

# Development of an understanding of feminism



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While building a case on contemporary feminism, Tolentino posits that in recent times, that feminism has grown to be one of the most widely marketed or proclaimed ideas in the world (10). In as much as there exist varying opinions about the feminism ideology, its ideal meaning relates to the efforts aimed at promoting equality among genders. Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines feminism as entailing equality of the sexes from a political, economic and social perspective. It is the belief that the rights and opportunities of men are equal to those of women. However, the ideas have been widely corrupted and misconstrued. Being an idea of the times, its understanding or lack of it thereof has vast consequences whose effect can run through generations.

Although the feminism idea is meant to be positively perceived by society, owing to its rationale and consequences, the misunderstanding of feminism has resulted in a negative perception. The misunderstanding of feminism cuts across society, affecting those supporting it, and those against it. As a result of the misunderstanding, those supporting feminism end up propagating and enforcing a skewed version of feminism. On the other hand, the misunderstanding of feminism lays a basis for those against it. According to Watson R. (2016), as a result of the negative perceptions against feminism, few can view the contemporary feminism movement as one having anything to do with equality. The author indicates that this could be the result of a misunderstanding of the history and goals of feminism.

In the misunderstanding, feminism has been viewed by those against as weapons aimed at ensuring men lose out in terms of opportunities, influence, power and authority in society. With this, the movement advocating for

feminism has been referred to as having degenerated to a men-hating movement, one aimed at belittling of men. The category has continued to view feminism as a force bent towards feminists controlling the world and putting men down (Watson 7). It has been further misconceived that feminism would finally negatively affect societal relationships, opportunities, marriage, among other societal dynamics.

On the other hand, a significant percentage of those supporting feminism has adopted an approach that depicts the image of an idea of promoting women superiority and displacing men from power. Others have taken a perspective that is committed to liberating women from men, as opposed to liberating women from the historical injustices placing women at a disadvantage and resulting in inequality. This has meant that a discriminatory perspective against men has ended up being the driving force for feminism, as opposed to the ideal desire for equality among the sexes. Such are the extremist approaches (misunderstanding) have resulted in feminism being viewed as hatred against men and aimed at discouraging men.

The consequence of this misunderstanding has been the discrediting of the otherwise beneficial idea, and the adoption of the wrong approach in implementing feminism leading to a counter-productive impact. The feminism idea has been regarded as being an enemy of the male sex. There is a further perception of feminism aiming at ending patriarchy and installing matriarchy in the world. In the upshot, feminism has been associated with bitter, angry and forceful women that are dedicated to enforcing a forceful ideology against men.

Expanding from the definition given by Merriam Webster online dictionary, the feminism idea should be based on advocating for the rights of women based on the equality of sexes and propagating the idea that both genders are entitled to not only equal rights but also equal opportunities.

As can be picked from this basis, feminism is primarily about equality of the sexes, as opposed to sameness. The concept of sameness arises in the understanding of feminism in the premises of men and women having varying physical capabilities and thus cannot be same. Therefore, in seeking to understand the feminism idea, 'sameness' should be replaced entirely by 'equal' - referring to equal rights and opportunities. Further, this means that it is not a requirement for men and women to have the same capabilities for equal rights to be granted.

Upon understanding this, the concern is as to whether equality can be effectively promoted (feminism), without the entire scheme emerging to be to the benefit of one's sex, and the expense of the other. This is such that one gender should not feel disadvantaged in the long run, thus the entire feminism idea losing its driving force - equality. Therefore, feminism should not be viewed as lowering men in a bid to bring up women. The feminism idea is concerned with handling both sexes to a situation where they enjoy equality in all ways. An understanding of feminism requires the comprehension that feminism is beyond discrimination and hatred of men.

As opposed to the perception of feminism being one sex (female) fighting against another (male), feminism must be approached as an idea committed to equality among genders. It is an idea entailing the struggle for economic,

political and social equality. Further, feminism should be differentiated from misandry. While misandry refers to prejudice and hatred against the male sex, feminism is dedicated towards equality for the sexes. In essence, feminism is committed to counteracting the effects of misandry as opposed to supporting it. This means that feminism is for the benefit of everyone in society, as opposed to being viewed as being of benefit to exclusively women in society. The very basis of equality of sexes should lead to everyone being in support of the feminism idea in society.

An understanding of feminism requires embracing the fact that both sexes require equal access to opportunities and rights. Therefore, discrimination based on gender is uncalled for, and an assessment of societal culture and beliefs for compliance with equality is vital. The fear that feminism goes against established gender roles, religious beliefs and traditions must be overcome for proper comprehension of the feminism ideology. Further, an understanding of the rationale for feminism will ensure that the misconstrued opinions held by people are objectively rendered void.

In the upshot, there is a meaning to feminism beyond the apparent perception as being synonymous to female-superiority, men-bashing, and men hating. The understanding of feminism is one that should be based on a struggle against misandry and misogyny. Only upon a proper understanding of the feminism idea can perceptions of those against it change and its rightful implementation result. Otherwise, pushing for feminism would remain an exercise in futility, and will continue to be counter-productive. An understanding of feminism being synonymous to equality of sexes or gender equality is primary.

## Works Cited

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