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**SHOULD WE ALL BE FEMINISTS?**

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**ABSTRACT :**

This article aims at giving views about the need for feminists in society. It has been in a process that Feminism is majorly taken in negative connotation nowadays and thus giving rise to the criticism to the people promoting Feminism. But the correct view about Feminism is necessary to be made aware to the people that Feminism is not about giving only supremacy to the class of women and making others lie below this supremacy but basically lies in bringing both classes of men and women upon equal stature. Thus there is a need for more and more people needed to make people know and understand the true meaning of Feminism and the true object of this campaign. And this article highlights the need for this ideology, all the constitutional provisions, and international efforts made in regard to equality and acceptance of correct methodology about Feminism and Feminists.

**INTRODUCTION :**

Before straightaway popping into the very topic, it is necessary to give an idea about the term Feminist. So simply if we say, the person who supports feminism is known to be a Feminist. Now if we talk about feminism, it indeed is a topic that has no limits and that has been the topic of several discussions in society from way back. The actual meaning of Feminism can be stated to the length I am defining it, I will say Feminism is a kind of ideology that believes in the equality of both women and men. The prime reason behind the inception of this ideology can be stated as gender inequality and gender stereotypes. As far as these terms are concerned, both are associated with gender roles. Gender roles are basically the manner that deals with how a particular gender or a person of a specific gender is expected to behave, act, speak and conduct herself or himself based on the sex assigned to her or him. Thus gender inequality refers to the unequal treatment where one gender or sex is prioritized and privileged over the other. Now if we consider stereotype, it is generally the widely accepted judgment or a bias against a certain gender. Thus gender stereotypes connote the preconception in regard to ascribing to an individual the specific attributes and roles that

ought to be performed by women or men for the reason of her or his membership in a social group of women or men. These all terms are covertly or overtly related to Feminism which is undoubtedly associated with Feminist.

### **Why there is a need for Feminism? :**

Now it is true that Feminism advocates the need for equality for both men and women on equitable grounds in various fields be it social, political, economic, cultural, etc. Feminism has been primarily misinterpreted way more than any other term could have been. But contrary to the preconceived notion about feminism, it indeed has nothing to do with pushing men to inferior levels or bringing women to a superior standard. All it talks about is bringing men and women on equal footing in terms of rights and opportunities which has been made specified from time to time in various Conventions like the Convention on Declaration on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1967,<sup>1</sup> Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993, Conferences namely Beijing Conference, Copenhagen Conference, Mexico Conference, Vienna Conference on Human Rights, Commission such as Commission on Status of Women & Statutes such as Constitution of India Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Sexual Harassment (Prohibition, Prevention and Redressal ) Act, 2013, etc.<sup>2</sup>

Now if we say that it basically refers to the rights of women then the question comes to mind why women only? It is so because women are the ones who have been the victim of gender inequality and gender stereotypes in much broader aspects in comparison to men. It is no doubt that men also face the consequences but the proportion of treating women on the pathetic level and men on such very level differs largely. In fact, men are nowhere close to being the victim of the discrimination that has been faced by women.

Regarding the need for the ideology of feminism or a feminist, it has been required from years because women have been facing harassment and discrimination since then. Giving various defaming adjectives to women, thinking them an object or toys that men can control, letting them busy with household chores and giving no recognition to their domestic job, not letting them go beyond certain boundaries by binding them with shackles of customs and rituals, forcing them to sit on the funeral pyre of their husband and become Sati, being abused for not giving birth to a male child or making them prey for female infanticide and being

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<sup>1</sup> (CEDAW), 1967

<sup>2</sup>< <https://www.naaree.com/domestic-violence-helplines-india/>

abused mentally, sexually, physically, economically and emotionally and what has not been there which women have not faced!! Still, there is a need to ask why need for feminism or feminist? Everyone needs to consider the fact that she is just not someone's mother, daughter, or wife but a thinking living individual.

### **Constitutional Provisions regarding Equality of Men and Women :**

Even the Preamble of Indian Constitution provides equality of status and opportunities of every individual, Article 14 provides for Equality before law and equal protection of law, Article 15 prohibits discrimination on any grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth,<sup>3</sup> Article 16 provides for equality of opportunities in matter of public employment,<sup>4</sup> Article 39A providing for equal justice and free legal aid,<sup>5</sup> Article 39(d) providing for that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women,<sup>6</sup> Article 39(e) stating that the health and strength of workers, men and women and the tender age of children are not abused and Article 42 regarding the just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief,<sup>7</sup> Article 51A (e) under chapter Fundamental duties also provides for renouncing the practices that are derogatory to the dignity of women, these all provisions have been provided because it is necessary for all around development of the country that there should be not any kind of discrimination to be in prevalence that could hinder advancement of country in social, economic, political and economic field but it should create such environment and situations where every individual will be self-sufficient and self-capable of dealing with their life in the way they want to and here individual accounts for both women and men.

Not just these National provisions but various international efforts and regimes have been there which talk about the equality of women such as the UN Charter whose Preamble provides for equal rights for women and men and its Article 55 talks about the universal observance of human rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 declares that all are born free and equal and they are endowed with reason and conscience.<sup>8</sup> Its Article 3 talks about the right to life and security for both women and men and Article 5 states that no one

<sup>3</sup> Article 15 in The Constitution Of India 1949

<sup>4</sup> Article 16 in The Constitution Of India 1949

<sup>5</sup> Article 39A in The Constitution Of India 1949

<sup>6</sup> Article 39d in The Constitution Of India 1949, Equality Act, 2010

<sup>7</sup> Article 39e, 42 in The Constitution Of India 1949

<sup>8</sup> <[19](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights#:~:text=All%20human%20beings%20are%20born,in%20a%20spirit%20of%20brotherhood.></a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

will be subjected to inhuman treatment and there have been International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights and International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights of 1966 stating that States ensure all men and women have equal rights which are set forth. These all international regimes have been providing provisions to ensure Equality in every phase and field because it has been the requirement of the world since ancient times. We went through four stages of Feminism in which there have been stress laid upon intersectional equality, legal and social equality, sexual and reproductive rights, and suppression of suffrage & oppression of women and still the fourth wave is in prevalence.

### **All be Feminists or not? :**

And **it is not true that only a woman can be a Feminist but a man can also.** It is not wrong to stand for a woman but for that purpose as well, the first initiative has to be taken by one who has been the victim of it i.e. women. So far the topic concerns me, I would definitely say that yes We all should be Feminists but up to the limit till where it does not disregard the equal footing of men and women. It is to be understood that Feminism is not about belittling men or disregarding men and even it does not seem to put remarks of sexism as well. Feminism is about the advocacy of women's rights in every sphere of life.

Feminism is about fighting against gender inequality and gender stereotypes that have been prevailing in society for centuries. Women have been the victim of such heinous treatment which men could never imagine. Women are termed weak quite a time but it's the only bearing unbearable and indescribable pain during parturition. Labor pain is one of the most severe pains that has been evaluated. So how are they weak? In fact, anyone telling them weak is the most ungrateful thing one could ever say. They are restricted not to work or even if they wish to work, the jobs which they are advised either of a teacher or doctor... why still women are not encouraged to be a pilot or go in defense? The famous cases have been there in regard to claiming the equal rights of women as that of name, be it the case of C.B. Muthamma v. Union of India [1979 AIR 1868, 1980 SCR (1) 668] in which there were provisions in Indian Foreign Service that women doing the job under this will have to get permission in writing for the solemnization of marriage and if domestic commitments of women come in between discharging her duties, her service may be terminated in that case. Likewise in the case of Air India v. Nergesh Meerza [1981 AIR 1829, 1982 SCR (1) 438] in

which it was their woman could not be married within 4 years of her marriage. Why these points were highlighted in these cases because they were discriminatory against women and thus these provisions were held unconstitutional then only because it has been the view that there should be no inequality in any way possible between women and men in terms of Status and opportunities. Another instance of gender stereotype can be why only women are expected to raise the child alone, does the child only belong to the mother, not to the father? And it has been held in various cases What I mean to say is that most of the restrictions have been put on women primarily, though the changes have been taking place still the large population of women is in the dark. The reason behind this is a lack of awareness. Women have been compelled to think that they have to go through this or they are meant to suffer such oppression, they have been limited only to household chores, they are bound to face abuse, it is okay for them to face domestic violence and for changing this mindset, we need awareness.

Awareness needs to be created by education and if people taking charge of creating this awareness among women are termed as feminists, then I believe that every man and woman should be a Feminist. We should not hesitate to join such a campaign which is for the betterment of society that will bring men and women on an equal platform. Teaching women to do away with all the arbitrariness they are facing or raising their voices against the sexual, physical, and domestic abuse they have been the victim of, claiming their rights in the field of opportunities in work, the profession is a job which needs to be done by everyone as it will be helpful for the whole country, the whole world. Change has been the law of nature and change in the position and status of women has been an alarming topic for several decades, though the situation is changing at a slow rate but if each one of us gets engaged in the campaign of Feminism, it will accelerate the pace which will eventually bring a great change in the society where we will see men and women on equal footing.

### **CONCLUSION :**

Lastly, Everyone could indeed be a Feminist as there is no wrong in speaking against the wrong or standing for claiming rights but it is necessary that Feminist and Feminism should be taken in positive and correct connotations. It should not be understood as a treatment for making women reach above men or making them superior to men, it never says that women

should leave the domestic household or should not do child-care, what it says is that there should be sharing of responsibilities be it household chores or child care facility. Not only women are entitled to take care of every aspect of life related to home but men should equally contribute to that. Women should not be said as bad or worst drivers, they should not be discouraged in pursuing their careers in engineering or defense. Both women and men should not hesitate in treating each other on an equal level. Equality should be taken into consideration respecting physical differences as well. One should claim equality on basis of physical differences because they have created some categorical functions as well. What should be taken into consideration is that there should be equal exposure to both women and men in every aspect of life. And if one is claiming that on being a Feminist then truly every person on the earth should be a FEMINIST!

