



FEMINISM AND IT'S CHALLENGES

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Feminism is the most important term in post modern literature. Feminism means in general term a woman's perspective to look at everything. It is a political agenda. Here political does not mean activities in parliament. Political means an understanding that no thought, no language is innocent, natural or God made. Feminism believes that everything is made by man. So this is the male dominated society and feminism challenges this. Feminism is a reaction to patriarchy i.e. the father principal or man is the center of the world. Man is considered as 'phallus' i.e. powerful. So male domination believes in subjection of woman, suppression and control of woman. Feminism believes that so far everything has been defined from the male perspective. Where man is the center and woman is the margin, man is primary and woman is secondary, man is right and woman is wrong, man is good and woman is bad. She is treated as a source of evil.

It is said that woman is a tale of man. Man is principle, woman is a tale. Tale is not necessary. The another word 'female'. The main word is male. So language is essentially defined by male. Another word 'history'. It is not the story of woman. But story of a man- 'his story' not 'her story'. Feminism also challenges the word 'mother' because mother creates other. Feminism is an interdisciplinary inquiry. Feminism focuses history, politics, literature, anthropology, science and philosophy. Feminism also challenges the 'signifying culture practice', 'signifying social practices'. Signifying means producing meaning. A sign has two aspects :- 1) Signified 2) Signifier

Woman is signified, she is a object, man is signifier or a source of meaning. Man produces the meaning. Man is responsible for earning bread. Woman is manager of earned income. Man should be outside, woman should be inside. Man is rational, woman is emotional, man is superior, woman is inferior. All these meanings are produced by man for this convenience. Feminism also believes in the idea that it is not simply a theory or philosophy. The object of feminism is to

change the phallocentrism i.e. male dominated world. According to feminism there are no facts, truth in his world but there are only male interpretation of the truth and facts. Feminism believes there should be subversion. It means changed place of top and bottom. Man plays three kind of politics with woman – 1 Sexual politics 2 Textual politics 3 Politics of interpretation

History is the best example of textual politics. Books written by men are only selected. History is the matter of selection. Biologically she is supposed to be inferior. Woman has no right on her body. So man gets upper hand over her. He plays with as a toy. There is a politics of interpretation. Woman's texts are not valuable. A poem is dismissed just because it is written by woman. So many female writers have to write under pen name. Feminism believes in protest, affirmation, signification of woman. Feminism believes in difference feminism is the philosophy of resistance. It challenges following factors –

1] Biology : Right from Aristotle woman is defined as biological term. Woman is nothing but a womb. Something productive, reproductive. Aristotle defines woman as 'Totarmulier in utero'. It means woman is nothing but uterus i.e. womb, woman cannot think intellectually. She exists emotionally, she is biological being, capable of productive activities. Feminism dismisses this derogatory concept of biology. The feminist thinker such as Helen Cixous in her essay entitled 'laugh of Medusa' presents idea that female should not feel ashamed of their body. Because body of woman is the native strength. Therefore all the biological activities of woman contribute to feminism. They should celebrate all the biological features with vigour and strength. So feminism on one side dismisses biology as defined phallocentrism. It defines biology from woman's perspective. Therefore they also celebrate the idea that duty of a woman is not to give birth to child, to be the mother, is decided by woman. Radical feminism does not believe in the idea of woman's dependency on men, women should earn

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without man. Motherhood and abortion is her decision. So feminism believes that woman is a capable of making her own choices. Therefore biological definition of a woman is dismissed.

2] Experience : The second factor which is dismissed by feminism is experience. Male dominated society thinks that all experiences by woman are trivial, valueless. Therefore woman can never think a big thing. Their world is domesticity, cooking and taking care of children and husband. Feminism dismisses this idea and thinks that experiences of woman can be trivial. Because woman's perception of life is different from those of man. Man looks at life from the major point of view. Major events like marriage, career, achievement. But feminism believes that life is not like this. Life is a matter of small events of everyday. Small experiences are also important. Life is not consist of a big thing only, big experiences only. Therefore feminism believes that woman's small world also should be elaborated.

3] Discourse : feminism challenges male discourse. Discourse is a French word means description, analysis, truth, identity and knowledge. Discourse is linguistic structure in which attitude is reflected. Feminism thinks that discourse is nothing but man made language, man made set of notions, ideology, value structure. Everything in this world is defined by man. So male discourse, male history, philosophy should be revised.

4. Male Ideology : So Elaine Showalter in her books - 'A literature of their own', 'Feminist criticism in the wilderness' 'Towards a feminist poetics' Talks about 'wild zone'. It is an area of feminist language, philosophy, literature. It is a world specially made for woman. Where men are not allowed. It is no man's land. Therefore feminism believes that there should gyno criticism. It is a language, philosophy, history, discourse of woman which are libratory in nature. Therefore feminism challenges male discourse with replaced gyno criticism. Male Ideology is full of derogatory images, stereo types and myths about woman. Woman is a source of evil images. Witches are

trouble maker. Often woman represent dark. Feminism dismisses male stereo types, images and aims at constructing the literature of their own. Feminism aims at granting that level of humanity. Woman is a saint and sinner at the same time. Tragedy of woman had taken place it's because of male Ideology. Woman lived a life of child, they do not have their own language, power and self definition. Psychologically they depend on male. Woman is always considered as parasite. Woman suffered a kind of alienation and became silent, mute. To remain silent is to say nothing. Silence is a mute agreement. To define self language woman's tongue should be used as gun. This is a new woman. Feminism aims at reconstruction of a new woman. It is like Medusa. Medusa was a woman who looked at men and men turned into stone. So medusa had a power to turn the men into stone. So feminism believes is medusa concept

5] Psycho-analysis – Feminism also challenges Psycho-analytic theory. Psycho-analytic theory believes Id is barbarous because it is suppressed zone of darkness. Feminism dismisses this idea and thinks that it is not a dark zone but it is a authentic sense. Women are the victim of suppression, do not express themselves, where thoughts and emotions are suppressed. Therefore feminism aims at the negation of biology, experience, male ideas, Psycho-analysis. Woman tries to redefine them. So feminism is not monolithic but pluralistic philosophy. That is applied to all the cultures, black, white, Indian, American. Feminism believes that woman should be consumer, writer, reader and creator of their own literary tradition. Therefore literary ideas, concepts, knowledge, nationality, truth must be redefined. Conclusion : In this way feminism restores the female culture. It aims at promoting gyno criticism. Feminism introduces the new concept of psychology, language, culture and everything that is related to woman. F e m i n i s m rethinks history, literature and finds woman's specific language, experience, literature this is known as 'Ecriture feminine'.

R E F E R E N C E

- 1) Contemporary literary theory. Raman Seldon, **Peter Widdoson**.
- 2) Beginning theory. **Peter Barry**.