

# Feminist movement 1960s



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The Women Movement has been divided into three phases by the feminist experts. Each phase dealt with different issues regarding to females.

In the First Wave of Feminism, the movement started from the 18th century which lasted in the beginning of the 20th century. The hurdles of inequality such as property rights and voting rights were the major concerns. Virginia Woolf is the founder of the ideas of this first wave of movement. The first wave completely paid attention to the idea and rights of suffrage.

The Second Wave of Women's Movement which is also known as Feminist Movement or the Liberation movement of women in the USA began during the early years of 1960s and lasted throughout the late 1980s. Simone de Beauvoir is allied with the idea of this wave. The second wave of feminism focused on the issues of gender inequality, sexuality, workplace, family and reproductive rights. This wave argued that women have to face the political as well personal tyranny in a society which is male dominant. (Barbara Sinclair, 1983)

The women's movement in the 1960's emphasized on attaining freedom in terms of reproductive and sexual. The demands are women specific like centers for rape crisis, birth control options, very reasonably priced child care, emphasis on women's health and other needs of women. This movement resulted in creation of municipal Rape Treatment Center Act, 1974 by which in all city hospitals, rape treatment centers established. This movement also challenged the abortion law in Illinois where abortions were illegal by law by creating an organization named Jane.

Other goals of these movements were the equality in terms of economics from 1960 onwards. This movement emphasized on gender equality unlike earlier movements which were aimed for legislation only. Another organization was formed for the rights of women in 1974 name The Coalition of Labor Union Women with the targets like maternity leave, pension benefits deduction and other rights like biased insurance rates and provided access to women who were never before on union level. Women which were already working in Chicago fought hiring and biasness for jobs.

The period from 1917 to 1960s had two world wars and an economic boom because of which many women came into Workplace. During the war, women served as labor and then they started working to achieve and maintain the new higher and better living standards which were enjoyed only by middle class families. When women joined the workplace, they soon realized the discriminated behavior towards them in terms of unequal economic and social status.

Many movements such as Civil Rights act and student movements were at its peak during the years of 1960s. The women adopted and followed the practices of these movements. They adopted the different methods of awareness raising, demonstrations, protests, and political lobbying to bring in front their own agenda.

National Organization for Women (NOW) was established in 1966 which was an official group to represent and fight for the issues and problems of women. This new group of women was not instant success of them but by the end of second years of its creation growing to its member's up to the

mark of 1035 and was divided by ideological partitions. The founders of NOW began working on the legislation that could improve the living of the women and they also forced the politicians to become aware of the problems of the women. This group worked out six factors which are considered to be essential for women's equality with men which includes the abiding of laws by employers for equal opportunity employment and end the discrimination, equivalent and isolate education as of men. The other factors were maternity leaves, tax deductions and training to poor women while on job. At the same time many other organizations started to establish for the welfare of the women. The two factors on which NOW faced serious problems were Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution which makes sure the equivalent rights regardless of gender and the demand of contraception and abortion. United Auto Workers which was supporting NOW with the office space took out its support because the ERA law will prohibit freedom for women. When some of the NOW members called to revoke the abortion amendments, many other members left NOW.

NOW was struggling to re-establish itself as a national organization for women for the period of two years. There were other groups formed due to this blow to NOW by female antiwar, civil rights and members who left NOW due to refusal to readdressing the women's concerns. Women during 1960's period were demoralized by unequal treatment. In 1964 at Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC) conference a woman's resolution was presented, Stokely Carmichael who was Black Nationalism in United States cut off all the debate with the argument that the only place for women in SNCC is prone.

NOW aimed on women's rights, the new radical groups emerged with wider themes of women's freedom and spread in Chicago, Toronto, Seattle, Detroit and other places and towns. Although these radical groups structure was not strong as NOW has its national structure. In no time, women's liberation movement was wide spread and can be observed every where. Liberation movement had no officers nor offices, no addresses and no printed agenda to present their point of view. Miss America Pageant presented the image of womanhood during the protest at Atlantic City and New Jersey in 1968.

Redstockings which is one of the feminist radical groups published "The Bitch Manifesto" based in New York City in 1969.

In 1969, NOW called the congress to unite women in which was aimed to unite the radical and moderate wings of the women's movement which was almost impossible task. NOW leaders were aimed to have a reform while the radical groups were aimed to revolution.

In 1975, the National Agenda of Women – the comprehensive program of legal and political reforms- was presented to the president Gerald Ford, all state governors and all the members of the Congress. Subsequently, in 1977 an action plan was presented to the government official in National Women's Conference in Houston to remind them about the feminine constitution which is their responsibility.

National Women's Political Caucus and National Organization for Women keep focusing and pressurizing the politicians and legislators and making prominent of women's issues on media. The legal success of the movements were the Affirmative action, Title IX and Women Education Equity Act, The

Equal Credit Opportunity Act (1974), the act of Pregnancy Discrimination (1978), the illegalization of marital rape and legalization of no fault divorce in all states. Beside all these victories, the change of social attitudes in favor of female is considered the biggest victory of the women's movement.

The year of 1980 is the decline of the second wave of feminine movement.

During the early 1980s, it was thought that females have achieved all of their demanded goals. In 1982, the Equal Right Act (ERA) was failed, because only three states did not approve this. The second wave of women's movement was successful except the ERA. (Flora Davis, 1999)

## **Pros and Cons**

Despite of problems faced by Women's movement due to its leadership and ranks, the movement attained some goals in a very short time. Due to support of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1965, women in US got jobs in every corner of US and the employees which have decimation histories are required to provide the durations in which they increase the women strength in their companies. Some laws including Divorce laws were relaxed; ensuring that employers can not fire the pregnant women from jobs and some new study programs for women are introduced in universities and colleges. In 1972, Congress passed an amendment in the Higher Education Act which ensured that there must be no discrimination on the bases of gender in educational programs which are getting federal financial helps and also ensured that there must be same space for women's in all male schools.

ERA amendments in the US laws including state sodomy laws, existence of single sex bathrooms in public places, legalization of same-sex marriage and relationship and making abortion as a legal right funded by the taxpayer fund. This law required 38 states which were not achieved as expected and amendment fell short of three states support. There was a growing sense that women's movement goals are already achieved. NOW sustained its new role in new millennium by struggling for women's rights including equality in military and federal funding for child care programs and to prevent any violence against women's of US. Despite of its popularity and its membership and funding growth, its activism fragmented and burdened with opposition.

In sum, the second wave of women's movement was very successful for the welfare and in status up gradation of women. It has many successes and the only failure is the ERA.

In the Third Wave of Feminism started in 1990's and present till today. This movement started in result of the perceived failures of the second wave of Feminism. The Equal Rights amendment is still in question and in progress which was supported by second and third wave movement leaders.