CHAPTER I

WOMEN’S MOVEMENTS IN THE WEST

A movement is a course or series of actions and endeavours on the part of a body of persons, moving or tending more or less continuously towards some special end. However there is not a commonly accepted definition for it. Consensus is yet to be reached on the exact meaning of social movements.

According to the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, social movements are uninstitutionalised groups in some insurgent relationship to existing society, involving unmediated bonds between leaders and followers. ‘A social movement, in the opinion of Rudolf Herberle, aims to bring fundamental changes in the social order, especially in the basic institutions of property and labour relations’. For M.N. Zald and R. Ash, ‘a social movement is a purposive and collective attempt of a number of people to change individuals or societal institutions and structures.’ T.K. Oommen defines social movements as conscious or purposive collective mobilisations, informed of an ideology, to promote change in any direction, (past / future) using any means - violent or non-violent - and functioning within at least an elementary organisational frame-work. According to Hans Toch, a social movement represents an effort by a large number of people to solve collectively a problem that they feel
they have in common. In Wendell C. King’s opinion, ‘a social movement is a group venture extending beyond a local community or a single event and involving a systematic effort to inaugurate changes in thought, behaviour, and social relationships. William B. Cameron holds that a social movement occurs when a fairly large number of people band together in order to alter or supplant some portion of the existing culture or social order’. All these definitions have some characteristics in common. A social movement is a collective activity which aims at social change in any direction.

The characteristics of social movements include sustained collective mobilization for or against change, presence of an ideology and a stand more or less conflictual in nature. The relation between social movements and action groups or the role of action groups in a movement is of great importance. Action groups or pressure groups may be catalysts of a social movement. Sometimes they will be the initiators also. However, social movements and action groups are not one and the same though closely related. D.N. Dhanagare observes: Action groups can be initiators of social movements, but not necessarily their customary agents, instruments or carriers. Social movements once institutionalised, may operate through already formed groups, parties, trade unions, organisations and similar paraphernalia. He adds: "An action group which initiates the mobilization process and acts as a catalyst of a social movement may also became its principal sheet-anchor when that movement moves in the
direction of institutionalisation representing a broader zone and political action. But some action groups may dissociate or withdraw from the movement."8 Organisation or group is a unit in a social movement. "Social movements are more amorphous social collectivities as compared with political parties and pressure groups."9 Social movements can be classified on the basis of their participants, their scale, dominant issues of interest, nature of the desired social change and the means of action. There are various movements. They include religious, caste, tribal, dalit, student, peasant, worker and feminist movements. These movements "have their inception in a condition of unrest, and derive their motive power from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living."10

Feminist movement or women’s movement is one of the categories of social movements which started with the aim of changing the deteriorated position of women to which they were condemned to for centuries. It was started in different countries at different periods. About women’s movement, Encyclopedia of Feminism says "It is more widely used, and more all-embracing than either feminism or women’s liberation movement and can include any and all activities and organisations which have the aim of improving women’s status and situation."11 Neera Desai defines women’s movement as the organised effort to achieve a common goal of equality and liberation of women and it presupposes sensitiveness to crucial issues affecting the life of women.12
Gail Omvedt says: "not all movements which include women are for women's liberation, and women's liberation movements may also include men."13

A broad category of women's movement includes movements in which women participate in large numbers with men as in the case of national movements and peasant movements, movements led by women for general issues such as for slum improvement, or against price-rise, and movements for achieving women's rights and for their upliftment. Before studying women's movements it is necessary to have an idea about certain terms such as patriarchy, feminism and various theories or approaches to feminism. These terms are often used and closely related to women's movement.

Of late, we find the term Patriarchy used by most of the feminists. Generally used to denote male domination both in family and in society, the word means 'the rule of the father.' Gail Omvedt explains: "Patriarchy comes from a Latin word meaning the power of the male head of the family, and refers to the power of the man (or patriarch) both over women and over children and other dependents in the family. It links the power of man in the family with the power of man in society as a whole."14 According to Kamala Bhasin and Nighat Said Khan, "When one uses the word patriarchy, it refers to the system that oppresses and subordinate women in both the private and public sphere." They further say: "it refers to a social system where the father controls all members of the family, all property and
other economic resources and makes all major decisions. Linked to this social system is the belief or the ideology that man is superior to woman, that women are and should be controlled by men, and are part of a man's property. This thinking forms the basis of many of our religious laws and practices, and explains all those social practices which confine women to the home, and control their lives. Our double standards of morality and our laws which give more rights to men than to women are also based on patriarchy.¹⁵

Feminism is a controversial word today. Many who were directly or indirectly involved in the fight for women's equality and against women's oppression generally hesitate to say that they are feminists. The word feminism is not acceptable to many women and men in India. Most of them think that feminism is a western word or concept which is against men and that feminists are man-haters. But feminism does not mean that. As Kamala Bhasin and Nighat Said Khan explains: "the term feminism may be foreign, the concept stands for a transformational process, a process which started in South Asia in the nineteenth century as an organised and articulated stand against women's subordination."¹⁶ Feminism stands for the advocacy of women's rights. And a feminist is one who supports feminism or women's rights. The best way of looking at feminism is to see it as an ideology of women as an oppressed section, in struggle against their oppression just as socialism is the ideology of the workers organised in class struggle.¹⁷
The meaning of feminism may vary from time to time. Feminism of the eighteenth century may not be the same as that of the twentieth century. It also differs from country to country and person to person. A more accepted broad definition of feminism is 'an awareness of the oppression and exploitation of women in society, at work and within the family, and conscious action by women and men to change this situation'. According to this definition any one who recognises the existence of sexism (discrimination on the basis of gender), male domination and patriarchy and who engages in some action against them is a feminist. Feminists may fight against all forms of oppression against women. To accept the legitimacy of the term 'feminism' means that women are specially oppressed as women, that their exploitation cannot be reduced to that of being members of the working class.

There are various theories or approaches in feminism. Major approaches are liberal feminism, radical feminism and socialist feminism. Liberal feminism is also called "moderate feminism" or "women's rights feminism". Liberal feminism aims at bringing equality within the framework of the existing system; radical feminism aims at revolutionary change in all social institutions and sees sexual oppression as primary; socialist feminism seeks to unite the fight for socialism with women's liberation. Today nearly all feminists in India are socialist feminists. However, the liberal tradition could be seen in the movement during the pre-independence period in India.
Women constitute nearly half of the world’s population. Yet they have been subjugated for centuries, though the nature and form of that subjugation have varied from country to country and period to period. This is reflected in the aims, objectivity and methods used by women’s movements in different parts of the world. In many countries women had to fight a long and fierce battle to attain voting rights and freedom.

Women’s movement had its origin in the West during the nineteenth century. It is often described as having two stages. i) The first wave of feminism and ii) the second wave of feminism. The first wave emerged in an organised way during nineteenth century and was known as the women’s rights movement. It almost faded out with the attainment of better status and voting rights for women. The second wave of the movement emerged in the 1960’s and was widely known as modern feminist movement or women’s liberation movement.

The debate on Feminism arose in developed countries like Britain and France during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The first recorded expression of the idea that women were the political equals of men occurred during the French revolution (1789). But it was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that emancipation and suffrage groups began to be formed.21 The English revolution of 1648, the American revolution of 1776 and the French revolution of 1789 (which was influenced directly and indirectly by the English and American
revolutions and had a great impact on the whole of Europe and the United States) almost ended feudalism and encouraged capitalism. The industrial revolution, the increase of centralised power, the intellectual flowering of humanism associated with Renaissance and the ideological challenge to the church, monarchy and aristocracy to a great extent changed Europe.

Eminent philosophers and political thinkers of the period were Jean Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, Volttaire, Condorcet and Diderot. Though these philosophers and thinkers of French revolution upheld the ideas of fraternity, liberty and equality, only a minority spoke about women's liberty. Jean Jacques Rousseau expressed radical revolutionary ideas on the social and political order and emphasised the value of freedom and equality. "But for all his enlightenment on political and social issues, Rousseau's ideal republic excludes women; the family is a 'natural institution', the man is head of the family with power of control over the wife, who is denied equal rights; freedom, equality are for the patriarchal heads of families, and women are not part of the social contract or the 'general will' Rousseau proposed a fundamentally different education for boys and girls. According to Rousseau only man was rational and capable of thinking rationally and abstractly, therefore women, lacking these qualities, could not be given freedom and equality. On the contrary, they had to be subjected and controlled as their passions were a source of danger." Many of the thinkers shared the ideas of Rousseau in the case of women's rights. However a
minority supported women’s rights. Among that group Condorcet’s name was prominent.

The new ideas and the new awakening of the period influenced women also. The rich women who got some education raised their voice in favour of women’s education. Isolated voices began to be heard from women about their position and education. Some women writers questioned the discriminatory social practices and proclaimed the necessity of educating women and of giving access to women in all types of employment.

The most outstanding feminist writer of the time was Mary Wollstonecraft who wrote the famous document *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, published in England in 1792. She says "challenged the idea that women exist only to please men and proposed that women receive the same treatment as men in education, work and politics and be judged by the same moral standards." Barbara Sinclair says: "it was the first full-scale book favouring women’s liberation, and nineteenth century leaders of the women’s movement in Europe and the United States read it and were much affected by it." Mary Wollstonecraft asserted that woman was a fully rational human being and denied the existence of separate male and female virtues. She vehemently criticised Rousseau for his views on women and advocated similar education for boys and girls. Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights on Women* was published in French in 1792. Many women’s clubs were formed in France which urged women to involve
in politics and demanded equal education for women. Among the
names of the revolutionary women Olympe de Gouges's name is
prominent during that period for her work in 1791 entitled the
Declaration of the Right's of Women. This declaration demanded
equal rights for women in the field of access to government
employment, freedom of thought, as well as better education,
equal property rights and reform of the marriage laws. Though the
period of industrial revolution provided a big boost to debates
on feminism, as Mariamies and Jayawardhana remarks, the early
decades of the nineteenth century were a period of reaction. In
1793, the women's political clubs were abolished. The Civil Code
which would have given greater rights to married women was
rejected. In 1795, women were forbidden to attend political
meetings. In 1804, the Napoleonic Civil Code decreed the total
submission of women to marital authority, and the right of
divorce, which had been granted in 1792, was abolished in France
in 1814. The brief whiff of freedom during the revolution was
replaced by repressive laws and constraints.27

The struggles for democratic rights set in motion in the
eighteenth century continued into the nineteenth century when
more systematic liberal doctrines based on bourgeois
parliamentary democracy were put forward, in a period which saw
the great expansion of industrial capital in Europe. As in the
early phase, the most rapid strides in Industrial Revolution
took place in Britain, which up to the latter decades of the
nineteenth century was the most advanced capitalist country. The
strong bourgeoisie which arose in Britain had to struggle against feudal forces in both the economic and political spheres. Politically the continued existence in the unreformed parliament of powerful feudal interest left to a massive campaign for the reform of the parliament culminating in the Reform Bill of 1832, under which the bourgeoisie were able to obtain political representation.²⁸

As elsewhere, until the nineteenth century, women in Britain had never been politically discriminated against in a conscious way. The law had never expressly forbidden women to sit in parliament, for instance; it remained true that none had ever done so. It was the first time in the English legislation that the word "male" appeared in the First Reform Bill of 1832, extending franchise to large sections of the new industrial middle class. Voting was thus specifically and officially restricted to qualified "male persons".²⁹

Industrial revolution also paved the way for the emergence of feminist thinking. In the pre-capitalistic period production was centered on household or small community. And women actively participated in the workforce along with men. Emergence of capitalism and the industrial revolution changed the centre of production from home to factory. As a result the wife as husband’s productive partner and fellow worker disappeared forever. The family as the co-operative unit of production faded out. The one exception was agriculture, which retained the family
as a unit of production, but the gradual shrinking in the number of farms and increasing urbanisation so reduced the farming population in the industrialised countries. Housewives were gradually deprived of most of the work that had been traditionally done at home: most of that work was now moved to industrial plants. The effect of capitalist development and the industrial revolution brought poor women out of their homes and fields, to factories, mines and sweated industries as cheap labour. Middle class and upper class women were kept within the four walls of home. They were totally excluded from work outside home and were wasted, and they suffered intensely from it. As Jean Crimshaw remarks in her book Feminist Philosophers; this situation "led to an increasingly sharp split between home and work and a resultant tension in the lives of many middle class women." Education, an essential lever of power was almost completely denied to these middle class women who had few chances of gainful employment.

This situation led to the entry of more and more women in the field of social work and contributed to the early campaigns of women against the existing discriminatory laws concerning property, birth control, divorce, prostitution and for securing educational and employment opportunities.

Women established educational institutions for women, and led the battle for reforms within the existing legal and institutional framework by sending petitions to the Parliament,
publishing books, circulating pamphlets and organising protest groups. Some campaigns were suppressed by the government though certain demands were accepted.

Women led campaigns for married women’s property right. Women’s committees which become active on the issue, petitioned to parliament to change the law. Their campaign met with success when in 1882 a law was passed allowing married women the control of the property acquired at the time of their marriage.

The other problem on which women reformers involved was that of prostitution. Double standard of morality in that age was clearly brought out in the Contagious Diseases Act of 1864 under which if a woman was believed to be a prostitute, she could be compulsorily examined medically, hospitalised and imprisoned if she refused treatment. Led by Josephine Butler, the Ladies National Association was formed to organise opposition to the Acts. They exposed the class aspects of the Acts whereby the upper-class men could have access to ‘publicly cleansed’ women of the working class and the sexist nature of the legislation under which women who were the victims were transformed into the culprits. They published a *Women’s Protest* which was reproduced widely in the press. The women courageously took the campaign into the political arena, supporting candidates favouring abolition of the Acts. The Acts were eventually repealed in 1886.32
The nineteenth century in Britain was an age of reform; it was a period when liberals supported by radicals were able to implement limited legislative reforms. Women in Britain were beginning to react against several disabilities and discriminatory laws which oppressed them. English law denied women political or economic or the right to suffrage. Married women could not sue, be sued, or be called as witnesses. They enjoyed no property rights, all her earnings belong to her husband. Even they were denied rights over children. Divorce was practically impossible for them.

However the most prominent and the militant struggle led by women in the nineteenth century was the Women's Suffrage Movement. The suffrage movement in Britain paralleled the movement in the United States. In the fifteenth century women petitioned for the right to vote. Books like Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) argued for woman suffrage. The demand was also raised by the Chartist movement in the 1840's. Soon afterward reports of suffrage movement in the United States reached England. The woman suffrage movement in England is a natural outgrowth from the Great Reform Act of 1832. "This was the first time that the word 'male' had been used in the electoral law of England; hitherto the words used had always been of a generic character—"persons", "freeholders" etc." The bill specifically enfranchised male persons thus excluding the other half of the population.
When most of the nineteenth century political thinkers were against women's equality, John Stuart Mill - the leading ideologue of British liberalism - strongly supported women's rights. John Stuart Mill's name stands prominent when talking about the women's rights movement in Britain. Mill, on his wife Harriet Taylor's persuasion, supported and took up the issue of women's franchise. He even included women's franchise in his manifesto during his political campaign for election to the House of Commons.

Two years after (1968) when the first women's franchise committee was formed in Manchester, John Stuart Mill presented to Parliament a petition signed by nearly one thousand five hundred people including Florence Nightingale, Frances Power Cobbe, Josephine Butler, Harriet Marlineau and Mary Somerville calling for equal suffrage for women. But an amendment to this effect to the Reform Bill of 1867 was lost, seventy three in favour, one hundred and ninety six against. Following the defeat of the amendment, numerous local woman suffrage societies were organised in England and Scotland, followed by the formation of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies under the leadership of Millicent G. Fawcett. From 1867 onwards, the movement in Britain and Ireland never ceased.37

Meanwhile some gains were made by women. Women taxpayers were given the municipal franchise (in 1869). The question of women's franchise was debated frequently in the Parliament. But
all the move towards that end failed due to lack of support from both conservative and labour parties. This behaviour of the political parties made some women organise and lead a separate movement. "By this time disillusionment with both the labour and liberal parties had spread amongst feminists, and the initiative passed to the militant suffragettes led by Emeline Pankhurst.38

Pankhurst made the then campaign for suffrage into a militant one and used all means to achieve the goal. The leadership of the movement thus shifted from a moderate to an extremist hand, using violent means to gain their ends for the first time in the history of European women’s movement.

Pankhurst established a new organisation for the cause, namely, Women’s Social and Political Union. It was formed in 1903.39 Though led by middle class women, the campaign had support among sections of working class women, Irish activist women and women radicals.40

Under the efficient leadership of Pankhurst, women rose in rebellion against the government, they held women’s parliament, organised mammoth meetings and adopted violent means to get wide publicity to their cause. On several occasions they were arrested and imprisoned. "They organised window smashing raids on shops and the fashionable men’s clubs in the West End of London; street lamps were broken; train seats, orchid houses, flowerbeds and golf greens were damaged; telephone wires were cut; fuse boxes blown up; sports pavilions and grand stands at races were burnt
down; works of art were damaged; several empty houses and stately homes and church property were destroyed; and bombs were placed in key places such as near the Bank of England. In addition the women used violence at political party meetings, interrupted the House of Commons debates and attempted to disrupt the Derby Races (where a woman suffragette threw herself in front of the king's carriage and was killed). Their cause was further highlighted by their martyrdom for the repressive state action against them included much brutality, beatings, arrests, imprisonment and forced feeding in jail and the death in action of several suffragettes.41

But the outbreak of the world war in 1914 changed the course of the movement as its foremost leaders Emeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christobel joined war efforts thus giving up the agitation. However Pankhurst's one daughter Sylvia continued the campaign. But its activism and militancy vanished to a great extent.

Women leaders participated enthusiastically in war efforts. They extended their service in the quite running of the government machinery. Many women "became nurses at the front, drove army trucks and ran the army communication system.42 After the world war women were given limited freedom. As Barbara Sinclair writes: "in 1918, partly as a reward for helping win the war and partly under the continued pressure of socialist militants, the government at last gave universal suffrage to men and women.43
But unlike men, women only above thirty years of age were allowed to vote. They had to wait until 1928 to get equal suffrage. After the attainment of suffrage the movement declined and no such militant movement is seen before 1960’s in British history.

Compared to Britain and United States, the issue of women’s voting rights was raised in France only later. Leyon Rishiyar was one of the pioneer of the women’s movement in France who published the book *Women’s Rights* in 1869. The movement initially concentrated on legal reforms such as campaigns for right to education and property. In 1878 Maria Deraismes organised the first International Congress for Women’s rights. Around 1880’s a movement started for women’s suffrage in France. Hubertine Aucert started a suffragette paper, ‘La citoyenne’ in 1881. However the movement was very slow. It was only in 1909 an organisation to fight for voting rights was formed. It conducted conferences and processions to press the demand. In 1919, though the law regarding this was accepted, it was later rejected by the Senate in 1922. In France voting rights were given to women only in 1945.

As in Britain, in many other countries, including United States, a movement by women for reform and suffrage developed during the same time. There are very many versions and opinions among feminists and historians about the origin of feminist movement in United States. The beginning of the movement is
generally traced to the Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls in 1848. "But an enlightenment was seen from the American War of Independence (1776). In the United States of America the feminist movement was also an outcome of demands for democratic rights. It first emerged around 1800, a period of intellectual ferment in Europe as well as in the United States of America. The leaders of the American War of Independence (1776) and the makers of the American Constitution had been strongly influenced by the philosophers of the ‘age of reason’ in Europe, and at this time some American women took up the issue of women’s rights."

During much of the 1800’s both by law and by custom, women were considered ‘non-persons. The law as the powerful restraining force on women’s emancipation. Religious principles also maintained wives’ rightful subordination to their husbands. Education for slaves were non existing and for non-slave women suppressed. Before an organised women’s movement began, middle class women were agitating for the right to higher education.

In 1821 Emma Willard opened Troy Female Seminary with local tax money to educate women. At first her request for funding to open such an institution was refused by New York legislators. In 1833 Oberlin college opened its doors to all races. Women were also admitted so that they might be trained for their future role as proper minister’s wives. But some of the first Oberlin graduates instead of being cultured appendages of their husbands, began breaking down gender barrier. Early graduates included Lucy Stone, soon to become a leader in the women’s suffrage movement.
Meanwhile the temperance movement attracted women very much. Elezabath Cady Stanton connected temperance and women's rights and advocated divorce when alcoholism was present. Within a short period women began to feel that temperance was a matter of women's rights.

Another area in which women actively participated was in the movement against slavery. The women leaders actively involved in efforts to eliminate slavery were Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Antonette Brown and Grimke sisters.

In 1830 anti-slavery societies were formed and Lucretia Mott who was present at the organising meeting of the American Anti-slavery Society later become one of the organisers of the Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Conference.

Women in America took part in struggles against slavery had to face vehement opposition from their male counterparts. Angelina and Sarah Grimke the two female abolition workers often received a negative reception from the public not on the content of their abolition talk but because they were women speaking in public. Thus while working in the anti-slavery agitation women become self consciously aware of their subordinate position. As a result they began including in the issue of women’s rights also in their lecturers.
Later the exclusion of feminist leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and other women delegates from an anti-slavery convention held in 1840 forced them to think and discuss the idea of organising a women's rights convention. That incident practically paved the way for a separate movement. Thus in 1840 an Equal Rights Association for the emancipation of slaves and women was founded.

The first Women's Rights Convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. A Women's rights document based on American Declaration of Independence was the speciality of that convention. Signed by sixty eight women and thirty two men, the Seneca Falls declaration stated: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal .... The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward women, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her ...." The convention demanded for women the right of equal education and the right to preach, to teach, and to earn a livelihood. It also passed a resolution stating "that it is the sacred duty of the women of this country to secure themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise." Thus was laid the foundation for the women's suffrage movement in the United States.45

After that convention various conventions were organised in different states. In 1850 the First National Convention was held in Worcester with delegates from nine states. Another convention was held in Syracuse New York, in 1852.
However from the 1850’s until the Civil War, the women’s movement was mainly concerned with grass roots organizing. Activism was constituted of meetings, conventions and petitions to state and national legislative bodies only. After Civil War Negro Males were enfranchised. But women were not given any such consideration. For more than five years, activists for abolition and women’s rights had been intensely involved with the 15th Amendment granting black males the vote. It showed women that they had no power to influence the content of laws. Thus the passage of the 14th and 15th Amendment became a political setback for white women as they were now, for the first time, explicitly excluded from politics. Naturally, achieving equal status through the vote become the primary goal of women’s movement from 1860’s onwards.

In 1863, after a number of southern victories, Susan B Anthony and Elizabeth Cady stanton called a convention of women to form a Loyalty League. President Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation, but it freed slaves only in the rebel States. The 13th Amendment outlawing slavery passed without mentioning suffrage for blacks or white women. Immediately afterwards a 14th Amendment was proposed with the intent of granting citizenship rights to freed slaves and, by inference, suffrage; the 14th Amendment was significant because it contained the word male, the first time this designation had been used in the Constitution. This Amendment with words 'male citizen' left
intact was passed. In 1869 a 15th Amendment was introduced to grand black males, the right to vote. Once again, women’s efforts to have the female sex introduced in this Amendment were rebuffed by abolitionists who feared this inclusion would jeopardies passage. Undesirably, the forces for abolition and women’s rights, instead of working together, were now pitted against each other.46

Anthony and Stanton organised the National Women Suffrage Association (National) to work for the women in the 15th Amendment. The National Association was the first independent organisation formed for women that was defined and controlled solely by women.

Six months after the founding of the National, the American Suffrage Association was formed to work for passage of the 15th Amendment as it was worked with the intention of working for a 16th Amendment for women’s suffrage after passage of the 15th. Before the war, the women’s rights movement had made progress on a number of issues raised at the 1848 conference. For instance, the activists had made significant gains in two of their most sought after goals: inheriting rights and entrance into educational institutions. However, passage of the 14th and 15th Amendment constituted a political setback for white women as they were now, for the first time, explicitly excluded from politics. And by the end of 1860 the primary goal of the women’s movement was to obtain equal status through the vote, and thus, the women’s rights movement became the women’s suffrage movement.
During this time two groups with different views and opinions were formed inside the women's movement. Some felt the need to obtain suffrage through the amendment of State Constitutions while others had the firm opinion that the immediate requirement was the enactment of amendment to the United State's Constitution. Two groups namely the National Woman Suffrage Association (under the leadership of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton) and American Woman Suffrage Association (Top leaders were Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe) were established in the same year 1869. They followed their own methods to obtain the desired results, but did not succeed. In 1890 the two organisations merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association and continued their fight in both ways.

Meanwhile three American women Harriot Stanton Blach, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, taking their cue from the got experience in the militant suffrage movement led by Emmeline Pankhurst in Britain introduced militant tactics in the women's movement in America. And in 1914 Alice formed the Congressional Union. The Congressional Union members engaged in actions to call attention to the issue of suffrage, thereby keeping it in the mind of the President, Congress and public. She 'staged scenes' introducing tactics and splash not found in the movement since its inception. Always calling newspapers ahead of time, she organised demonstrations on a grand scale with stirring songs and pageantry. The Union adopted colours - purple, white and gold,
held parade with women dressed in white carrying tri-coloured banners, and established a weekly publication, "The Suffragist".

In 1916, in the states where women could vote the Congressional Union formed a women’s party to divert women’s votes from the democratic party. Though the former President Wilson got re-elected, the women’s party was able to claim a women’s protest vote.

In 1917, the United States declared war on Germany. Ignoring the war, the Congressional Union officially become National Women’s Party (NWP). The National Women’s Party initiated picketing at the White House and held "Watchfires of Freedom" in which they burned newspaper clippings of President Wilson’s words. The first picket lines appeared in January, and for the next year and a half, on most days that congress was in session, women carrying purple, white and gold banners were to be found in front of either the White House gates or the Capitol. Delegations representing different status or organisations took turns on the picket line, thereby ensuring a constant reminder to the President and legislators of women’s demand for suffrage.

After six months of picketing a series of arrests began, which extended over a year. Attacks by heckling crowds became a frequent occurrence and their banners were rippled away. But at every time new processions of women with banners appeared, arrests continued. Arrest and more stringent penalties could not deter the enthusiasm of women. More and more women came to the
front for picketing. Increasing penalties were invoked, resulting in prison terms of thirty to sixty days and the occoquan workhouse. Eventually some suffragists including Alice Paul were sentenced to seven months in prison. Calling themselves political prisoners, seventeen imprisoned suffragists went on a hunger strike. The response from authorities was to forcefeed them. The process of arrests, refusal to pay fines, jailing, hunger strike, forced feeding, and eventual release continued throughout the remainder of the suffrage campaign. With the constant coverage provided by the press, women's suffrage become a household word.

Finally in 1920 American women were enfranchised by the 19th amendment to the constitution. By 1945 in most European countries and America, women had won a high degree of political and legal equality with men. During the Second World War many women took up jobs outside home and held even high positions.

But the legal rights won by women increased their status only to a limited extent. The discrimination in all fields of activity continued. As Jo Campling says: ".. Women remained a minority at all levels of political life, they were grossly under represented in high professional positions, they were discriminated against in all areas of employment, they were paid less than men, welfare provisions assumed and encouraged dependence on a husband, and many women certainly did not share the benefits of the newly affluent society."
Both in Britain and America, the first wave of feminist movement disintegrated with the attainment of voting rights. The organisations existed but activism disappeared. And till 1960’s no such movement emerged.

Three years later Alice Paul wrote Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and had introduced it in the congress of the United States. The Women’s Party activists believed that this may raise women to an equal status with men and do away with the legal barriers to women’s advancement in the public realm. The women’s groups from that time onwards debated on it and many opposed the passing of such an amendment. While the Women’s Party worked for equality between the sexes, most of the other women’s groups considered women as mothers who needed special treatment and protection and were for legislative provisions for maternity infant health care and proctive labour legislations. Later the movement almost succumbed to the divisions within.

The period from 1920’s to 60’s was a period of anti-feminism. During second World War, though women were encouraged to accept jobs outside home by the government, many of them were thrown out of their jobs in the post war period. The credit of campaigning single-mindedly as a feminist group for women’s equality and for Equal Rights Amendment goes to the National Women’s Party which faced great opposition and criticism from other women groups.
The second wave of feminist movement developed in the early 1960's in United States. Publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 gave much inspiration to the feminist activity in America. Millions of copies of it were sold in America and Britain. As many women entered paid employment they became more and more aware of their position, and demands for change were voiced.

The forerunner to the 1960's social movement was black activism in the South. The precipitating event to organising mass protest occurred in 1955 when Rosa Parks, a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to give up her seat and move to "the back of the bus". This action went beyond the concept of integrated educational facility and inspired Southern civil rights activists to protest segregation of public facility in general. Martin Luther King worked on the resulting mass transit boycott and the organising of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). College-age students in SCLC formed the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1961 and began promoting summer 'Freedom Rides' in the deep South. Another campus movement of importance founded in the early 1960's, calling itself the New Left, was Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

The younger generation who were involved in the movements of the Political New Left, civil rights and particularly in students
dominated antiwar movements found themselves treated as second class participants. Many such college educated women founded organisations and worked for a change, such type of experiences including discrimination, inequality and neglect in almost all fields made employed women also work in this line.

Various organisations were formed to work for the cause of women. The 'National Organisation for Women' (NOW) was formed in 1966 which in its 1971 conference supported the right of each person to define and express his own sexuality and passed a resolution declaring the oppression of the 'lesbians' a legitimate concern of feminism. WEAL, the Women's Equity Action League, focussing on legal and economic issues was established by some of the former 'NOW' members in 1968. Later a radical feminist group, 'The Feminists' was organised by Ti Grace Atkinson. All the time while working within the social movements, women suffered discrimination. Their secondary status and suppression of their rights within these social movement circles which espoused high ideals of social justice made women to protest publicly. In 1964 women in the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee wrote a position paper protesting their status within that organisation. They were ridiculed by male activists.

Moreover in a National Conference for New Politics (NCNP) held in Chicago in August 1967, a group of radical women led by Jo Freeman and Shulamith Firestone attempted to move a resolution
that women who represented 51 percent of the population must receive 51 percent of the convention votes. They were refused access to the microphones and were told that they had more important issues to talk about than women's liberation. This and other similar incidents occurred during the period urged them to organize separately. They held a meeting in Chicago asking women of the Left to organize their own autonomous movement for women's liberation. Books such as *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1948) and *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan (1963) inspired women of Britain and America. Later Jo Freeman acted as the editor of the first news letter - 'Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement' for radical activities. In 1968, with Pam Allen, she formed the New York Radical Women (NYRW). This group organised the first media protest - the 1968 Miss America pageant which launched the movement into the public eye. By this time, consciousness-raising groups were widespread. Women's centres become common. Women examined their lives, and issues bubbled over. Research from a feminist point of view slowly gained legitimacy and eventually led to a new and positive perspective on traditional women's values.

Despite the growth of the women's movement, ideological divisions emerged inside the groups which tried to analyse women's issues and wanted to change women's status differently. Marxist feminists have blamed women's problems on capitalism and a class structured society and advocated an end to capitalism. Separatists, often lesbians, have claimed that women's situation
will change only if women withdraw from male-formed structures. Radical feminists have seen women's situation as the result of biology and seek to change women's status through biotechnology and fundamentally restructured families and communities. Many socialist feminists have agreed with important elements of both the radical and Marxist critiques. However, they have advocated fundamental societal changes that will accommodate women's biological and social roles.\textsuperscript{53}

The major issues on which women agitated were i) equal pay for equal work and ii) protection of gains and equal participation in decision making. But ideological differences inside the movement created problems many times. Generally issues related to fair employment practices, education and political participation united women, but family and sexually related concerns especially abortion and lesbianism polarised women.\textsuperscript{54}

Though in 1970's and early 1980's women's movement concentrated on the passage of Equal Rights Amendment, it failed to win ratification by 1982. As a result the activists began to reevaluate their strategies.

The long struggle led by women enabled them to achieve many gains. By 1980's women had gained access to almost every public office. In 1981 Sandra Day O'Connor became the first women to sit on United States Supreme Court. Pressure from the women's groups resulted in various Amendments. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibited discrimination based on sex in
educational activities and programmes in order to enable teachers and administrators to become conscious and to change discriminatory practices. Efforts were also made by women to change the language and the media to avoid its gender bias. They demanded equal pay for work of equal value and challenged many assumptions about the relationship between men and women and about the family roles.

The 1960’s witnessed the re-emergence of a women’s movement in Britain also. It was mainly led by left wing of women. The first women’s groups banded together as a loose collective called the London Women’s Liberation Workshop and published a news letter called SHREW. The first National Women’s Liberation Conference was held in 1970 at Ruskin college, Oxford.55

The news about the movement in America and Britain spread fast and inspired women of other countries in their struggle for achieving rights.

The movement for liberation carried out by women in different countries for getting equal status with men, though not successful had no doubt improved their condition to a large extent. The liberal ideas and the news about the women’s struggle for getting equal rights in Britain and America reached India which influenced educated Indians during the nineteenth century.
REFERENCES


7. Desrochers, n. 4, p. 16.


10. Ibid, p. 23.


13. Gail Omvedt, *Feminism and the Women’s Movement in India*, Research Centre for Women’s Studies, S N D T, Bombay, 1987, pp. 3-4


In 1869 five medical students admitted to the medical courses in Edinburgh were refused permission to continue their courses due to riots from some male students and faculty members against their admission. They protested and later went to London and started the School of Medicine for women.

Mariamies, n.23, p.88.
33. Chartism was a British working-class movement for social reform that normally came into existence after the publication of The People’s Charter in May 1838.


   The Encyclopedia of Social Reform says; ‘votes eighty three in favour and one hundred and ninety six against’.


   Some of the leading suffragettes included Emmeline Pankhurst’s daughters, Christobel and Sylvia; Millicent Garret Fawcett, a long time champion of women’s rights; Countess Markieviez, the Irish revolutionary; and well-known figures such as Lady Pethwick Lawrence and Lady Constance Lytton, and working-class militants such as the cotton mill worker Annie Kenney.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid, Pp.93-94.

42. Sinclair, n.22, p.211.

43. Ibid.

44. Mariamies, n.23, p.96.


The best known of early feminist writers in Europe was Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97). In 1791, she wrote the Vindication of the Rights of Women, in which she challenged all the prevailing nations about women's rationality.