th century were called women's movements on the liberal side and women's liberation movements on the radical side. Since 1972, women's liberation movements have gained momentum and began to be called 'Feminist Movements'.

Defining Feminism:

Feminism has been defined in different ways. Starting with opposition towards discrimination based on sex, feminism has moved to the status of a wide movement around the world, supporting the cause of women. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary 'Feminism' means advocacy of women's rights on grounds of equality of sexes. The Encyclopaedia of Britannica defines feminism as the belief that women are equal to men; should have right to vote, to hold public office and to go to college and to work on the same job as men. This implies that men and women should have opportunities
of enjoying rights and sharing of responsibility in all walks of human life. According to the Columbia Encyclopedia, 'feminism is a movement for political, social and educational equality of women and men. This makes clear that men and women should be treated as human beings. Absence of equal treatment has led to a movement by the discriminated sex.

The liberal thinkers and the utilitarian have also thought on the above lines. Mary Wollstonecraft in her *vindication of rights of women* speaks of equality of men and women. J.S. Mill and others feel that because of the common nature as free human beings, men and women are to be treated as equals.

Juliet Mitchel, one of the well known writers of feminism, says that feminism discovered women as a distinct special group, a group whose identity is womanhood. In understanding feminism, writers like Juliet Mitchel, Boulby Rachel and Gallop Jane are guided by gender as well as psychological factors. Hence their explanations could also be considered as psycho-analytical.

Maim Attalah's book *women* gives details of what women speak of feminism. Feminism enables one to understand it from women's point of view. Some noteworthy opinions are given here under. Anna Dickson feels that feminism is not a complement. Because of media, feminism equals man hater, lesbianism, ugly and common protester. To her, feminism should be viewed as a political aspect and can be applied to men as well and men can be
feminists'. Rebecca Fraser dislikes the idea of feminism if it is threatening to men. Lady Anabel Gold Smith categorizes women of different countries adopting feminism. In her opinion, American women were aggressive and lost their feminity and French women continue to achieve what ever they want to. While retaining feminity, English women are more influenced by the Americans rather than by the French. The Latins tend to keep their feminity. So feminism has been shaped in accordance with different social conditions in different stages.

Nicky Hart is of the view that feminism should not exclude men, but women wanting to be alone should get self confidence. She pleads for the co-existence of men and women. To Blamche Lucas, feminism really means being fair to women and giving them the same place in society as to men. Jenny Lumet says that feminism has made some people think that being a female is a burden. The ultimate feminism would be for a woman to succeed by thinking intuitively. She says that the feminists and effects of feminists movements are to be balanced. Susan Mc Henry goes further saying that 'my feminism is not just the gender thing, it is also race, clan and caste'. Susan stresses on the need for a democratic change in society and feels that any movement should not lead to division.

Bel Mooney in the 1980's dismisses the very idea of feminism, due to the bad name it got on account of extremists. She is apt in saying that radical feminists have extreme views and schemes. Feminism is a very human movement and it is also a
female trade union movement for Mully Parkin. Penny Perrick's idea is that feminism should aim at equal opportunities in every aspect of life irrespective of sex. She is against radical feminism, which rejects males. These two opinions are humanistic.¹⁹

Feminism Categorised:

Feminism has evolved over the years with some ideologies, which has not always been even. Feminism with ideology as the base, could be classified into Social Welfare Feminism, Reasonable Feminism, Radical Feminism, Militant Feminism, Cultural Feminism, Marxists Feminism and Socialist Feminism.

As is widely known, feminism as a self conscious movement with some elements of organisation emerged by 1818 in Britain and by 1820 in America. In these countries, feminist movements could achieve the right to vote and equal status at which feminism chiefly aimed. Since it aimed at a simple cause, this kind of feminism has been called as reasonable feminism. This reasonable-feminism is the first wave feminism.²⁰

Radical feminism has gained considerable importance in the second half of the 20th century. The defining feature of it is its insistence that sex is the fundamental factor of division of society. Exploitation of biological difference between sexes is termed by the radical feminists as male dominance. To them, male dominance, otherwise known as patriarchy, is said to be prevalent where men have the ability to exploit biological differences
between the sexes. Patriarchy has often been used as the central concept to understand the nature of women's oppression. So the radicals have laid stress on the need to root out the evil of women's oppression. They want to adopt a revolutionary method for goal achievement. They are not for reforms, but for women's integration, to act as potential sisters. Despite the unique strategies and techniques, radical feminism contains conflicting tendencies. Semi-radical feminists characterize them as pro-women and argue that women are to explore their own potentials. Radical feminists regard women even as superior to men.

Some radical feminists have called themselves revolutionary and termed their approach as cultural feminism. Marxist feminism is based on Marxist political theory. These feminists are of the belief that class struggle is the primary activity aiming at overthrowing the capitalist system and the feminist movement should carry on only from the point of the class struggle. They also believe that feminist groups should work together to explore the autonomy of ideology.

Militant feminism is known for its distinct techniques. These feminists use modern propaganda and techniques like street marches and processions, banners and floats and head lines hitting publicity. They also circulate newspapers and picture magazines. In pursuit of votes for women, they practise civil disobedience. They believe in the principle of no taxation without representation. Militancy is shown by defiance of government and law. However, militant feminism, where ever adopted, has confined
itself only to the minority sections.

Lawrence A. Bobb identifies another type of feminism which in India is called **Brahma Kumari’s feminism**. He says that feminism can be seen as a product of different cultures and argues that "will to be free" can be nourished in different ways by different cultures. **Brahma** Kumari's concept of the word is an idea of human alienation that draws its strength from the image of women as victims of corrupt institutions. This version of predicament however, differs some what from the one portrayed by Western feminists. This group of feminists concentrate on sexuality, rather than on the exigencies of child bearing and house keeping, as the significant factor in women's subordination. They gave importance to the divine family through which liberation can be achieved from the injustice of this world. So the fact would remain that feminism is essentially **indigenous**. Brahma Kumaries formulated their order by utilizing elements from within their own traditions.²⁷

It can be now be said that there exist recognizable differences between various groups of feminists. Some would give preference to ideology, others plead for the status of women, while some others are against **patriarchy**. Yet some other **feminists** are **more** concerned about the techniques to be adopted in achieving the goals. However, one should accept William Wald's opinion that equal rights for women are vital ingredients. Moreover a recognition, realization and self confidence about equal rights are essential particularly among the two **sexes**.
Feminist Movements Around the World:

Feminist movement had its origin in the French Revolution, when the Women's Republican Clubs demanded that liberty, equality and fraternity be applied regardless of sex. The French Revolution in turn, inspired women to think in terms of women's liberation. In 1792, "Vindication of Rights of Women", the feminists document was written by Mary Wollstonecraft. Various thinkers started exploring the required social and political changes, if the idea of equality were to become a reality. Feminist movements and theories of the 18th and 19th centuries were largely liberal in inspiration and are based on claims of justice and fairness.

Feminists Movement in America:

Feminism as a movement became active in America earlier than any other part of the world. Even Europeans looked to America for a lead. This is the reason why every feminist movement was, up to a degree, considered as an imitation of the American feminist movement. Even though the legal and economic position of women was better in America than else where, women's rights and opportunities were very limited. At the beginning of the 19th century, there was no higher education for women and they played no part in professions. Inequality was very much evident in the occupational structure which was the fundamental determinant of individuals' class position and was the back bone of class structure. Occupational structure was again directly linked to the educational
system. Legal redress was possible only in some parts of North America.

The idea of partnership with women in many spheres of life was gradually superseded by the "cult of womanhood", in which the true middle class women were depicted as pious, delicate, submissive, domesticated and pure. Feminist ideologies were materialized through campaigns to correct prostitutes and to promote temperance as early as the 1830’s and 1840’s. A substantial feminist movement began in the United states where women involved themselves in the movement to abolish slavery in the 1830’s. Three hundred men and women attended the famous convention held at Seneca Falls in 1848. Twelve resolution of which women's suffrage formed a very important one were passed. The Seneca Falls Convention was the first collective action for change in the position and rights of women.

Feminist political action in the United States has gone through a cyclic nature in the past 140 years. This cyclic pattern could be divided into three phases- the first phase occurring between 1848 and the Civil War, the second phase between the 1900 and 1920 and the third from 1960 to the present.

At the beginning of the first phase of the feminist movement, feminists focused on the suffrage issue. Two main suffrage associations were led by Elizabeth S. Carton and Susan B. Anthony. Social feminism, that is the involvement of the women in reforming directly benefited women. By the 1880’s. The National
Women's Suffrage Association became more respectable and by 1890 it merged with the American Women's Suffrage Association to form the National American Women's Suffrage Association. Elisabeth S. Carton and Susan B. Anthony thought that the fight for women's right now had to be waged by women alone.

In the first two decades of the 20th century, militant feminism became active. The suffrage movement itself entered the militant phase. Carrie Champmann's skillful leadership secured in 1920 entitled women to vote in the national as well as in the state elections. The public at large presumed that women's emancipation had been achieved and the result was that feminism had subsided but it did not disappear.

The outcome of the first phase of feminism in America was the new ideology of equality. The emergence of liberalism and capitalism inspired women to apply for equal rights and doctrine to themselves. There by women were freed from many domestic female functions. But working class women remained with the burden of double shift. In the opinion of O'Neil the upper class and the educated middle class launched and dominated the women's movement. They were more conscious about women's narrowing sphere and the man's expanding one.

During the second phase of feminism in America between 1920 and 1960, when feminism was supposedly dead, the descendants of the suffragists poured much of their energy into education and employment. They earned greater proportion of advanced degrees. But
during the 1940’s and 1950 s the proportion of women in the labour force continued to climb. In this phase equal rights feminism was replaced as pointed by Banks, by welfare feminism or reasonable feminism. During the days of depression, the feminist movement supported welfare measures to alleviate poverty, and the feminists were also involved in peace movement. 37

In respect of social status, during the 1950’s there was a sharp rise in the employment of married women coupled with the long term decline in the fertility rate. 38 In the opinion of Rossi, 1961 could be suggested as the beginning year of the marker, 1966 as the transition to the second phase and 1972 as the standing power of that transition to the third phase. 39

It is important to note that the second wave of feminism has not addressed itself to political questions and has characteristically ignored questions of citizenship. But it was primarily the women's party that pursued the question of equal rights. The larger NAWA became the league of women voters, concentrating on women's civil education and worked for welfare legislation.

The National Organisation of Women, played a central role in women's liberation movement. Under the first president Friedon, NOW adopted conventional patterns of organisation. Though primarily oriented towards equal rights, its platform has always included radical elements, reflecting in particular its changing relationship with the women's movement as a whole. NOW at its 1967
conference, demanded not only increasing equal employment opportunities but also legislation accepting or legalising abortions. After the withdrawal of conservative members from the NOW, the progressive women formed the women's Equality Action League in 1968. This league concentrated on legal and economic aspects of equal opportunities. The National Organisation of Women claimed a membership of 50,000 and 500 local chapters by 1973. From then on it started supporting the decriminalisation of prostitution and the rights of lesbians.

Another important organisation was the National Women's Political Careers, a non partisan organisation founded in 1971 to function as a pressure group for greater representation of women and women's rights and issues in the mainstream of both the Republican and Democratic parties. In the 1972 political party conventions the number of women delegates increased—Democrats from 13% to 39% and the Republicans from 17% to 30%, and these women gave weight to feminist political pressure. Subsequently, the number of women's organisations increased giving support to the ERA. Feminist movement at its National Conference at Houston in 1977 was seen as a disaster or as a manifestation of robust political health. There were differences of ideological tendencies. NOW and ERA campaigns could, for specific purposes, bridge these divisions.

The third wave feminism which started from 1960's has several important events at the beginning itself. The publication of Friedon's 'The Feminine Mystique' in 1963 was a significant
marker, as enormous response was there among the American women in the years following its publications. Another event was the formation of Kennedy Commission, a Status Commission of women in 1961 and publication of its final report 'American Women' in 1963. Following these two markers, the National Organisation for Women (NOW) was founded in 1966.

**Feminist Movement in Great Britain:**

British feminism was chronologically the second after the American movement to emerge in an organised form. It dates back to 1850’s though a few organisations were founded earlier whose implications were feminist in character. In Britain, feminist ideas spread among women in the 1840’s. The first recognisable women's suffrage pamphlet was published in 1847 by Anne Knight, a Quaker and the first suffragist organisation, Sheffield Association for Female Suffrage was formed in mid 1851. But as an organised movement, feminism emerged in the mid 1850’s a decade later than in America. The suffrage question came to the fore from the mid 1860’s and particularly following the defeat of J.S. Mill's attempt to get women included in the provisions of 1867 Reform Act. This led to the formation of the National Society for Women's Suffrage. In fact Mill's Subjugation of Women had an incalculable influence on feminism. Almost everywhere social feminism began to flourish taking forms similar to those in America. Under the influence of Josephine Butler, a big campaign was launched against prostitution. In 1857, the Divorce Act was passed. As these reforms were in progress, opportunities were also expanding in the field of
education. In 1866 female suffrage movement presented to parliament a petition signed by 1,499 women demanding that suffrage reform then under consideration include votes for women. The leading woman until 1890 was Lydia Becker. 46

Emma Patterson founded the British Trade Union League in 1873. It was led successfully by Mary Macarthur, its secretary. After 1903, various women’s organisations were launched. The suffrage movement under the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies inclined towards the liberal party. 47 The conservatives several times voted against the female suffrage bills. 48 As a result, Women's Social and Political Union came into existence as a Radical Feminist Wing. By 1910, its prominent leader Mrs. Pankhurst launched a famous campaign of direct action, but it went in vain. During the First World War, a group of feminists intended to support the government, if their demands are conceded, while the other group extended unconditional support. Despite these differences, feminism at the end of the war was still vigorous. The British feminist movement by the 1900s became not only large and vigorous but also radical and successful. Its tactics which included frequent marches through the streets and demonstrations in the open air were more daring than those of any other feminist organisations outside the U.S.A.

Suffrage to the British Women was granted in two phases—to those aged 30 or above in 1918 and to all adults in 1928. This gave more life to British feminism in the 1920s. O’Neil suggests that British feminism grew more radical than the American Feminism in the first decades of the twentieth century. 50
In British, the WSPU disintegrated after 1919. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Society was renamed as National Union of Societies of Equal Citizens. If continued to press for equal rights. The drive to extend the vote to women under thirty was its central activity. But with considerable labour party support, feminists also secured a significant extension of women's rights. Women obtained equal rights to divorce and to the custody of children. In the place of militant feminism, both in Britain and America, welfare feminism prevailed in the 1930’s. Following the Second World War, most of the feminist in Britain came to believe that a new society in which there was the equality of sexes was institutionalized and marriage was conceived as partnership.

It is evident that in the 1950 s the contradictions in women's role multiplied and intensified. Continuously women experienced roles strains, with the expansion of higher education for women in 1960’s. As Rossi pointed out, unattached women played a central role in women's rights movement because of that relative independence from men. Since 1960 the age of marriage has moved up. The birth rate was dropped and the divorce rate has risen. 51

It is interesting to note that, since the 1960 s British women began reemphasizing on equal political rights. Many younger women especially students got involved in politics, like in campaign for nuclear disarmament and Vietnam solidarity campaign. In 1969, the National Joint Action Committee for Women's Equal Rights was formed. It drew the attention of Marxist groups like the International Marxist Group. However, the British Groups lacked
continuous coordination mechanism other than conferences and publications and particularly Spare Rib a periodical launched in 1972. At the 1975 conference in Manchester, it was agreed to delegate, to a committee, responsibilities between the conferences and that committee came to be known as WIRES (Women Information Reternal and Enquiry Service). After the circulation of Sheila Jeffney's paper 'A Need for Revolutionary Feminism', militants called themselves revolutionary feminists. 52

Women's Movement in Erstwhile U. S. S. R.:

During the Tsarist Regime, conditions were not favorable for the development of the feminist movement. 19th century Russia, governed by the authoritarian Tzar, was overwhelmingly rural and peasant in structure. Expression of feminism everywhere was only literary.

The feminist movement in Russia was more than usually isolated from men. Russian feminist movement emerged from St. Petersburg and Moscow. Mariya Trubrikona (1835-97), daughter of one of the aristocratic dembrist revolutions of 1825, derived her feminism from reading western literature and personal contact with Josephine Butler whom she met in England in the 1860s. Feminist groups and organisations in Russia were encouraged by a letter of support from John Stuart Mill. It was the non-Russian literature that inspired women's cooperatives in this country. By 1895, Russian Women's Mutual Benefit Society was formed to concentrate on philanthropic causes. It helped to develop a feminist consciousness among its members.
Russian feminist movement which began as a moderate movement connected with the philanthropic society in the 1860s underwent a transition to more radical aims and tactics after the revolution of 1905. Radical feminism was unable to emerge until the 1905 revolution because of the extremely repressive attitudes of the authoritarian Tzarist regime. The Russian feminist movement of the 1860s was subjected to repeated frustration at the hands of the authorities, however, the social democrats and social revolutionaries believed in female equality. The movement carried its work of protection of working mothers. However, women played a minor role in the Social Democratic Party. Bolsheviks led by Lenin paid more attention to the recruitment of women into the party. But Bolsheviks regarded that the emancipation of women was something the world had to wait until the completion of the revolution.  

Since the time of Kruschev, there has been a steady stream of resolutions calling for the importance of female participation in the political process. During the 1970s, there was evidence of a renewal of concern. Breznev, in a speech on 23rd Feb, 1981 at his last Congress said "It has to be acknowledged that so far not all possibilities are being used to promote women to executive posts". Mikhail Gorbachev also added to this point on 6 March, 1986, saying that "more women should be vigorously promoted to party posts". In spite of the stress on the promotion of women by the leaders, women's political education was not up to the mark. In the USSR, the sexual division of labour exists which gives women the major responsibility for the family. Traditional attitudes towards women persisted and female political
consciousness still fell below that of men. Moreover, women's own attitudes presented psychological barriers. However, from Kruschev's times, women started involving themselves in social activities. There is a womanly social organisation called 'Zhensovety', which involved women workers in social activities and helped to organise public services. The Zhensovety appeared to have had the most success in mobilising women around the political and socio-economic decisions of the party and the state.

Zhensovety tried to improve the lives of women, acting as a pressure group in the working places. It frequently intervened to improve women's working conditions. However, the main achievement had been to help women believe in their own strength and develop the relationship among them. Their growth helped to educate women towards collectivism, friendship and mutual support. Even though Zhensovety was organised as a women's wing for the cause of women, it was not as independent as the western women's organisations.

Feminist Movement in India:

Taking the lead from the early efforts, some Indian women began to work for the cause of women. Among the early prominent women reformists mention should be made of Panditha Ramabhai and Ramabhai Randey along with a host of men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy. In the 20th century, the contribution of Gandhiji towards the emancipation of women is worth noticing. Writing in 'The Young India' in 1926, Gandhiji said "the custom of child marriage is both a moral as well as a physical evil; ordinarily a
girl under eighteen years shall and never be given in marriage." Gandhiji boldly opposed the social evils that roan has made himself responsible. None is so degrading, so shocking or so brutal as his abuse of the better of humanity to the female sex, not the weaker sex." Through his writings, Gandhiji tried to generate right thinking among the people. Gandhiji made the Indian woman into a person who is respecting and self confident.

In respect of women taking lead for the cause of other women, the establishment and functioning on the Women's Indian Association could be regarded as the first attempt to organise women on an all India basis. Started by Annie Beasant and Margaret Cousins on May 8th, 1917, this organisation developed 48 branches with a membership of 2700 by 1921 and 3000 by 1926. The main objectives of the Women's India Association were to present to women their responsibility as the daughters of India; to secure for women the right to be elected and to bring women into a group for the purpose of self development and education. In 1917, the WIA submitted a memorandum to Montague, the Secretary of State for India, requesting extension of franchise to women of other dominions of the British Empire.

In August 1919 the WIA decided to send representatives to England to work for female franchise. Mrs and Miss M.A. Tata followed by Sarojini Naidu submitted the statement regarding female franchise to the Joint Select Committee. As female franchise was regarded as a domestic subject, it was left by the parliament to be decided upon by the provincial legislative council. But it
ted an opportunity for the leading women in credit for this step goes to Mrs. Annie Beasant, Mrs Sarojini Naidu, Mrs 3ta and Miss Mithan Lam Bar-at-law whose arguments were convincing to the members of parliament. 61

On the 22nd and 23rd of April 1924 a National Convention Allahabad adopted a resolution to strive for equal rights on women to the incorporated in the constitution. The WIA serve like a pressure group and it had its links with the Jional Women's Suffrage Alliance.

Another women's organization, the All India Women's ce, which came into existence in 1929 mainly campaigned for reforms such as the Sarada Bill and for Women's Franchise. s during the 1920 s and 1930 s tremendous change occurredomen's movement in India. The movement consisted of ladies and Maharani and these personalities were well ed with the Congress. The All India Women's Conference or the promotion of women's education and for the welfare and children. It had taken up problems of the national and by 1948, the middle class and working women had come 64

This is a very far reaching development.

The constitution of independent India recognized the of sexes. Towards emancipation of women, the Indian ent passed progressive legislations which included the Hindu Act 1955, the Hindu Succession Act 1956, the Hindu and Guardian Act in 1956, the Suppression of Immoral

The above discussion makes clear that the feminist movements in the U.S., USSR, UK and India initially focused more on their demand for social and economic equality based on gender. The political aspect, though visible, has not received first priority. In the recent decades, feminists have laid greater stress on political equality, quantitative and qualitative, as the prerequisite for other kinds of equality. It would be useful to give details of the concept of political equality. Political equality is having equal opportunities in public affairs. Equality is based on commonalty of needs. Therefore political equality means that all citizens should enjoy equal political rights without limitations.

Enjoying political equality is the need of every citizen. Before feminism has gained ground, women were deprived of political equality and they did not possess independent political status. In England and America, married women were not recognized as persons. Legal existence of women is suspended and incorporated into the husband. Indian women also were maaided in the same way on the lines of Manu's doctrines.
In the process of emancipation of women, political equality was considered as the last step. That is why Von Hippel aims at the inconclusiveness of women in the ‘Rights of Man’. If women are recognised as the fellow citizens of men, then the public status of men can be changed. The same arguments was expressed by Wollstonecraft during the French Revolution.

Among the efforts made by women to mobilise and involve women in the political process especially in the electoral process, mention should be made of women's parties established in different countries in 20th century. In Great Britain, Canada France, Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Israel, U.S, Argentina, Chile, Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Korea, Philippines and now in Russia since 1993, women's parties got established. With the scarce data available about these parties, analysts have found that some of them have been successful, but none of them have been long lasting. The main objective of the early women's parties like those in Britain, Canada, U.S.A., Argentina and Australia is to get the vote for women. Since the 70s of this century, women's parties emerged as a result of growing dissatisfaction with the limited number of women in elected offices and the scant attention paid by the politicians to women's concerns. The Norwegian Women's Party, the Women's Party of Netherlands and example of such parties. The Feminists Party of Canada, the women's party in Russia called Women of Russia could be also be mentioned. In Russia the women's party got more than 8% of the total vote in the recent election (1993-94). Whether women's parties are a successful strategy to get more women elected is a big question. Success depends on their
ideology, choice of interests, quality of leadership, interaction with the women's organisations and other factors. Only when a women's party can show that women's interests have their own political implications and relevance for political decision making, it will be able to attract and mobilise the female electorate. However, sharing of responsibility and participation in decision making by both the sexes in the political parties is a more feasible arrangement for realizing the goals of any system. In the opinion of Ursula it is not sufficient if political equality is granted. Women should also have the capacity and competence to participate in public affairs.69

To Barbara Rogers, the public issues are being defined by the political parties as entirely men's issues and women are reduced to choose among policies. Hence it is to be understood that political equality is an opportunity where by people can participate in policy making and forming political parties and leading them.

Feminists in Andhra Pradesh:

The above would suggest that feminism as a political movement has not been uniformly active around the world. The feminists have fought for political equality of women. Absence of institutional support like that of political parties is one of the strong hindrances for the active involvement of women in politics and for the assumption of leadership roles. In this context, the views of some prominent feminists in the state of Andhra Pradesh
could be mentioned. The writer has interviewed a number of prominent women in the state and also consulted feminist literature. In the state of Andhra Pradesh, the strong feminist organisations, led by women themselves like Asmitha, Abhyudaya Samakhya, Strisakti Sanghatana, Progressive Organisation of Women, Democratic Women's Association, Andhra Mahila Sabha are dedicated to the cause of women. Some organisations chiefly led by men, like the Bhagavathula Charitable Trust, Jana Vignana Vedika. A. P Civil Liberties Association are also concerned about the uplift of women. Very recently some of the above organisations are campaigning for the active participation of women in the political process. An organisation, whose main objective is that of encouraging women from local to national level politics, called/State Committee of Women from the Panchayat to Parliament emerged in 1995. Since 1980 more importantly in 1990's women's involvement in politics, campaign, political parties, representative institutions and decision making structures is felt to be the need of the day. Vasantha Kannabhiran, a committed feminist says that no importance is attached to women's experiences while framing political ideologies. Hence the programmes of political parties based on such ideologies will not be conducive to women's development. She strongly feels that women's experiences in daily life, their thoughts and desires are to be analysed for getting a right perspective about women and that it is necessary to frame ideologies, giving right place to women's experiences, aspirations and needs. Arguing that 'personal is political' a self declared socialist feminist and writer, Volga says that experience is personal and it has its relation to ideology. Continuing her
argument, she says that influence of patriarchy is higher over middle class and hence woman get less opportunity for political participation. She is against exploitation and gender discrimination and patriarchy and supports these evils. Echoing Volga's views, Vasantha Kannabhiran says that feminism explains the politics of gender and it is a means to search answers to certain questions relating to gender discrimination. In an attempt to bring out the differences between feminists and mass organisations (non-feminist organisations), K. Lalitha of Anveshi points out that the former observe democratic principles and the latter are hierarchical. Hence women are denied of leadership roles in political parties and other organisations. In her opinion women's leadership in all organisations is necessary to solve several problems.

The feminists in the state in general, believe that the political parties are male dominated and they do not work for social change. Hence feminists are against participation in legislatures. Dr. Rampalli Anasuya feels that political parties do not give proper training to women. Hence women's leadership is not developed. An interesting statement given by Aparna, a prominent leader of the Progressive Organisation of Women, is that attitude of feminists in general to keep themselves away from men is wrong. It is the patriarchy that is to be attacked. She favours active involvement of feminists in women's movements for achieving the goal of emancipation of women in the right direction.
Feminists in Andhra Pradesh are in favour of superseding the hierarchies, achieving *women’s solidarity* and *development* of women’s studies *movement* which have also been supported by prominent women leaders like Devaki Jain and *Maitrei* Krishna Reddy of All India Women's Association. As suggested at the Global Summit of Women in 1992 by feminist leaders of states like Mary Robinson of Ireland, Ígdris Finbogalóir of Ireland, the need for *identification* of a feminist method to evaluate the status of women is also felt by the feminists in India. The need for coming out of barrier, while fight against barrier is realised. The Global *Summit* of Women and Political Leadership held at Taipei, Taiwan, February 1994, reemphasised on the need for increased efforts for mobilising women around the world for sharing political power and responsibility and decision making with men.
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