CHAPTER I
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF FEMINISM

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CHAPTER I
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF FEMINISM

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines feminism as “the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim” (Hornby 560). Whereas A New Approach Dictionary of Living English defines, “Feminism as a belief or movement advocating the cause of women’s rights and opportunities, particularly equal rights with men, by challenging inequalities between the sexes in society” (Sohoni 200). After taking into consideration some of the definitions of feminism, it is essential to study the nature of feminism and its correlations with various other factors on a broad level.

Feminism is mainly a western concept. In human history, women’s existence is observed through male point of view as a result of which women are always considered as secondary. Feminism comes into existence through the struggle for women's right against the injustice carried out in the society. Feminism involves two important aspects of intellectual commitment and political movement that lead to justice for women and ends in sexism in all forms. According to Deborah Madsen, “feminism deals with women and their status in society and asks questions about oppression, consciousness and gender”. Madsen further states that the concerns of feminist theory are “the unique experience of women in history; the notion of female consciousness; the definition of gender that limit and oppress; and the cause of women’s liberation from those restrictions” (200).

Feminism involves different aspects related to women’s rights in the society such as political, social and economical. These rights allotment provides them a means of participation in politics, business and legal matters that help them to get recognition and build up power in the society. It also covers all aspects of women's rights.
Feminism covers two major concepts that of gender and patriarchy. Gender is identified through the difference of male and female. It is regarded as sex role in sociology. In the society of the past, all the decisions in the family were dependant on the men and, therefore, women were given secondary status. This position in the family came to be known as patriarchy. This system had a lot of influence on the society.

Hence, male enjoyed all the privileges allotted to them by the society whereas women were always given secondary status. From these general observations, feminist theory came into existence that raised the concept of inequality between male and female. Feminists have worked out lots of campaigns in order to gain equal share in the family property and voting right for women. They also promoted women’s reproductive rights. Feminist activities have opposed various injustices such as domestic violence and sexual harassment. Considering the economical factor, they have struggled for women’s rights at the work place including equal wages and opportunities for them. Various definitions of feminism are provided, as according to Chris Weldon feminism is a politics:

It is politics directed at changing of existing power relation between women and men in society. These power relations structure all areas of life, the family, education and welfare, the worlds of work and politics, culture and leisure. They determine who does what and for whom, what we are and what we might become. (94)

In the society, women are given secondary status like discrimination between the rights of male and female, sexual assault, restrictions imposed on behaviour, separation, etc. Men always keep restrictions on women’s political, social and cultural rights. It becomes essential to understand the origin of feminism. In the 19th century, women from England and America started a movement for their voting right. Till
1960, the movement was not up to the mark, but later it started taking its speed. Various movements took place after which the writings of Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer and Kate Millet became popular.

The basic aim of the feminist theory is to understand certain aspects of gender difference and gender inequality. Considering the aspects of social and political power relations, it concentrates on the promotion of women's rights in the society. There are various themes that explode in feminist theory that includes discrimination, sexual objectification, oppression and patriarchy. In April 1981, All Indian Women Students Association was established. It included various subjects correlating to Women Studies such as History, Sociology, Economics, Psychology, Geography and other subjects. It becomes essential to study the commitment shared by the feminist before learning the correlation of these subjects. As put by Elioise A. Buker, feminist shares five general commitments:

1. Valuing women and their specific contributions to society.
2. Critically analysing the past to understand how patriarchal practices have devalued women.
3. Analysing sex gender differences and examining differences among women, especially in terms of race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, age, body shape and religion as well as other categories of identity.
4. Formulating new understandings that can transform social, political and personal practices on the basis of women contributions, values and experiences.
5. Working towards social and personal transformations through political activities designed to enable women to participate as full citizens in public life. (476-477)
Feminism is not only the realization of the injustice carried out in the society with the women, but it should also create awareness among them about the new role they have to play in the modern society. As rightly pointed out by T. N. Singh in *Feminism and Fiction: Some Reflections* as a critical tool, “feminism should aim at providing an altogether new awareness of the women’s role in the modern complex world” (11).

1.1 FEMINISM: CONCEPT AND THEORY

The term “feminism” is derived from the Latin word *femina* which means women, having a quality of females. In 1890, feminism was coined for the first time instead of Womanism. Womanism is made from *wifman*, which is related to the theory of sexual equality and the movement for women's right. This word was coined by Alice Rossie in the journal named Athenaeum, in 1895. Feminism is a movement that should not only be spiritual or only for conversation, but should be brought into implementation. Feminism concentrates on the explanation of differentiation in the rights bestowed on both male and female. In 1993, Jackie Stacey wrote an article, titled *Untalenting Feminist Theory* in *Introducing Women Studies* (Macmillan Press, London), in which she discusses various aspects of women such as their separation and secondary status, and also suggested some remedies to fight against the injustice they face.

1.2 WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT:

In America, Japan and Europe, after 1960 there were lots of discussions and movements regarding women's rights. This was the base for the women's liberation movement. This movement was not the beginning of feminism, but it brought forth old traditions of thoughts and actions, in classic books that revealed the problem of women's inequality in society. For instance, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, portrays
the unequal treatment given to women. The first major book in this respect that contributed to the arrival of the new women's movement was Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) in which she criticizes thus:

> the dominant cultural image of the successful and happy American woman as a housewife and mother (Leitch 308). She further attempts to demystify this false feminism Mystique, which she described as a world confined to her own body and beauty, the charming of man, the bearing of babies, and the physical care and serving of husband, children and home. (Millard 155)

In order to renew the concept of women's fight for equal rights, Freidan gave rise to a new consciousness to develop the new discipline of women's studies. Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1969) also became a challenge to the traditional norms of feminism. According to her, secondary status of women depended upon the concepts of patriarchy which gained considerable significance in feminist literary studies. *Sexual Politics* became popular as it was related to the politics of female representation in literature. By politics, Millet relates it to the power relations in the society. She also criticized Freud's psychoanalytical theory for its male bias.

Millet shows the perspective of a female reader through her readings from established writers like D. H. Lawrence, Normal Mailer and Jean Genet. Before Millet's depiction of the negative images of women in literature, there were some cautious responses such as Mary Ellman’s *Thinking About Women* (1965). Modern Feminist criticism in the United States initiated with Ellman who gave somewhat humorous treatment to the stereotyped images of women in literature. Thus, Ellman
is considered as one of the pioneers in the development of contemporary feminist criticism.

1.3 FEMINIST LITERARY CRITICISM: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

In the past years, feminist literary criticism is considered as one of the major development in literary studies. Feminist literary criticism is a literary criticism that involves feminist theory and politics of feminism. There are many significant works by the women authors such as George Eliot, Margaret Fuller and also the third wave authors. Feminist literary criticism before the 1970s, in the first and second waves of feminism, was related to the politics of women's authorship and representation of women's condition in literary books.

The recent development that took place in feminist criticism laid stress on the place of women in the society. It has created a lot of awareness in the writings of women. It discusses various issues related to gender in the works written by both men and women, but was related to women's writing. As rightly pointed out by Maggie Humm, “feminist criticism is the analysis of universal sexual representation and ideology in literature from the point of view of women”.

Feminist literary analysis may examine:

- Images of women and representative of female experience in texts written by authors of either sex;
- Women writers including the specific qualities and concerns of female authorship and the creation of a female tradition or canon;
- Women readers, focusing on the role gender plays in the reception of literary texts and the emergence of a distinct female readership;
- Language, attempting to define a distinctly feminine mode of writing;
• Literary form, particularly the relationship between literary genre and gender;
• Publication, noting the impact of the publishing system on the production and consumption of texts by women. (153)

This movement is important as it brings out the significance of the images of women promoted by literature. In this sense, the women's movement is always concerned with women's writing on which Elaine Showalter remarks in *Literature of Their Own* by calling women writing a subculture. She stresses this subculture right from the Brontes to the present day. This development is an outline by her in three stages. The study of these stages will clarify the nature of women’s writing:

1. Feminine: This is the phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of dominant male traditions.
2. Feminist: This is the phase of protest against the standards and values in favour of autonomy.
3. Female: This is the phase of self discovery of the women’s search for identity. (11-12)

Showalter coined the word ‘gynocritics’ to describe the stuff, known as women centered criticism. According to her, gynocriticism includes several subjects such as history, themes and structures of writing by women as the psychodynamics of female creativity; the individual or collective female literary tradition.

From the 19th century, feminism is studied in the context of three waves specially in United States and United Kingdom.

1) First wave feminism,
2) Second wave feminism and
3) Third wave feminism.
THE FIRST WAVE FEMINIST CRITICISM:

Feminism is an older concept that began in the 19th and 20th century in America and in Britain. The first wave feminism emphasizes various topics related to women such as property rights, marriage and even their right to vote.

The two crucial elements related to it are the Women's rights and Women's suffrage movements. The first wave feminists include Elizabeth Robins, Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf who are the founders of this contemporary feminism. Simone De Beauvoir is the last critic of the first wave feminism. She is the founder of the newspaper Nouvelles Feministes. She is the feminist critic who raised the general questions related to women. She also wrote the famous book *The Second Sex* (1945) that differentiated biological, psychological and economical discrimination between male and female. She, further, goes on commenting on the social aspects related to women, “One is not born; but rather becomes woman. He is one, she is other”. She also makes a distinction between being female and being constructed as 'a woman'. She explores various stages related to the life of women such as childhood, adolescence, sexual initiation, lesbianism, marriage, motherhood and old age. The major issue concerned to the first wave feminism was that all human beings should be treated equally. It also included topics like equal wages for women at the work place, educational and legal rights and the right to vote. This means that the first wave feminism emphasizes equal rights for women in the society. It also concentrated on certain topics of sexuality as well as reproductive rights concerned to women. The first wave feminism provided the platform to the women to question the institution of marriage where women and children were considered as the property of men. At the end of the first wave feminism most of the women were granted rights to vote in the early 20th century. From the
1920s to 1960s, the struggle regarding human rights and social justice continued. After the 1960s the struggle continued as the second wave feminism.

THE SECOND WAVE FEMINIST CRITICISM:

Second wave feminism of women's liberation began in the 1960s. It emphasized cultural, social and political discrimination related to women in the society. Betty Freidan's *The Feminine Mystique* and Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* are the substantial works produced during the second wave feminism. Though second wave feminists followed the footsteps of the first wave feminists, they “continued many reformist agenda, advocated more radical ideas, actions and programme” (Tong 23). The second wave feminists reflected multifarious dimensions of feminism through their philosophies and practices. It included active participation of young women and girls born during the economical flourishing that took place just before the World War II. It was the period when girls started receiving university education and actively participated in the Civil rights struggle as well as radical issues related to youth culture movements. During that period, many women were driven back to their traditional roles that of full time wives and mothers. Even these women were not having lots of opportunities, and if they got an opportunity, they had to work with low wages. This situation caused dissatisfaction in the lives of women related to social and economic factors. It further created awareness among women regarding sexual discrimination carried out in the society, which provoked them to protest. Hence, politics, reproduction rights and sexual liberation of women became significant issues in the second wave feminism. Duggan comments “Political and cultural battles over sexuality in the 1980s also characterised some of the key feminist debates” (1).
The second wave feminism can be considered as the product of the liberationist movement of the 1960s. It deals with two aspects like women experience and sexual discrimination. From the biological point of view, women experience a different emotional life. Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* covers the second wave feminism. In her book, she reveals certain topics concerning women such as patriarchy and exploitation of women criticizing the writers such as D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller and Norman Mailer. The second wave feminism concentrates on one important concept that is the personal is political. It reveals patriarchal oppression. Many feminists have not concentrated on women as readers, but tried to develop a female framework for dealing with women's writing related to the aspects of motivation, analysis and interpretations. It includes Patricia Meyer Spacks’ *The Female Imagination* (1975), Elaine Showalter’s *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelist from Bronte to Lessing* (1977) and Susan Gubar’s *The Mad Woman in the Attic* (1979).

**THE THIRD WAVE OF FEMINISM**

The third wave of feminism is also called as Post-feminism or Revisionary feminism which began in the 1960s and flourished in the 21st century. It explores the relationship between gender and language, and covered issues related to discrimination against women in the publishing sectors. The third wave feminism covers the aspects of race and multiculturalism. It challenged the dominant form of white feminism through powerful narration involving various dimensions of consciousness in the society. It is a revolt which took place in the 1980s which not only raised issues such as race, class and culture but also the sexual difference. In fact, the third wave feminism deals with the concept of the new hybridity that expressed multiple identities of girls and women. This concept gave rise to a new generation of revolt of feminist
related to multiple ethnicities and class experience. During the third wave feminism, lots of younger generations grew up in the 1960s and the 1970s, and started receiving formal education. The third wave feminism concentrated on their perspectives related to sociopolitical and economical aspects. It also concentrated on the factors of class and race rather than biological ones. The representation of women in literature was felt to be one of the most important factors of socialization, and thus, it provided models related to women. As pointed out in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, Showalter defines four models of differences which are as follows:

The biological model is the most extreme; if the text somehow mirrors the body, this can reduce women merely to bodies...Showalter’s linguistic model of difference posits women’s speaking men’s language as a foreign tongue; pursuing language of sexism is not going far enough..... Showalter’s psychological model identifies gender difference as the basis of the psyche, focussing on the relation of gender to the artistic process. It stresses feminine difference as the free play of meaning outside the need for closure... Showalter’s most important contribution has been to describe the cultural model that places feminist concerns in social contexts, acknowledging class, racial, national and historical differences and determinants among women, but offering a collective experience that unites women over time and space a binding force. (199-200)

Various writers define feminist theories according to their own concepts. For instance, Lisa Tuttle has defined feminist theory as asking “new questions of old texts”. She cites the goals of feminist criticism as: (1) To develop and uncover a female tradition of writing, (2) to interpret
the symbolism of women's writing so that it will not be lost or ignored by
the male point of view, (3) to rediscover old texts, (4) to analyze women
writers and their writings from a female perspective, (5) to resist sexism
in literature, and (6) to increase awareness of the sexual politics of
language and style. (184)

Feminist Literary Criticism can be understood more clearly
through the French Literary Criticism, British Literary Criticism and
Marxist Criticism. Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) was
considered as the source of creating feminist consciousness, even though
it is acknowledged for its little influence on French feminist literary
criticism. The major agenda of intellectual French feminism was to bring
Marx and Freud together or feminization of the society. In 1968, an
incident took place where workers and students came together and
topped the state which proved to be motivation of French feminism. The
french feminist literary critical scene was dominated by new readings of
Freudian psychoanalysis by Julia Kristeva in 1990.

The classical Marxist criticism observes the oppression of women
considered as a private property by the men. The oppression of women,
especially, takes place due to their traditional roles in the family. This
leads to their exclusion from participation in public life, and restricts
them to the domestic world, i.e. the private world of home. Feminist
school can be divided into two different aspects of women, woman as a
reader and woman as a writer. In one aspect, the woman is considered as
the consumer of literature produced by male, and the second aspect is
where they provide textual meaning and produce structures in literature.
According to the concept of modernism, feminism has to build up
meaningful relationship between male and female in terms of socio-
political aspects. It might become socio-political force but should work
according to the willingness of men and women. Ideas, language and
images play a crucial role in shaping women's life. Feminism plays an important role in analyzing the construction of knowledge, meaning and representation. It also deals with finding out a voice to express such knowledge for the struggle carried out in the society by women.

Philosophically, feminism tries to discover deep seated causes responsible for women's oppression. It emphasizes profound change in traditional social conventions related to the family, economical role and power of women and their attitude and personal relationship, in order to bring social order in the society. Feminist literary criticism has also found the lost literary women and documents. In short, feminist criticism has directed its attention to the female intellectual tradition. Here, it becomes necessary to differentiate between “female” and “feminist”. According to Toril Moi, “Feminist criticism...is a specific kind of political discourse, a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism...” (204). A political position is implied by the term feminist as Sharon Spencer argues feminist criticism, “attempts to set standards for literature that is as free as possible from biased portraits of individuals because of their class, race or sex” (158).

There is a difference between female and feminist. Female does not include political position. It deals with a gender difference. Without being committed to the political position, female writing can deal with women perspective on various issues related to social, cultural and political aspects. Patricia Meyer Spacks points out, “the difference between traditional female preoccupations and roles and male ones make a difference in female writing” (7).

Female writing can be related to gender instead of political perspective. Hence, male writers can be feminist, but they cannot be female writers. The male feminist critic K. K. Ruthven in his Feminist Literary Studies (1984) has stated, “the aim of a feminist criticism as of
any revolutionary criticism should be to subvert the dominant discourses, not to make compromises with them” (29).

The first serious feminist criticism forms its constitution by the major critical studies of women writers from the viewpoint of the female tradition. Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* discusses three important stages of women's writing. The first one deals with the imitation of mainstream literary tradition: the second stage protests against this dominant tradition in the society and the third stage searches for identity. Showalter identifies these stages as Feminine, Feminist and Female respectively. The feminine period covers the years between 1840 to 1889; the feminist period 1890 to 1920 and the female period starts in 1920 and comes to an end in the 1960s.

The second most important book written on the major female writers of the 19th century is Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Mad Woman in the Attic* that presents female tradition distinctively. Gilbert and Gubar's main argument is that “artistic creativity, which is perceived within the dominant 19th century tradition basically as a male quality, is in fact patriarchal superimposition upon the women writers who are imprisoned within it” (26).

There is a total difference between reading as a woman and reading as a man. It does not mean that the female reader goes against the traditional discourses, but working within those traditions, protests and tries to change the falsely situated perspectives of the male reader. When a female reader attempts to cope up with the accepted reading process, it is an effort of taking to reverse the perspective of the male reader. By working within the traditional discourse, the female reader tries to challenge its Logocentricism and tries to subvert the centers of male domination. “The task at this level is not to establish a woman's reading that would parallel a male reading”, writes Culler, “but rather, through
argument and an attempt to account for textual evidence, to produce a comprehensive perspective, a compelling reading” (58).

Such reading is refreshing because it regains the undermined elements in a text and provides a broader perspective to the reader. Each and every aspect of woman's life is taken into consideration by the women's liberation movement. Feminists elaborate various questions of what is to be a woman and how femininity should be defined. It includes various issues as objectification of women as sexual objects for male consumption and other forms of violence against women within and outside the family. It is also concerned with the right of education, rights of equal opportunities and the right to have childbirth according to their willingness. It tries to destroy various oppressions related to women by class, race and patriarchy. The term ‘patriarchal’ refers to power relations in which woman's interests are considered secondary to the interests of man. In patriarchy, the nature of the woman in the society is defined in relation to a norm which is male. The social as well as political gains received by women have been the results of their struggle to include women in the rights which men have subordinated women to serve their own interest.

Even, the right to vote which women acquired was the long struggle made to eliminate economic and social injustice, which has been subjected to them from the generations. Regarding this Toril Moi says, “the words feminist and feminism are political labels indicating support for the aims of the new woman’s movement which emerged in the late 1960s” (28).

Feminism does not only want to benefit women, but also it tries to eliminate injustice from the society. It does not go in favour of women, but tries to involve their support for a movement against injustice. Feminism creates the feeling that there is something wrong with society’s
treatment of women. It tries to find out the reason and dimensions of women's oppression and also helps for women's liberation. Feminism is a movement which seeks as Teresa Billington Greig wrote in *Feminist Dictionary*, “the organization of the world upon the basis of sex-equality in all human relations; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex, would abolish all sex privileges and sex burdens, and would strive to set up the recognition of the common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom” (158).

Feminist movement in the western society has brought a lot of change regarding women's right to vote, education, gender neutrality, equal job opportunities, reproductive rights and even the property rights. Feminists have struggled to protect women from every aspects such as domestic violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault. They laid stress on the women's right instead of fulfilling men's traditional interest for reproductive purposes, sharing their experiences and developing theories. Their campaigns for rights have provided women some protections, and brought change in their social status. They started understanding that women have been deprived of their basic rights in historical writings.

Riot girl is the feminist movement connected with the third wave feminism. Riot girl movement concentrated on two factors that of self-sufficiency and self-reliance. It also emphasized on the female identity and separatism associated with the second wave feminism. This movement provided women the right of expression as they should get the freedom to express their voices according to their willingness. It provided the platform not only to women but also to adolescent girls. An international convention, the United Nations General Assembly worked for the rights of women. It eliminated all forms of discrimination against women. Although feminism rooted in the late 19th and the early 20th
Century, it was not only the period of activism to achieve justice for women, but it had its effect from earlier period. Depending on the wave model, the first wave feminism concentrated on the struggle to achieve basic political rights from the mid 19th century upto 1920. The second wave feminism pushed behind the quest for political rights and concentrated on the aspects of equality for women in education, at the workplace and home. Whereas the new transformations took place in the third wave feminism. The third wave feminists criticized both the earlier waves for they lacked attention towards the differentiation carried out due to race, ethnicity, class and nationality.

1.4 WOMEN WRITERS: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

To understand the nature of feminist literary criticism and its alternative approach to literature, it becomes essential to understand its long history. The literary history of women's images and the dominant stereotype images of female fictional characters were discussed for the first time by the critics like Simone De Beauvoir, Mary Elleman and Kate Millet. Feminism has its long past history from nearly last two hundred years. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) was the first significant book to create awareness regarding equal rights for women. French Revolution influenced Wollstonecraft regarding the equal rights of individuals. Her book became significant as K. K. Ruthven observes, “the analogy with slavery, which is present in Wollstonecraft's book, becomes the dominant trope in nineteenth-century feminist writing, doubtless because of feminist involvement in the abolitionist movement” (29).

J.S. Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* (1869), appeared seventy seven years after the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Mill expressed it powerfully, “All men, except the most brutish, desire to have in the woman, most nearly connected with
them, not a forced slave but a willing one, not a slave merely, but a favourite. They have therefore, put everything in practice to enslave their minds” (Norton Anthology Vol.2, 1991). After sixty years, a strong female sensibility and criticism was enhanced by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*. (1929) Therefore, it became an important work to be followed by other writers of feminist literary criticism. In her book, Virginia Woolf expressed her opinion that women in the patriarchal society were prevented from expressing their creativity and true potential by the male dominated structure. Virginia Woolf emphasizes on the idea that women writers have to fight against the injustice in the society. There was no other option left for them than writing to get their right and preserve their individuality. It was not so easy for women to write even though women were excluded from many social, political and economical issues. In her essay *Professions for Women* Virginia Woolf states that she had to kill, “The Angel in the house”, in order to write her novels.

Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing. For, as I found, directly I put pen to paper, you cannot review even a novel without having a mind of your own, without expressing what you think to be the truth about human relations, morality, sex. And all these questions, according to the Angel of the House, cannot be dealt with freely and openly by women. Killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer. (Eagleton: 52)

It becomes essential to understand the difficulties involved in being a female writer. It is very difficult for any woman to write considering herself as passive and subordinate being in the house. The stereotype image of a housewife and mother needs to be destroyed for a woman to be a writer. Women writers had a great challenge before them regarding
their marginality in the house as well as in the society. It is not surprising that most of the female writers took women as the subject of the novels, and expressed their literary rebellion against marginalization both as women and writers. Through their writings, they tried to open a new way of thinking towards the ideas generated in the society to struggle against the injustice. Anne Bronte's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) is regarded as the first manifesto for women's liberation. In the novel, Helen Huntingdon, the female protagonist, has to leave her cruel husband to achieve independence and sustain her identity. Her decision was against the social convention. In 1848, the idea of leaving a husband without causing legal problems was highly impossible as the wife and the children were under the control of male dominance through the medium of the husband. In spite of such difficulties, Helen Huntingdon leaves her husband and walks out of his life taking her son along with her. In the society, women have to obey their husbands without any complaints and obey them according to their expectations.

As the 19th century women writers were exclusively confined to house, most of the novels written during this period had their setting of the house. Their experiences were limited compared to men as they were away from the outside world. Therefore, their novels reveal a highly static way of life. As they have limited experience of the world, they express themselves in the limited way. However, they were aware of the disadvantages of their limitations. Their way of expression within the limitations was suggestive of their resistance against the norms of the male dominated society. As their writing was against the social convention, they have to take permission for the publication of their works. Even though these difficulties arose, the women novelists developed the way of expression through the medium of their novels confined to the subjectivity of the location of their house. Regarding the
settings of the novel, Eva Figes states, “the position of women, isolated within individual households, favoured the development of the subjective voice in a fiction which concentrated on the domestic setting” (151).

In the 19th century, women even expressed their awareness regarding economical rights which were deprived of them. This social system was questioned and commented on by the woman novelist Mrs. Gaskell in her fiction. Women writers contributed to humanist value by laying importance on both the factors in the society and destroying anti-humanist male attitude that dominated women in the society. Therefore, female identity is considered as the subject always in a progressive motion. The important contribution by the women writers to the literary movement was the creation of the awareness regarding their female identity. Even though female identity is considered as a process and is able to express their creativity, they are unjustified on the basis of their intellectual powers. Therefore, they are kept aloof from the mainstream of literature and the society.

There are number of writers such as Eliza Haywood, Sarah Feilding, Maria Edgeworth, Elizabeth Inchbald, Jane Austen and George Eliot who brought into the existence, the traditions of the subject in the process that is feminism. Their literature created the rebellion of the female consciousness against the male dominated society and help them form their identities and share their experiences. While discussing the connectivity between female experience and female consciousness Judith Kegan Gardiner points out, “The concept of female identity shows us how female experience is transformed into female consciousness, often in reaction to male paradigms for female experience” (190).

Even though there was no favourable condition for women to prove their creativity and potential, women writers “felt pressured to prove both their reliability and their physical endurance” (11).
So, they accepted a new way of literary narrative, the novel for expression. The novel gradually emerged in the 17th century which was the period of transformation into capitalism in spite of many uncertainties. The first writers to initiate the arrival of the novel were Aphra Behn and Delariviere Manley to experiment with the realistic technique. Eliza Haywood established a new convention that was followed in the new genre by the other writers. All the writers such as Elizabeth Inchbald, Charlotte Lennox, Charlotte Smith, Maria Edgeworth, Sarah Fielding, Mary Wollstonecraft took the novel further and ensured its popularity in appealing the people. They are the first representative 18th century women novelist who popularized fiction. As Showalter notes, “English women made steady inroads into the literary marketplace, mainly as novelists” (16).

Through the women’s writing, awareness is created to transform traditional and stereotype images into the ones who think in a new, improved way. It should develop the concepts of feminist protest against the injustice, and also should change the scenario of the compromise. It should create awareness regarding liberation movement and rights to equality. It should help the society to change the attitude of considering women from the social and psychological point of view as the symbol of sex. It should raise many fundamental questions in the minds of the readers regarding the aspects of writing, reading and gender bias. It should concentrate on the major issues related to social, cultural and political practices.

Feminism, thus, aims at destroying male domination in the most profound sense, and asks for equal treatment considering the woman as an individual and a human being. In Three Guineas, Three Causes, Virginia Woolf develops humanists thought to prevent pacifism, building an institution for women to help them, to enter the profession and enjoy
every aspect of life according to their own willingness. After learning about women as both reader and writer, it becomes essential to study the types of feminism.

1.5 TYPES OF FEMINISM:

Feminism has different demands and revelation at different places and times. The struggle carried out against the injustice in the society has to be continued in terms of achieving free lives. There’s much to be done to prevent the achieved freedom from being lost. There are different types of feminism. They are as follows:

I) LIBERAL FEMINISM:

According to liberal feminist, rights should be given more importance than materialism. Liberal feminist of 18th and 19th centuries gave importance to female education and equal opportunities.

Three important advocates of liberal feminism are:

1) **Mary Wollstonecraft** -

   Mary Wollstonecraft is known as the pioneer of the women liberation movement. She discussed the concepts of rights for women in her book *Vindication of Rights of Women* (1792). She was influenced by the ideas elaborated by the French Revolution such as equality, liberty and fraternity. Her ideas regarding the rights of women amazed people in the society.

2) **John Stuart Mill** –

   Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* (1869) is about women’s rights in the history of feminism. He struggled for women's participation in the election of parliament.

3) **Simone De Beauvoir** -

   Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) became popular after 1960. She discusses her thoughts regarding modern feminism.
Liberal feminism emphasizes political and legal equality among men and women. It helps women to reveal their ability and sustain it through their own willingness of action and choice. It handled the various issues such as reproductive rights to women, voting, education, equal wages and health care. It also makes women aware about their sexual and domestic violence in the society. It concentrates on the interaction between men and women as it can be fruitful to bring gender equality. It states that women and men should not be differentiated on the basis of biological factor. If women and men are not so different, they should not be treated differently in the society under the law. Women and men should have equal rights regarding legal matters, education and work opportunities. It tries to remove the gender system as it has discriminatory effects on women in the society. It appeals the society to recognize past achievements of women and their current capabilities in many fields. It also allows women to do the work that they want to do outside the home, share some of the house work, and also get equal payment at the work place. Women have entered every field from mining to space travel. Women in the police force and the military are no longer an oddity, and women in high positions, including leaders of the country, are no longer a rarity. There are two types of liberal feminism.

A) CLASSICAL LIBERAL OR LIBERTARIAN FEMINISM:

Classical Liberal or Libertarian Feminism explores the idea of women and men being self owners of acquiring property rights over things. There should be no difference in the property distribution between men and women. This right to freedom from compelling interference includes various rights such as freedom for conscience and expression. It provides freedom to control one's body; it provides freedom to acquire control and transfer property as well as the right to compensation when someone violates the rights.
Equity feminist is a classical liberal or libertarian feminist who holds the opinion that the state is responsible for the oppression of women in the societies like the United States. It is of the opinion that political freedom should also be provided to the women, so that there will not be any limitations to women's liberty.

Cultural libertarian feminism depicts traditional customs. Religious and community institutions impose restrictions on women and reflect the patriarchal nature of society and the medium of oppression. It recognizes various sources of women's oppression. As Frederick Johnson and Roderick Long put it, patriarchal culture and the state are “interlocking systems of oppression” (5).

B) EGALITARIAN LIBERAL FEMINISM:

It provides the freedom to choose personal autonomy to live a life. It is of the opinion that women should understand their social status and try to regain various factors kept away from them till date. They should acquire personal and the self-governing elements of women flourishing.

II) SOCIALIST FEMINISM:

Socialist Feminism is a branch of feminism that focuses on the public and private aspects of women's life. It is of the opinion that unless and until the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression come to end, liberation cannot be achieved. Socialist feminism includes radical feminism based on the role of gender and patriarchy. Socialist feminism appears “to adopt some of the same tenets of Marxism, but instead of focusing on economic determinism as the primary source of oppression, the socialist feminist sees the oppression as having psychological and social roots” (Simon de Beauvoir 89).

III) ANARCHY FEMINISM:

Anarchy Feminism, also called as Anarchist feminism, combines Anarchism with feminism. It generally views that patriarchy is followed
by involuntary hierarchy. According to Anarchy feminist, patriarchy is an essential part of class struggle which women have to continue. The Anarchy feminism also struggles against the state which is a necessary component of feminist struggle. Susan Brown claims, “Anarchism is a political philosophy that opposes all relationship of power. It is inherently feminist” (208). Late 19th and early 20th century Anarchist feminists Emma Goldman, Voltairine De. Cleyre and Loucy Parsons inspired Anarchy feminism. Even though Emma Goldman was in opposition of the first wave feminism and suffragist goals, she was passionately interested in the rights of women, and hence, she is today heralded as a founder of Anarchy feminism. Anarchy feminism challenges to resist patriarchy along with state power and class divisions responsible for the oppression of women. In 1897, she demanded “the independence of a woman, her right to support herself; to live for herself; to love whomever she pleases, or as many as she pleases. She also demanded freedom for both sexes, freedom of action, freedom in love and freedom in motherhood” (Goldman 224).

IV) RADICAL FEMINISM:

Radical feminism is a recent feminist theoretical perspective that focuses on the idea that patriarchy is responsible for the complexity of relationship based on male supremacy causing the oppression of women. It challenges to overthrow patriarchy by going in opposition of standard gender roles responsible for the oppression of women, and emphasizes the necessity of reordering the society radically. In the western society, radical feminists believe that none other but the society is the patriarchy in which women are primarily oppressed by men. Radical feminists try to abolish patriarchy. Women are considered as the other by men due to patriarchy, and hence, they are systematically oppressed and marginalized. In order to deal with patriarchy and oppression of women
of all kinds, it is essential to find out the underlined causes of these problems through revolution. According to radical feminist, the cause of all inequalities in the society is based on gender identity, class, perceived attractiveness, sexual orientation and ability.

In the United States, radical feminism developed as a component of the women's liberation movement. Radical feminism has previous experience due to the civil rights movement with radical protest in the struggle against racism. It also believed that elimination of patriarchy, and removal of one’s domination over the other will liberate everyone from injustice found in the society.

**V) EQUALITY FEMINISM:**

Equality Feminism is a sub-branch of feminism. It deals with the equal treatment of male and female sexes. Mary Wollstonecraft, in *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), elaborates that women should enjoy all the legal as well as political rights similar to men as they are human beings. John Stuart Mill, in *The Subjection of Women* (1869), discusses that society should not be framed on the basis of birth, but it should be framed on the ability of an individual as being a human being. Even if men and women are biologically and anatomically different, they should not be treated differently. Society should treat them equally.

**VI) AMAZON FEMINISM:**

Amazon Feminism is a branch of feminism that emphasizes female physical power as a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. The name itself makes reference to the Amazons, a nation of warrior women from Greek mythology. It indicates the image of the female hero in fiction. For example, wonder women in the early 1940s were based partially on the Amazons in Greek mythology.
VII) POSTCOLONIAL FEMINISM:

Postcolonial Feminism is also called as Third World Feminism that includes postcolonial setting, and deals with the topics like racism, colonialism and its cultural, economical and political effects on the society that explore some particular gendered realities of non-white and non-western women. It provides information about the sufferings of people due to colonialism such as resistance, suppression, representation, difference, race, gender, slavery, migration and reactions to influences of imperial Europe. Postcolonial feminism constitutes both recently decolonized nations and the women under patriarchal influences, as both of them reveal the dominant culture suffered by them in the society. Postcolonialism is strongly connected to the Black Feminism as it deals with the issues related to racism. The women have to remain under the impact of traditional norms, and hence they were oppressed by the men. Postcolonial feminism provides them with a platform to express their rebellion against the injustices imposed on them due to the traditional norms followed by colonialism. The new customs were an imposition on the former colonies as a means of social progress. Similarly, women were considered as secondary and restrictions were imposed on them by men.

VIII) MARXIST FEMINISM:

Marxist feminism includes various theories of Karl Marx based on the philosophical and economical theories. Marx discussed an important factor related to economical laws that underlie capitalism in his masterpiece *Capitalism*. Marxist feminism is such a feminism which focuses on the dismantling of capitalism as a way of liberating women. It upholds private property responsible for economical inequality, dependence and political confusion, and also the social relations between men and women are the root causes for the oppression of women in the society. Marx claims that women are not subordinate due to the biological
factor, but due to the social relations in the family where all the activities of women are under the control of men. It, further, expresses that women should be given freedom to work, and should get equal wages for their work at the workplace.

IX) CYBER FEMINISM:

Cyber Feminism constitutes of a feminist community, philosophy and sets of practices that deal with feminist interactions and acts in cyberspace. It is related with information technology and arose in the 1980s and 1990s. It is a perspective that revolves around women's use of new information and communication technologies for their upliftment. Some cyber feminists believe that “these technologies are essential and their development will lead to an end to male superscript because women are uniquely suited to life in the digital age” (Millar 98).

Cyber Feminism emphasizes the potential of the internet and computer science as technologies would open new avenues of job opportunities and creativity that would not involve any differentiation based on racism, sexism or any other oppression of women. It would bring a major difference between the virtual world and the real world. Cyber Feminism involves various types of feminism as it correlates information technologies, women and feminism.

X) INDIVIDUALIST FEMINISM:

Individualist Feminism is a feminism which explores the idea of the protection of an individual woman. It emphasizes on the transformation of the legal system in order to eliminate the inequality on the basis of class and gender privileges. Individualist Feminism also emphasizes on the freedom of an individual over the private property on the basis of equality. It encourages women to be self dependant instead of depending on others, and also to take over all responsibilities of their own lives. It even opposes government interference in the lives of women.
XI) LESBIAN FEMINISM:

Lesbian Feminism is a cultural movement that deals with the issues related to lesbian and women in the society. It became popular in the 1970s and 1980s. It emphasizes that society is structured to serve heterosexual needs, but the assumption that everything is straight being false as a society should also consider serving heteronormative needs. Lesbian Feminism includes some writers and activists such as Charlotte Bunch, Rita Mae Brown, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Mary Daly, Sheila Jeffrey and Monique Wittig.

In the words of lesbian feminist Sheila Jeffrey’s, “Lesbian feminism emerged as a result of two developments: lesbians within the WLM [Women's Liberation Movement] began to create a new, distinctively feminist lesbian politics, and lesbians in the GLF [Gay Liberation Front] left to join up with their sisters”. She further defines lesbian feminism as having seven key themes:

- An emphasis on women's love for one another,
- Separatist organizations,
- Community and ideas,
- Idea that lesbianism is about choice and resistance,
- Idea that the personal is the political,
- A rejection of social hierarchy and
- A critique of male-supremacy (which eroticises inequality) (19).

XII) SEPARATIST FEMINISM:

Separatist Feminism includes lesbianism. It is a kind of feminism that enables women to take interest in other women. It creates new space and dialogue in women's relationship, and limits them from dealing with men. Marilyn Frye's (1978) essay on Separatism and Power constitutes the major theory of Separatist Feminism.
XIII) ECO-FEMINISM:

Francoise d’Eaubonne coined the term ‘Ecofeminism’ or ‘Ecological feminism’ in 1974. Ecofeminism is a social and political movement that deals with the existence of environmentalism and feminism. It believes that the social mentality that causes domination and oppression of women leads to the abuse of the natural environment. It also emphasizes on changing the attitude of the society towards productivity and activity of both women and nature. Through their daily interactions, a woman is connected to the environment which has been ignored. Eco-feminism discusses that the strength of women and that of nature is misunderstood, as it fulfills the social benefits and sustenance needs.

XIV) DIFFERENCE FEMINISM:

Difference feminism discusses that men and women are biologically different versions of human being. Even though the title difference feminism is recently added to the feminist movement, it has its roots far back from the early Greeks. Difference feminism deals with differences between the sexes such as biological, emotional, sociological or spiritual. It is a feminism that reverses gender polarity that is women are superior to men. In the society, there is an opposite tradition as men are considered superior to women.

Fractional gender complementarity discusses that men and women are complementary to one another, even though they are separate parts. They composite as a whole when they are together. This feminism was most popular in the cult of true humanhood in the 19th century as it was developed as a reaction to other forms of feminism.

Integral gender complementarity discusses that when men and women are integrated, they result into something greater than the some of their parts. Michele M. Schumacher, for example, believes that there is
“one (human) nature, two modes of expression...Together they form a communion of persons...to exist mutually one for the other” (45).

XV) BLACK FEMINISM:

Black feminism includes the liberation of black women from all oppressions. In 1974, the Combahee River Collective and Black Socialist Feminist Organisation discussed the need to end racism, sexism and class oppression. Patricia Hill Collins defined Black Feminism, in Black Feminist Thought (1991), as including “women who theorize the experiences and ideas shared by ordinary black women that provide a unique angle of vision on self, community and society”. Black feminism considers women's liberation as a strategy that unites women, men and children in which women have to struggle against injustice because they suffer oppression. This oppression is not limited to a particular location but includes all the women in the society. All women can change their attitude by discussing certain issues with each other, start building links and bringing transformation into their lives.

1.6 DEBATES AND DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT FEMINIST CRITICISM CONCENTRATED ON THREE AREAS:
1. The role of theory
2. The nature of language and
3. The value of psychoanalysis

a) FEMINIST CRITICISM AND THE ROLE OF THEORY:

There is an Anglo-American version of feminism and the French feminists who rely more upon post-structuralist and psychoanalytic criticism. The Anglo-Americans treat literature as a series of representation of women’s lives and experience. They regard close reading of individual literary text as the chief business of feminist criticism. The American critic Elaine Showalter is the major
representative of this approach and others are Sandra Gilbert, Rachel Brownstein, Susan Gubar and Patricia Stubbs.

b) FEMINIST CRITICISM AND LANGUAGE:

There is a debate on the form of language which is inherently feminine. Virginia Woolf, in *A Room of One’s Own*, suggests that language use is gendered. The female writer is seen as suffering the handicap of having to use a medium (prose) which is essentially a male instrument fashioned for male purposes. The thesis that the language is ‘masculine’ is developed by Dale Spender in the 1980s in her book *Man Made Language* (1981). This view is challenged by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in the essay ‘Sexual Linguistics: Gender, Language, Sexuality.’ The female French theorist Helene Cixous in *The Laugh of the Medusa* uses the term ‘écriture feminine’, in relation with feminine and free play of meanings within the framework of grammatical structures. ‘Écriture féminine’ is, by its nature, transgressive, rule – transcending and intoxicated notion that poses many problems.

c) FEMINIST CRITICISM AND PSYCHOANALYSIS:

Kate Millett, in *Sexual Politics*, condemns Freud as a prime source of the patriarchal attitudes. But, Juliet Mitchell defends Freud in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974). Mitchell makes a distinction between sex and gender. The first is the matter of biology, and the second one is a construct, something learned or acquired, rather than natural. Simone de Beauvoir invokes this distinction in her book *The Second Sex* (1949). According to Mitchell, Freud does not present the feminine as something simply ‘given and natural.’ Female sexuality is formed by early experiences and adjustments.

1.7 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FEMINISM AND WOMANISM:

The term ‘Womanism’ was first coined by Alice Walker in her book *In Search of Our Mother Gardens: Womanist Prose* (1983) to
describe black feminist. Womanism emerges from the recognition of racial struggles by black feminist in the first and second wave of feminism. As Alice Walker defines Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender. Feminism is a vast concept which includes all aspects of women's oppression such as political, social, cultural and economical, whereas Womanism concentrates on Black feminism. Womanism provided political framework for coloured women, and gave them tools in their struggle with patriarchy which imposed restrictive norms on them. Womanism is used as a means for analyzing literature of black women on the basis of race, class, gender and sexuality. Womanism includes only issues related to black women’s strength and experiences, whereas feminism includes all the women in general. Feminism is a thought, a perspective and a value belief system that is an alternative way of viewing the world of women.

Thus, an increasing awareness of injustice done to women made them raise their voices against inequality and oppression and represent themselves into various roles. It becomes imperative to study the representation of women as depicted by Joan Barfoot in her novels.
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