

AN INSIGHT INTO THE POST-INDEPENDENCE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN INDIA

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Abstract

Building on the nineteenth-century social reform movement, the Indian women's movement progressed through the period of nationalism and the struggle for independence, ultimately reaching the democratic climate that emerged in India after the country's achievement of independence. The achievement of the constitutional guarantee of equal rights for women gave the Indian women's movement a new lease of life, but it fell short of realizing the full potential of feminism in India. The new women's movement is presenting itself in the form of recently established organizations and groups, as well as new campaigns and demonstrations focused on achieving women's independence. Given this, the present research aims to understand the women's movement's multiple components and track the changes it underwent in the years after independence.

Paper Identification



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Introduction

It is common knowledge that women have been the victims of many domestic crimes since ancient times. To address this problem and elevate the status of women, many projects were started by women. Some of the most important social movement efforts of the modern age are seen to have been spearheaded by women. Women's movements in India were distinct from one another both before and after independence. The pre-independence movements, which emphasized social advancements, were mostly founded by men. In contrast, the post-independence movement questioned the division of work based on gender, highlighted the oppressive characteristics of the existing patriarchal society, and demanded gender equality. Women were considered as the masters of their

own fate in the post-independence euphoria, and as such, their status would grow dramatically alongside that of other persecuted groups. But once this failed, a number of initiatives with a broad focus on issues such as pay equity, land rights, job security, and equality emerged. Women's organizations got together to talk about issues including population control, work, and crimes against women like drinking and rape. Addressing gender inequality is difficult even now. The women's movement has not been able to "decommunalize" the issue. Women's organizations and feminists had no idea how to address the problems that women from different religious backgrounds brought up. Minority identities began to take shape in the 1970s, long before the feminist movement did. The polarized environment affected Muslim women. The primary objective of this research paper is to provide a summary of the women's movement's development in India after independence.

Objectives

- The study highlights the major women's movement in India after Independence.
- To highlights the main drawbacks of women's movement.

Methodology

The historical cum analytical method was used in the design of the whole project. Most of the basis for the research comes from secondary sources. The books, journals, and newspapers that make up the secondary sources are diverse. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods were used to depict the women's movement in India after independence.

Women movement: post- Independence Era

Several administrative institutions were formed to support the improvement of women's prospects, and the Independent India Constitution pledged "Equality between the sexes" in order to preserve the obligations made to women. But via the feminist and women's movement, Indian women started to realize that the "constitutional promise of equality" was insufficient to resolve the equality problem on its own. This encompasses a range of cultures and worldviews, especially in a country with the diversity of India. Addressing gender inequality is difficult even now. Concerning the problems raised by women who belonged to other religious groups, feminist organizations and women's groups had no idea how to respond. By now, the women's movement had moved into the 1970s. The women's movement, which had hitherto been a secular movement, found itself unprepared to handle difficult new difficulties.

Conceptually, Indian women had to balance preserving national distinctiveness by using religion as a barrier with incorporating Muslim women's issues into broader feminist themes. This is especially clear in the SHABANU case, but it also created new opportunities for the boundaries of women's movement. developing laws, like Muslim Personal Law, that are favourable to women. During the 1970s, there was also division inside the Indian Left Front. This begged a number of concerns about their prior understanding of revolution. Some additional movements among the women also surfaced. The Shahada movement was one such movement; it began as a folk protest and then evolved into a militant movement in tandem with the new left party. Its objective was to prevent nontribal landowners from employing workers from tribes who are landless. Most likely, the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was the first attempt to form a trade union connected to the Textual Laborers Union of Ahmedabad. This group of women, led by Ela Bhatt, were employed by different merchants but had many commonalities, such as previous job experience, poor pay, horrible working conditions, harassment from superiors,

and a lack of recognition for their accomplishments as full-time workers. SEWA worked to improve working conditions for women via collective bargaining, legal literacy, training, technical aid, and teaching the ideals of integrity and dignity.

The Anti-Price Agitation campaign was a noteworthy female-led movement. It was in Maharashtra and had to do with the drought and starvation that the state was facing in the early 1970s. This resulted in a sharp rise in prices in the cities of Maharashtra in 1973. To unite women against inflation, the United Women's Anti Price Front was founded. The group eventually expanded into a significant consumer protection movement, requesting that the government distribute things that are essentially commodities and establish a minimum price. A sizable contingent of 20,000–10,000 women protest outside a government facility. Money and emotional assistance would be given by members of parliament's houses, company owners, and those restricted to their homes as a sign of support. In Gujarat, this movement became popular and was given the name Nav Nirman Movement. This movement started out as a student protest against black marketing, increasing costs, and corruption. However, it soon turned into a women's movement due to the significant number of female members.

The mid-Himalayan Akanada catchment basin's environmental problems were brought to light by the worldwide Chipko movement. Locals, especially women, launched a campaign to persuade forest contractors of the unfavorable effects of tree cutting. The women's movement is another name for the Chipko Movement. The word "chipko," which translates to "to embrace," comes from the Uttar Pradesh Tehri Garwal region and is obviously related to ecofeminism. It was Sri Sundarlal Bahuguna who continued this initiative. Its tagline is "planting the five Fs": food, fodder, fuel, fiber, and fertilizer. The introduction of ecofeminism to India was facilitated by the Chipko movement. Women's environmental movements started in India prior to the UN Women's Decade (1975–1985) and the Stockholm environmental conference, claims Vandana Shiva.

The Telangana movement, which linked pre- and post-independence from 1946 to 1951, was often seen as a post-independence movement because of its consequences after 1947. The success of the Telangana movement was largely due to the participation of women, especially middle-class and rural women. Hundreds of peasant women united in Penukonda City and pursued a police car through the Appajpet city as part of one of the semi-violent actions. To release their activists, the women attacked the police vehicle with pestles and frigid power. The first movement was the armed insurrection known as the Srikakulam Movement, which was led by the Marxist-Leninist-Communist Party of India in an AP district. It was the Girijans' struggle for justice and fair play. Guerrilla groups were introduced by this movement. Women began to form guerilla groups led by Panchadri-Nirmala. Another notable woman who had a major impact was Bommaraddi Snehalatha, who had a large female following. Her rebellion against the landowners and government is an example of how Indian women are becoming more powerful. Women gained a fresh perspective on their circumstances when the United Nations acknowledged the abuse of women and declared 1975 to be the International Women's Decade. This proclamation had an effect on Indian women in particular and changed their perspective on the liberation fight. This was a significant turning point in the history of women's independence. The anti-rape campaign, which sprang from a revised definition of rape presented by second wave feminism, was one of the most important movements. The impact of rape on civil freedoms was discussed. After several organizations, including some AUTONOMEOUS Women's Organizations, Feminist Network Collective (FNC), Mahila Dakshita Samiti (MDS), Stree Sangarsha Samiti (SSS), Socialist Women's Group, Purogami Sangatana, Stree Sakti Sangatana, Pennurumi Iyyakum, and others, made the cause their primary concern and staged protests in response to horrific rape cases, the Anti-Rape Movement gained popularity.

One of the most significant and historic women's movements of the 1990s was the Anti-Arrack Movement. It is worth noting. The small hamlet of Dubagunta in the Nellore district marked the beginning of the women's fight against societal ills. This movement was primarily spurred by the literary mission that was effective in the Nellore area. The chief of the Dubagunta village, Rossamma, is credited with coining the expression "Give up Drinking and Wake Up from Ignorance." They stopped making the regional alcoholic beverage, Arracks. A 24-person anti-arrack group blocked the roads and staged protests. Renuka Chowdary was a crucial component of this effort as the leader of the Anti-Arrack community. As a result of the campaign, alcohol was offensively sold on January 1, 1995, and arrack was outlawed on October 1, 1993. The fight against Dowry started in 1979 and continued until 1984. In terms of discourse and women's active participation in all sociological strata in the country, it was still mostly concentrated on cities. In 1974, two findings were made by the parliamentary joint select committee and the committee on the situation of women in India (CSWI): first, female child election or identification; and second, the widespread use of dowries. Dower is today practiced by all castes, ethnicities, religions, and geographical locations. The concept of caste gender has been associated with dowry. The nature of the gifts that are given and received by the two parties must be taken into consideration while defining dower. In 1982, women's groups started to claim that problems with dowries were the cause of young bride suicides or that dowry-related problems were the cause of most young bride fatalities. Due to the well-known 1983 murder of Sudha Goul, for which a high court sentenced the husband to death and the mother-in-law and brother-in-law to life in prison, a number of organizations, including the National Federation of Indian Women, the Mahila Daksataha Samiti, the All India Democratic Women's Association, and NARI RAKSHA SAMITI, have come out against the system. The government revised the dowry legislation in 1984 and put it into effect again in October of 1985.

When the Dalits of Maharashtra founded the Dalit Panthar movement in the early 1970s, a notable movement known as the Dalit Women's Movement was born. Panthar opposes the identity and prevailing culture of the oppressed groups, especially women. The movement's main intellectual weapon was literature. Dalits fought against the devadasi system; in another case, they were led by Kerala's chief minister, C K Janu, in a campaign for the rights of the Adivasi community in Wayanad. There are other Dalit women's movements too, such the Anti Untouchable campaign.

Drawbacks of the Movements

Since independence, women's movements have made significant progress, but it is important to recognize that they still have many shortcomings. The main drawbacks are as follows:

- The primary disadvantages of these movements are that they are still mostly concentrated in India's cities, with relatively little activity taking place in the country's rural regions. Women from low-income backgrounds seldom participate in these initiatives. The movements' leading intellectuals include people like Arundhati Roy, Medhha Patkar, Menca Gandhi, and others.
- Although these movements have been successful in gaining some attention and support on a national and international level, they have often failed in influencing government policies to promote women's welfare across India.
- Despite the fact that women in contemporary India have some privileges as a result of these movements, they nevertheless experience a great deal of prejudice. Over the last 20 years, India's patriarchal culture has

made it difficult for women to get access to education and land ownership rights. A worrying tendency of sex-selective abortion has also evolved.

- The Indian feminist movement has faced some criticism in the west. They have come under fire for placing an excessive amount of attention on wealthy women while ignoring the demands and power representation of women from lower castes. As a result, caste-specific feminist associations were established.
- Women's movements are ineffective because the middle class does not actively support them when it comes to problems that limit their freedom, such as dowry-related violence, wife beatings, or rape. Because of these ideas and behaviors related to class, Dalit women are therefore triple exploited.

Beyond this, women's movements in India face a plethora of additional issues. The real growth of these women's movements won't be feasible unless these obstacles are eliminated as soon as possible.

Conclusion

The Indian women's movement launched a bold and demanding battle against social problems and evils, especially in the years after independence. and fought for social justice. Though these movements are generally referred to as feminist movements outside of India, women who organize or participate in any form of movement are not seen as feminists there; rather, they are known as women's movements. Since India gained its independence, a vast array of independent women's groups have arisen to oppose patriarchy and tackle various concerns, such as violence against women and equitable participation of women in political decision-making, both in the academic and recreational spheres. After India gained its freedom, women's status changed dramatically. Across the nation, women were accorded equal standing in every aspect. The days of submission from before were gone. In actuality, however, were only now discovered in papers.

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