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### WOMEN AND SOCIAL FREEDOM: CONCEPTUALIZING FEMINISTIC MOVEMENTS AND RESISTANCE

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### Abstract

Feminism as a form of theory and practice has remained important to scholars and to the research carried out in the field of gender and politics. For many gender scholars, therefore, the "personal is political"—their academic interests have been inseparable from their political commitment. Their endeavor is therefore one of "critical scholarship" with an explicitly normative dimension. And from the late 1960s, women academics also began to organize inside the discipline. The women's caucus of the American Political Science Association was established in 1969, the International Political Science Association created a Study Group on Sex Roles and Politics in 1976, and in 1986 the Standing Group on Women and Politics was created within the European Consortium for Politics Research. Debates about separate gender sections and panels on women and politics—seen by some as separatist—linked to broader questions about women's political participation, such as whether women should organize within established structures (political parties, trade unions) or autonomously (Dahlerup 2010). Scholars pressing alternative sexualities pushed further, sometimes arguing for a destabilization of analytic as well as social categories (e.g., Butler 1990). The development of much academic work on gender and politics was shaped by this broader context of feminist and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) activism. In this paper, the different theoretical perspectives that have led researchers to the idea of leisure as resistance, including structuralism, post-structuralism, and interactionism, are discussed. Using insights from these perspectives, three issues related to the conceptualization of resistance are examined: the collective versus individual nature of resistance; the question of outcomes of resistance; and the issue of intentionality. Finally, it presents an understanding of the evolution of the gender and politics subfield as well as some of the challenges that remain.

**Keywords**: Feminism, Social Freedom, Women, Individual Resistance, Collective Resistance, Outcomes, Intentionality, Women's Leisure.

### Introduction

Women and Social Freedom' is a slogan of the feminist movements, which means a woman needs her freedom even from the clutches of the unwritten laws of the patriarchal society. Laws are abundantly created to ensure the dignity of woman in her living environment. But there is a gap between the existence and execution of laws. So, in a practical sense it is impossible to ensure the safety and freedom in the domestic and public spheres. Social freedom of a woman means the society's willingness to accept 'Her' with her body and soul. In public and private areas, she has to be acknowledged as a human being with her aspirations equal to me In a patriarchal society, religion is not, simply, a mere form of belief system. It has multi levels of implications in structuring, restructuring and altering the norms and practices of a society in tune with the patriarchal social order. Religion and its intact teachings and principles have the power to dominate the common-sense and the rational psyche of its believers with its embedded frame of 'faith'. In this sense, faith acts as a tool to induce the consent of the people to dominate their socio-cultural space. Finding a 'self-space' within this 'faith-space' will naturally lead a faithful individual at the mouth of social and self-contestations. As an 'oppressed' social category, women often conceive religious faith as an ultimate asylum to open up their worries and feelings. This 'addiction' will lead her, indirectly, towards the total submission of her social space at the will of patriarchal hegemony. However, the modern gender theories and feminist movements offers a new window to understand the 'faith frames and its positive negotiations with the women's space.

### The Study of Women on Their Own Terms

Taking a different point of departure, other gender scholars have examined women in politics on their own terms. They are less concerned with sameness and difference between women and men within traditional political institutions and analyze women's political activities and legal reform, institutions, and policy of concern to women as women, thereby bringing new areas of study into the discipline. One important body of work examines the diverse activities and ideas that are often thought of as feminist but has also studied women's movements and organizations broadly construed. It demonstrates how feminist movements put important issues on to the political agenda and documents the diverse forms women's organizations take and the wide range of issues they engage with This includes women's organizing in developing countries as well as in Europe. Examples of such research includes analyses of







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organizations like the National Organization of Women (NOW), which operated nationally throughout the United States to campaign for women's equality from 1966 onward or studies of the way gender, race, and class worked together to structure the civil rights movement.

Gender has multiple meanings and analyses that include the production of sexuality, masculinities, and femininities that had hitherto been downplayed in the gender and politics scholarship. The increasing fragmentation of feminism has resulted in feminisms in the plural and the problematization of women as a coherent and unified category, which adds greater analytical complexity particularly once race, class, and sexuality are fully analyzed. This work also posed important challenges to concepts such as objective knowledge and the role of researcher and researched. It has required self-reflexivity about feminism's hegemonic discourses and exclusions. Feminists who are of color, working class, postcolonial, and lesbian, argue that failure to consider the distinctive and sometimes conflicting interests among women has created a bias toward the experience of white middle-class.

In India, the creation of caste structure on the basis of occupation caused the creation of a patriarchal society. The brahmanical society hegemonised the entire life of other people and created a new social order, which is further divinely sanctioned with religious order. Religious faith is imposed as a hegemonical tool to create obedient and subordinate subjects. This 'faith tool' worked at the level of creating further social impositions on the women community, who were demarcated by several social taboos. Female bod tself was placed as pure and impure while approaching religion. Faith and body are interconnected and through this faith the women body suppressed in many instances. Faith imposed many rules and regulations on the real identity of a woman to maintain the cosmic order. From her childhood, she subjected to the norms of religion and faith, which is deep rooted in her mind and her thoughts, will act accordingly. Many of her spiritual God fathers envisioned for a systematic moral structure of a society and they imposed the responsibility for the maintenance of that infrastructure on women. This type of social construction is substantiated by the old religious texts and its practices. Thus, the construction of patriarchal society absolutely oppressed a women's freedom by all means, especially oppressed her sexual privileges. Indeed, the laws of society formed to control the sexual privileges and status of a woman in her surroundings. The term 'chastity' is reserved only for her protection and it is her responsibility to remain 'pure' always in the terms of a patriarchal construction. It is believed that the 'purity' of a lady purifies the society and leads to salvation. Even from her childhood her dreams should bear such a concept or responsibility. Her body is identified as weak, way to hell, lifeless, inert etc. The thinkers think about a woman connected with her body, without body there is no thinking is possible about woman. Otherwise never recognized as she is a perfect creation of God with soul, mind and body and her feelings, emotions, ambitions, desires etc are rejected for her own purity and the societies too.

In the patriarchal structure of family, women have been associated with nature and unthinkable matter and all women have historically been associated with the concept of 'mother'. But she represents love and sacrifice and the main duty entrusted on her to safeguard the society by keeping her as a pure lady. In fact, it is a harmful action to posit collective identity above individual assertion of sexual ethnic and religious identities is ultimately totalitarianism.

Religion and faith are a social construction to keep up the male domination uninterruptedly. So, a girl is born and brought u n a society have to surrender her dreams and desires as they envisioned for it is so harmful or will turn as fatal to male dominance. It is so evident that the feminine and masculine features included in a structure and the feminine aspects are deliberately suppressed. The Society is women oriented. Everything is created for her. The phallo centric symbolic order suggests the formation of women in a same way from generation to generation. In such a structural point of view as Manu suggests she would remain as dependent to others, have no right to move an inch independently. But the matter is that she didn't know she is in the chains of faith and she has her own identity. As Betty Frieden opines women apparently had everything that was supposed to make them happy and comfortable, but something haunting was there. The feminists demanded liberation from the role of the housewife and mother who lived in a 'comfortable concentration camp'. The duties of the housewife and mother were endless, monotonous, unrewarding and peculiarly suited to the capacifies of feeble-minded girls. Society's expectation that a mother should care for her own children was cited as oppression of women by our male - dominated patriarchal society from which women must be liberated so that they can achieve fulfilment in work force just like men. Actually, the underlying problem is problem of identity - a stunning or evasion of growth. In spite of our modern ways of life, material progress and progressive ideas, we will treat women to gratify their basic need, didnot allow them to grow and fulfil themselves as human being. The stereotypical female is a sexual object, she must look happy and her face must not betray human or intelligence. She must be completely passive in the sexual act. This desexualisation involves not only her body but also her mind and feelings. Thus, the deal women castrated creature, a female cunach. Germaine Greer, an apostle of female physicality, energy, daring experimentation, independence and vigour, she only advised women to take position of their body and regale in its power and boldly accept its laws of loveliness. To her body was the only effective means that a woman possessed; she could use it to attain emancipation.







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Women spiritualism interpreted as an attempt of a woman to find out her own identity in the ways of her deep faith. Perhaps, deep inside every woman has a longing to be someone in her own rightfully aware of herself, confident and in control. In a patriarchal society woman spiritualism is used as a tool in two ways. There is an identity crisis in every woman's mind. She is engaged in search of her true own identity. Her real identity is hide by other socio – religious, cultural identities. Even her women hood is presented as a socio - religious and political agenda. These identities upon her lead her life without a sense of who she is. Beyond her basic necessities she never thinks of it. She has a notion that she is in a comfort zone in the premises of her house and in the premises of her faith. There are several things to be determined as do's and taboos for her. In her life these norms of the society demanded a complete walk in her life with the male protection. She deserves no freedom of expression or speaks about her way of thinking and life. It is suppressed by the social construction of faith, which moulds her life in a manner that is entirely different from her own identity. Because the smooth functioning of the patriarchal society never wants to face a hindrance with the organic process in the body of a lady like menstruation and contraception. The male dominant society considered women as 'dalit'. She became so religious in these circumstances for she is ignorant about her surroundings and the elements of a male dominant society. In this context number of domestic violence are reported very few for she will suffer that as part of her moral duty. Her thoughts moulded to follow these anarchies as sacred. So that once the ladies strictly observed the social anarchies like 'Sati'. These taboos insisted on her never allows to break the unseeing laws of the male dominant faith formation. And the significant consequence is that the coming generation too destined to save the same circle of life and believed that it's their duty to protect the culture without any hesitance. These taboos at created in the name faith, which is a sharp too, to subject a women's dreams and her vision about a free life without her involvement and it seems that naturally her life will spoil. The existence of 'faith' in the present day is a socio – political religious expression which acted as the supporting element for the continuation of male dominance.

But we have some exceptions to indicate, those who have been walked beyond the boundaries of their religion and faith. These exceptional examples also born and brought up in the above-mentioned religious circles. But they took an effort to analyse their suppressed conditions and tried to solve the identity crisis that they faced. They lived for themselves to fulfil their own life mission but its fruits experienced by the society as well. Such ladies utilised 'faith' as a tool to renovate their dreams and thus discovered their missing identity among the socially constructed confused identities.

In this context it is very essential to know the movement of feminism. The patriarchal elements created by the male dominant society should be explain and interpret in the light of progressive thoughts to accomplish the idea of gender equality. Nationally it is a hindrance to procure the progressive goals without the participation and contribution of women. Society should be the platform for men and women in a same perspective to bring forth their creativity to remove the injustice of the society. The term 'feminism' is interpreted as women's rights. It's an ideological position which emphasizes for equality of gender and advocates maximisation of potential of women, so that institutionally and culturally created constraints do not hinder the process and pattern of development of women. Thus, to become a feminist means to be prepared for a profound personal transformation. A feminist is one who is awakened and conscious about women's life and problem, and feminist consciousness is the experience in a certain way of certain specific contradictions in the social order. That means the feminists apprehends certain features of social reality as intolerable; so as to be rejected if one is to transform the society for a better future. The movement of feminism requires people to support them again injustice. Feminism is not mere a word, it's an activism envisioned to build an egalitarian society for the benefit of whole mankind.

#### Conclusion

Gender relations, like all social relations, are multi-stranded: they embody ideas, values, and identities; they allocate labour between different tasks, activities, and domains; they determine the distribution of resources; and they assign authority, agency, and decision-making power. This means that gender inequalities are multi-dimensional and cannot be reduced to some single and universally agreed set of priorities. Any attempt to do so will run the danger of being either too narrow (as the MDGs have been accused of being) or a wish list that is too long and complex to act on. However, gender relationships are not internally cohesive. They contain contradictions and imbalances, particularly when there have been changes in the wider socio-economic environment. Consequently, a shift in one aspect of social relations can initiate a series of changes in other aspects, with unpredictable consequences. To that extent, it could be argued that each of the three indicators embodied in MDG 3 has the potential to make a difference. Each can bring about immediate changes with longer term consequences. Indeed, the same could be said of any set of policies that seeks to improve women's access to resources. Some may be more strategic than others, but all have transformatory potential as long as the change in question is a genuine expansion of women's choices, rather than a token gesture of paternalist benevolence.







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