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# **THE WAVES OF FEMINISM**

While the roots of feminism are buried in ancient Greece, most recognize the movement by the three waves of feminism.

However, empowered by the constant connectivity of the internet and the strength of the Me-too movement, a new wave of feminists are speaking out in record numbers against discrimination.

## **What Feminism is-**

- Feminism is a collection of political movements, social movements and ideologies that defend the political, the economic, the personal and the social rights of women.
- Feminist movements aim at achieving and establishing equality between women and men.
- Feminists act, speak, write and advocate on behalf of women's issues and rights and identify injustice to females in the social status quo.

## **The first wave (1830's – early 1900's): Women's fight for equal contract and property rights**

Often taken for granted, women in the late 19th to early 20th centuries, realized that they must first gain political power (including the right to vote) to bring about change was how to fuel the fire. Their political agenda expanded to issues concerning sexual, reproductive and economic matters. The seed was planted that women have the potential to contribute just as much if not more than men.

Key concerns:

- Women's suffrage (the right to vote)
- The right to education
- Better working conditions
- Marriage and property laws
- Reproductive rights

### **The second wave (1960's-1980's): Broadening the debate**

Coming off the heels of World War II, the second wave of feminism focused on the workplace, sexuality, family and reproductive rights. During a time when the United States was already trying to restructure itself, it was perceived that women had met their equality goals with the exception of the failure of the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (which has still yet to be passed).

Key concerns:

- Raising consciousness about sexism and patriarchy
- Raising consciousness about gender based violence, domestic abuse and marital rape
- Inequalities in the workplace • legalizing abortion and birth control
- Sexual liberation of women

### *Misconceptions...*

This time is often dismissed as offensive, outdated and obsessed with middle class white women's problems. Conversely, many women during the second wave were initially part of the Black Civil Rights Movement, Anti Vietnam Movement, Chicano Rights Movement, Asian-American Civil Rights Movement, Gay and Lesbian Movement and many other groups fighting for equality. Many of the women supporters of the aforementioned groups felt their voices were not being heard and felt that in order to gain respect in co-ed organizations they first needed to address gender equality concerns.

Women cared so much about these civil issues that they wanted to strengthen their voices by first fighting for gender equality to ensure they would be heard.

### **The third wave (1990's – early 2000's): The “micropolitics” of gender equality**

Unlike the former movements, the term 'feminist' becomes less critically received by the female population due to the varying feminist outlooks. There are the ego-cultural feminists, the radicals, the liberal/reforms, the electoral, academic, Eco feminists... the list goes on.

The main issues were prefaced by the work done by the previous waves of women. The fight continued to vanquish the disparities in male and female pay and the reproductive rights of women. Work continues to end violence against women in our nation as well as abroad. This wave was about acceptance and a true understanding of the term 'feminism'.

It should be noted that tremendous progress has been made since the first wave, but there is still much to be done. Due to the range of

feminist issues today, it is much harder to put a label on what a feminist looks like- *leading to a brand new generation r allying for equality and women's rights.*

### Key concerns

- Intersectionality
  - The diversity of "women" is recognized and emphasis is placed on identity, gender, race, nation, social order and sexual preference
  - Changes on stereotypes, media portrayals and language used to define women.
- Sexual identities

Source : <https://www.progressivewomensleadership.com/a-brief-history-the-four-waves-of-feminism/>  
<http://gestproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Anastasia-Flouli-AUTH-3-Waves-of-Feminism.pdf>