**Feminism**

Feminism has evolved in its definition, transitioning from a movement advocating for equality to one that some perceive as seeking vengeance. The first wave of feminism began internationally in 1848 at the Seneca Falls Convention, where women demanded equal rights, such as property ownership, universal suffrage, and the eradication of poverty. The second wave emerged in the 1960s, focusing on equal pay, reproductive rights, and combating workplace sexual harassment. The third wave, characterized by a musical expression of female frustration, encouraged women to write songs to voice their concerns. The fourth wave, starting in 2012, expanded its advocacy to include the rights of minority groups like LGBTQIA and black communities.

In the history of feminism in India, its roots trace back to early practices of hunting and gathering, which led to a division of labor reinforcing male superiority. The first phase of Indian feminism began in the 1850s, with European colonists addressing patriarchy rooted in England. Early advocates included men, but women like Kadambini Ganguly, the first Indian woman to study Western medicine, and Muthulakshmi Reddy, the first two female graduates, played pivotal roles. The second phase, during the nationalist movement, saw the incorporation of women's issues by Mahatma Gandhi. Independent women's organizations emerged, addressing intoxication, abuse, and domestic violence.

Notable advocates of women's rights in India included Savitribai Phule, who established the first school for girls, and Tarabai Shinde, who wrote the first feminist text. Others like Pandita Ramabai and Rani Rudrama Devi fought for women's rights. The post-independence period marked the third phase, demanding fair treatment in the workforce, land rights, addressing dowry issues, political parity, and reforming rape and divorce laws. This era granted women unprecedented rights and freedoms, yet the persistence of patriarchy and the tendency to blame men exclusively hinder a focus on real issues and legal challenges.

However, the modern feminist movement, akin to other identity politics, has shifted towards a preoccupation with victimhood rather than equality. This shift has overlooked men's unique challenges, such as higher rates of mental health issues, elevated suicide rates, criminal court disparities, and biased sentencing. In India, laws designed to protect women from men, like Section 498a of the IPC, intended to prevent violence against married women, have become tools for legal abuse. Similarly, Section 304B, aimed at preventing dowry-related deaths, has seen instances of misuse.

Concerns also arise regarding the imbalance in laws addressing forced sexual intercourse, with laws protecting women but lacking equivalent protection for men. False rape allegations are a serious issue, causing harm to innocent men by affecting their employment, reputation, and social standing. While the need to protect women is evident, it should not come at the expense of ruining the lives of innocent men.

It is crucial to shift attention away from divisive identity politics and recognize that men, like women, are fallible. Redirecting public discourse towards addressing gender inequalities where they are most needed, such as in rural areas where women lack awareness of their rights and face issues like dowry payments, inadequate maternity leaves, objectification, forced arranged marriages, and limited access to birth control, is imperative.

In conclusion, the call for a change in perspective is urgent. Society must move beyond labelling all men as oppressors and acknowledge the existence of flaws in both genders. Public discussions should focus on tangible issues, particularly in regions where gender inequalities persist, rather than perpetuating divisive identity politics. This shift is essential to fostering a more inclusive and equitable society for all.