

# Women's Rights, Gender, and Feminist Approach

Dr. Hemasri Devi

## Abstract:

Debates on gender concerns, feminist experiences, and challenges to patriarchal values are gradually become the content of discussion of the contemporary academia especially since the World War II. The United Nations Organization (UNO) through its Human Development Index (HDI) and Gender Development Index (GDI) is continuously explaining about the scenario of existing gender disparity in this world. Worldwide policies and plannings too incorporate gender issues in the ambit of their developmental strategies. The study therefore, attempts to define the aspects of gender issues, rights of women and feminist perspectives to have a better understanding about current need of the society. The paper uses secondary sources of information as regards to data collection and descriptive analytical methods to explain the results.

**Keywords:** Gender issues, Feminism, Patriarchy, Women's right etc.

## Introduction

Women's right, gender concerns and feminist approach are the emerging areas for study more especially since 1970's. Researchers had undertaken deep inside these themes only after the global concerns on women's issues came into force under the initiatives of United Nations Organization (UNO). Women's right as human right and social recognition of contributions and roles of women are one of the greatest and more challenging targets of present day Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Similarly, feminist approach also refers to equal position, advantages, responsibilities, and privileges for womenfolk alongside their male counterpart. Thus, this study will attempt to comprehend and correlate the aspects of women's rights, gender concerns and feminist perspectives and its relevance in contemporary times. The paper is based on purely secondary sources of information and we use descriptive analytical methods to explain the results.

## Objectives:

The main objectives are:

- To comprehend the concept of Women's right, gender concerns and feminist approach
- To comprehend and correlate these issues of women's right

## Methodology:

The paper is based on purely secondary sources of information. We use books, articles, journal write ups and online materials for collection of secondary sources of information. We use the theoretical concepts of women's rights, gender as well as feminist approach to internalize theme of gender prospects. For analysis we use descriptive analytical methods.

## Results and Discussion:

Before going to the core of the study, we have to first understand the concept of gender.

Gender is assumed to be a product of one's sexual "identity (<https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/340-Gender-Studies/Ch-2.pdf>) Gender" is a socially constructed collection of norms, roles, and behaviors, according to another article. These are related to a person's sex assigned at birth, which influences their equal enjoyment of rights, access to resources, and power (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2025/06/what-is-gender-and-why-understanding-it-is-important/>). Therefore, according to Professor Gouri Srivastava, gender is social construct that denotes the attitudes, duties, responsibilities, behavioral patterns of men as well as women in all communities ([https://ncert.nic.in/dgs/pdf/RMSA\\_Module.pdf](https://ncert.nic.in/dgs/pdf/RMSA_Module.pdf)). Once more, in 2000, Hazel Reeves and Sally Baden defined gender as the socially constructed notions and behaviors of what it is to be male or female (<https://courseware.cutm.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Gender-and-Development-Concepts-and-Definitions.pdf>). Hence, gender connotations refer to socially entrusted values, norms, behaviours and responsibilities on male and female by the social systems on the basis of their biological identity, whether the person is a male or female. Here, usually the socially constructed norms bind women within the household. Public fields are far from their reach in patriarchal social set up. They are underrepresented in social-political platform. Accordingly, the society witnesses gender inequality and the world is running without being contributions of the half of the population of this world, i.e. the womenfolk. Hence, it is the need of the hour is to comprehend the gender issues and focus on women empowerment and gender equal prospects

The second theoretical proposition is women's right. To demonstrate movement for establishing women's right we can trace back to the history of United Nations Organization (UNO). Since the inception the organization is striving for guaranteed equal human rights for both men as well as women. The article 55 declares universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion ("<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>"). Thus, this declaration refers to universal human rights for women too along with their

male counterpart. Another study in the year 2007 reported that women's rights encompasses many different areas and very much difficult to define. It is frequently seen with the explanations of reproductive rights, domestic violence, sexual, as well as employment discrimination (Women's Rights Guide, Claire Dunning, 2007, Harvard Law School, <https://hls.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/guide-women-1.pdf>., p.4)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in its Article 2 marked that all humans are equal and free irrespective of sex, religion, colour, creed, or other characteristics. Hence, rights of women are also fundamental human rights, there must not be any discrimination and inequality amongst humans. ([https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf))

General Assembly passed Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, which is another important law. Its preface acknowledged that women still do not enjoy equal rights with men despite existence of other "instruments (<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Events/WHRD/WomenRightsAreHR.pdf>)". The convention called for equal political, social, economic, cultural, and civic rights for men as well as women and condemned all forms of discrimination against "them (<https://cglj.org/human-rights-law/thematic-research-guides/womens-human-rights/>)".

Practically concept of women's rights movements started in and around 1792 with the first wave of feminism mainly focusing on voting rights for women. The second wave enlarged the span of demands from only legal-political rights to economic rights, workplace discrimination for women around 1960's to 1980's and in the post-1990s era, the third wave came up with demands for gender equality irrespective of race, class, sex and diversities. Currently, we are in digital era and since 2010, the whole world is globally through the digital platform raising awareness against all forms of inequalities and harassments more particularly in workplace (<https://restpublisher.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/22.-The-evolution-and-Future-of-the-Global-Womens-rights-Movement.pdf>).

Women's rights have been clearly explained in Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 1993. It demonstrated that Women's Rights are Human Rights. The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights (<https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2507227.pdf>).

Women's rights are therefore referring to basic human rights to women as like men. It asks for having opportunities for women in politics, social spheres and in economic context equally with their

male counterpart. It is an assurance to women in enjoying basic liberties, rights and opportunities to have a dignified living.

The third theoretical concept we have added in this study is feminist perspective. Basically in this study, we are trying to address the feminist perspective towards gender issues and women's right. Therefore, we have to start discuss about feminism. With the creation of the first women's studies programs in the US and the first academic periodicals to highlight or focus on feminist theory, feminist theory started to become institutionalized academically in the early 1970s: Studies of "Feminist (1972) ([https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2021-08-04\\_610b1d7f76469\\_TheOxfordhandbookoffeministtheorybyDischLisaJaneHawkesworthM.Ez-lib.org.pdf](https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2021-08-04_610b1d7f76469_TheOxfordhandbookoffeministtheorybyDischLisaJaneHawkesworthM.Ez-lib.org.pdf))".

However, feminism can be comprehended as a set of movements, studies and discussions for establishing equal treatment between the sexes. It challenges the male dominated patriarchal values referring to domination, non recognition and exclusion of women from public domain. Therefore, feminism as an ideology calls for men and women to have equal rights in politics, decision-making, career advancement, as well as "child care ([https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/114625/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_114625.pdf](https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/114625/1/MPRA_paper_114625.pdf))".

Thus, feminist perspective explains about a just society having equal share, equal rights and freedoms for all irrespective of sex differences in all public and private domains. Feminist's theorists have identified the gender centric social constructions. Social constructions shoulders women the primary responsibility of taking care as well as maintenance of household, children and family members. Accordingly, the public life of women and their contributions are somewhere suppressed by these household responsibilities. Hence, feminist perspective advocated the need of providing equal and amicable environment to women in workplace. In addition, feminist perspective seeks to understand and challenge social, economic and political inequalities faced by women. It demands such a just society which dismantles patriarchal power and promotes equity, recognition and belonging across the full range of human diversity (<https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR2506924.pdf>).

Thus, from the above discussion the researcher tries to internalize the three basic topics gender, women's rights and feminist perspectives. The study conceptualized these three aspects and added that despite having a wide scale of movements towards rights of women and ensuring equal privileges to them, yet statistics proves that women are far from their male partners in socio-political and economic fields of decision-making and holding political positions and so on. Here, we can include the global gender gap report and can admit that no country has achieved full gender parity but globally gender gap has narrowed

to “68.8% (<https://affairscLOUD.com/wefs-global-gender-gap-report-2025-india-slips-to-131st-iceland-topped/>)”). Therefore, establishing gender equality is one of the very important targets for the universe under United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Conclusion:**

At end of discussion it is obvious to express that women's right, gender and feminist perspectives are three interrelated connotations and they advocate for a gender neutral social set up. They seeks to define equal positions to all human beings irrespective of sex differences. They ask for ensuring amicable environment to women in all spheres of private as well as public life. Gender issues and social constructions must be reshaped with the present concept of equality and freedom required for dignified living to all. United Nations Organization at global level and governments at national levels are working together to satisfy the aim of such a society where people irrespective of their gender identity attain equal privileges. Society must reshape the socialization process to address this objective. Social-familial set up must have gender sensitive features.

### **Works cited:**

- <https://affairscLOUD.com/wefs-global-gender-gap-report-2025-india-slips-to-131st-iceland-topped/>
- <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR2506924.pdf>
- [https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/114625/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_114625.pdf](https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/114625/1/MPRA_paper_114625.pdf)
- [https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2021-08-04\\_610b1d7f76469\\_TheOxfordhandbookoffeministtheorybyDischLisaJaneHawkesworthM.Ez-lib.org.pdf](https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2021-08-04_610b1d7f76469_TheOxfordhandbookoffeministtheorybyDischLisaJaneHawkesworthM.Ez-lib.org.pdf)
- <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2507227.pdf>
- <https://restpublisher.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/22.-The-evolution-and-Future-of-the-Global-Womens-rights-Movement.pdf>
- <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Events/WHRD/WomenRightsAreHR.pdf>
- <https://hls.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/guide-women-1.pdf>
- <https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/340-Gender-Studies/Ch-2.pdf>
- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2025/06/what-is-gender-and-why-understanding-it-is-important/>
- <https://cglj.org/human-rights-law/thematic-research-guides/womens-human-rights/>
- [https://ncert.nic.in/dgs/pdf/RMSA\\_Module.pdf](https://ncert.nic.in/dgs/pdf/RMSA_Module.pdf)
- <https://courseware.cutm.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Gender-and-Development-Concepts-and-Definitions.pdf>