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\*\* WAVES OF FEMINISM \*\*

# History of Feminism




- The history of the modern western feminist movements is divided into three "**waves**". Each is described as dealing with different aspects of the same feminist issues.
  - **First Wave Feminism**
  - **Second Wave Feminism**
  - **Third Wave Feminism**
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# First Wave Feminism




## Historical Content

Women widely are considered to be:

- Intellectually inferior
  - Physically weak
  - Emotional, intuitive, irrational
  - Suited to the role of wive and mother
  - Women could not vote
  - They were not educated at school/universities and could only work in manual jobs.
  - A married women's property and salary were owned by her husband
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# First Wave Feminism



- Rape and physical abuse are legal within marriage
  - Divorce available to men but far more difficult to women
  - Women had no right to their children if they left a marriage
  - Abortion was illegal.
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# First Wave Feminism



- First-wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activity during the 19th and early twentieth century in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.
  - The key concerns of First Wave Feminists were education, employment, the marriage laws, and the plight of intelligent middle-class single women.
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# First Wave Feminism

- Over all goal: to improve the legal position for women in particular to gain women the vote.
- Basic assumption:  
Men and women have separate, biologically determined roles and duties in society.  
Women work in the private sphere (the home), men in the public sphere.
- Active until the First World War I

# Second Wave Feminism

## Historical Background

- Women could attend school and university
- Women did not receive equal pay for the same work
- It was easier to gain a divorce but socially frowned upon
- Rape and physical abuse within marriage were illegal but husbands were rarely convicted
- Abortion was still illegal
- Women's body were objectified in advertising




# ***Most Important incidents***

- **Russia:** In 1913 women observed their first International Women's Day on the last Sunday in February. Following discussions, International Women's Day was transferred to 8 March and this day has remained the global date for International Women's Day ever since.
- **England:** In 1918 Marie Stopes, who believed in equality in marriage and the importance of women's sexual desire, published *Married Love*, a sex manual that, according to a survey of American academics in 1935, was one of the 25 most influential books of the previous 50 years.
- **Germany:** in 1919 granted women the right to vote
- **England 1919-** Nancy Astor became the first woman to take her seat in the House of Commons.
- **China:** The first female students were accepted in Peking University, soon followed by universities all over China.

# Second Wave Feminism



## Basic assumptions:

- Society is patriarchal
  - Women may have legal rights but they are still treated as inferior.
  - Women should be equal to men in all respects.
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# Second Wave Feminism

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# Second Wave Feminism


- *Most Important incidents*

- 1966 Twenty-eight women, among them Betty Friedan, founded the National Organization for Women (NOW).
- 1969 The American radical organization Redstockings organized.
- 1973 The American National Black Feminist Organization was formed
- 1977 the Canadian Human Rights Act was passed, prohibiting discrimination based on characteristics including sex and sexual orientation, and requiring "equal pay for work of equal value"
- 1980 The second wave began in the 1980s in Turkey and in Israel.

# Third Wave Feminism




## Historical Content

- Women seem to be more equal to men
  - Women are no longer obligated to marry or have children, and marriage is more equal.
  - The legal system is better at protecting women's right.
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# Third Wave Feminism



- Third-wave feminism seeks to challenge or avoid what it seems the second wave's "essentialist" definitions of femininity, which often assumed a universal female identity and over-emphasized the experiences of upper-middle-class white women.
  - Third-wave feminists such as Elle Green often focus on "micro-politics", and challenge the second wave's paradigm as to what is, or is not, good for women.
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# Third Wave Feminism

- Third wave feminism was a continuation and response to the perceived failures of the second wave.
- The movement that called as young feminist emphasizing collective action to effect changes and embrace the diversity represented by various feminisms.
- They focused on a multicultural emphasis and strived to address problems stemming from sexism, racism, social class inequality and homophobia.

# Third Wave Feminism



- The most important
  - 1994: The Gender Equity in Education Act became law in the U.S. It banned sex-role stereotyping and gender discrimination in the classroom
  - 1994: The Violence Against Women Act became law in the U.S
  - 1995: The Fourth World Conference on Women was held in China
  - 2007: The Gender Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2006 came into effect in the United Kingdom
  - 2008: Norway requires all companies to have at least forty percent women on their boards
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# THE FOURTH WAVE: TODAY???


There is a question whether we are still in the Third Wave or if we have entered into a Fourth Wave of Feminism.



# THE FOURTH WAVE: TODAY???

4<sup>th</sup> Wave: now??? – time (history) will only tell.

We are definitely not in Post-Feminism phase  
= only when we live Post-Patriarchy – the  
system of male control/power.



Any questions?



**THANK YOU**

*Photography by Ravichandra Kamath*