

issue of women's oppression and move in the direction of liberation.

**Jana Everett** grouped women's movements on the basis of two different ideologies of feminism. They are 1. Corporate Feminism claimed a larger role in politics for women on the grounds that they have a special contribution to make as women. 2. Liberal feminism, claimed that the rights of men should be extended to women on the grounds that women are equal to men and thus should have the same rights.

**Religiously diverse, multilingual, and caste-divided India also has one of the most vibrant and many-stranded women's movements in the world. One of their primacies is challenging patriarchal religious practices, while at the same time respecting religious differences. Another is lessening the poverty and insecurity of women and their families.**

- It is found that the women's upliftment period began in the late nineteenth century, first among elite Hindu men and women and, later, Muslims. Besides stressing education, they called for reform of the practices of widow remarriage, polygamy, purdah (the veiling and seclusion of women), property rights, and sati (the ritual suicide of widows).
- To curb these sinful acts made by society's traditional leaders or heads, Women established their own autonomous organizations, the most important of which was the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) in 1927. In 1934, when AIWC introduced a bill for equality in marriage, divorce, and property rights, they drew upon the nationalist rights discourse; and after independence in 1947, women were granted constitutional equality. However, the Hindu, Islamic, and other religious communities retained jurisdiction over family law (Desai 2001)
- After India gained independence from British rule in 1947, the Congress party formed the Government. The government made certain attempts to fulfil the promises it had made to women during the pre-independence period, and also in the initial period after independence. While framing the Constitution of India, it included the very important aspect of equality of men and women in all provinces of life.
- Article 14 of the Constitution of India states that, "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India".
- Article 15 states that "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, sex, place of birth or any of them." Article 15(3) states that "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children".
- Article 16 states that "There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State".
- **According to Veena Majumdar**, "The Constitution's radical departure from inherited social values represented to women of that generation its greatest intrinsic quality.
- **In second phase of women's movements, grass-roots organizations formed and these focused not only upon gender but also upon caste, class, and culture as roots of women's exploitation.** The groups in this movement were associated with grass-roots labour, labourer, and tribal movements as well as leftist opposition parties. Among their activities were protests by tribal women in the **Toilers' Union in Maharashtra** against alcohol-related domestic violence and by the **Chipko movement** of poor women in the Himalayas to protect their forest resources and highlight women's unrecognized economic contributions. **The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a union of women working as street vendors and rag-pickers and in home-based industries, established the first women's bank for poor women.**
- A number of administrative bodies were established for the creation of opportunities for women. Many women were inducted into the government. In the two decades that followed, 1950s and 1960s, there was a lull in the activities of feminists and in the women's movements in India. Women, however, started realizing that the constitutional promise of equality did not by itself resolve the equality questions, especially in a country as diverse as India, which comprises different religions and cultures.