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Unit I

Module 2

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Feminism: Origin & Development

Early Views

- In the late 18th century, individualist and relational perspectives of thinking about women were combined in Abigail Adams' view of gender relations.
- In addition to demanding equal representation for women within the law, Adams also warned against depriving women of access to education and social equality.

Early Views

- She was one of the most influential women of her day and she was also the wife of John Adams, the second president of the USA.
- She and her husband lived apart by virtue of his political commitments. She wrote to him regularly and urged him to “remember to think about the Ladies” while drafting the Declaration of Independence.
- Her letters were compiled and published posthumously by her grandson.

Early Views

- Mary Wollstonecraft voiced warning against the dangers of perpetuating social and legal discrimination against women.
- Influenced by the ideas of the American and French Revolutions, in 1792, she called for the full participation of women in the rights and duties of citizenship.
- *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787)

Early Views

- Publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) – thought to be the first conscious attempt at engaging with issues of gender discrimination.
- Wife of the political writer and long-time friend William Godwin
- Her daughter is Mary Godwin, later Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein*

Early Views

- She wrote *Vindication* in response to the Swiss-French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
- His book *Emile* claimed that women were sentimental and frivolous, and that in marriage they could occupy only a subordinate position as companions to their husbands.
- As a pioneer of the British suffrage movement, she spoke about the need to challenge prescribed gender roles.
- She advocated women's education and argued for their right to participate in public life.

Early Views

- The Grimke Sisters
- Angelina Grimke, a lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society and a public speaker on women's rights. She urged women to take part in political decisions and to make their voices heard by writing petitions to Congress.
- In 1838, she became the first woman in the US to be allowed to address a law-making body.

Early Views

- Sarah Grimke was a spokesperson for the abolitionist cause and for women's rights.
- The sisters' affirmation that men and women are created equal and that women should be allowed the same social and civil liberties as men created a general public uproar. They were criticized by clergy members for behaving like men.

Early Views

- Harriet Taylor Mill and John Stuart Mill are two key figures who endorsed Wollstonecraft's liberal feminist ideas and expanded on them.
- Two essays “The Enfranchisement of Women” (1851) and “On the Subjection of Women” (1869) – about sexual discrimination from an informed perspective.

Early Views

- Harriet suggested that it was possible for women to reconcile motherhood with the demands of a professional life, and emphasized that work was necessary to maintain the sanity of woman.
- J S Mill's essay on the subjection of women established a correlation between the degree of civilization of a people and the social position of its women.

Early Views

- He argued against essentialism.
- He introduced an amendment to the 1867 Reform Act by substituting the word “person” for the word “man”. Though it was defeated, it sparked a legal case to establish that words of the masculine gender should include women.

Early Views

- Caroline Norton – novelist and poet. She became a spokesperson for women’s rights. Her battles for custody and property in 1839 highlighted the plight of mothers trapped in unhappy marriages.
- Her book - *A Plain Letter to the Lord Chancellor on the Infant Custody Bill* (1839)
- Her high profile legal case for her children’s custody from her divorced husband resulted in the passing of the Infant Custody Act in 1839.

Early Views

- 1856 – English Laws for Women in the Nineteenth Century; this along with a petition signed by 25,000 women in favour of married women's property ownership, resulted in the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, the precursor of the 1870 act which allowed married women control over their financial earnings and inherited property.
- Seneca Falls Convention, New York 1848

Early Views

- Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton travelled to London to attend the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840.
- They decided to organize a convention to which they invited women suffragist and interested men. The aim was to discuss issues related to equality in education, marriage and property laws.
- Amelia Jenks Bloomer, publisher and editor of the first American women's rights newspaper *Lily*

The 1850s in the USA

- It was a period of great social and political change.
- Notable female figures Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony
- Stanton campaigned for women's right over their reproduction, sexuality and divorce laws, and reminded her audience of the slave-like status of women.

The 1850s in the USA

- Anthony was a liberal Quaker and a dedicated radical reformer. In 1851, together they organized the National Woman Suffrage Association and published a newspaper, Revolution – various injustices suffered by women.
- The International Council of Women
- Anthony defiantly registered and cast a ballot in the 1872 presidential elections.

The 1850s in the USA

- 1883, she went to Europe and met women's right activists. She helped form the International Council of Women (1888).
- It included 49 delegates from nine countries: Canada, the US, Ireland, India, Britain, Finland, Denmark, France and Norway.
- The first meeting – Washington DC resulting in drafting the constitution

The 1850s in Britain

- Series of important legislations were introduced as a result of high-profile legal battles; growing number of single middle-class women who campaigned for economic independence.
- Harriet Martineau – Unitarian parents with progressive views on girl's education; though she received similar education to her brothers, she was not allowed to attend University

The 1850s in Britain

- She protested against this in *On Female Education* (1823)
- Article “Female Industry” – arguing that a wider choice of professions should be made available to middle-class women
- *Political Non-existence of Women*
- Advocated equal employment opportunities and state education for girls and favour of allowing women to join the medical profession

The 1850s in Britain

- Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon – wrote in favour of women doctors and opportunities for women in higher education. Campaigned with Caroline Norton
- In 1866, she formed the Women's Suffrage Committee
- Its members penned a suffrage petition, signed by 1,500 women, which J S Mill agreed to present to the House of Commons on their behalf

The 1850s in Britain

- Emily Davies and Elizabeth Garrett carried the large roll of parchment into Westminster
- “Langham Place” circle - group of middle-class activist women who discussed and published their views on women’s rights.
- They met at 19 Langham Place, London – known as the headquarter of first wave feminism

Early Views

- Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes established The English Women's Review and a Society for the Promoting of the Employment of Women.
- 1865, the first women's suffrage society was formed in Manchester, and the movement spread to London, Birmingham and Bristol.
- 1889, the Women's Franchise League was former.

- Emmeline Pankhurst; 1903, founded the Woman's Social and Political Union (WSPU), an organization dedicated to obtaining the vote for women in Britain.

- Militant Suffragettes
- By 1911, suffrage had still not been achieved – They became more violent and committed arson, cut telephone wires and burned phone boxes, slashed paintings in public galleries and threw bombs at commercial buildings.
- Pankhurst undertook ten hunger strikes during subsequent arrests, and was released and then rearrested depending on her health.

Milestones in Suffrage

1892	New Zealand – I country to grant women's suffrage; voted in 1902 elections
1902	Australian women achieve the right to vote
1906	Finland extends the vote to women
1913	Norway
1915	Denmark
1917	The Netherlands and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
1918	Canada and Luxembourg. British women over the age of 30 gain vote
1919	Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Poland and Sweden. Belgium grants partial vote

Milestones in Suffrage

1920	US women gain the vote
1928	British women 21 years and older are extended full voting rights
1929	Ecuador
1934	Turkey grants suffrage to women in national elections
1944	France
1946	Women gain the vote in Japan and Palestine
1947	China, Argentina and Pakistan
1948	Women vote in South Korea; full vote in Belgium

Milestones in Suffrage

1949	Syria
1956	New constitution guarantees women the right to vote in Egypt
1957	Women achieve suffrage in the Republic of Lebanon
1958	Voting opened to Muslim women in Algeria
1960	Algeria grants universal suffrage following independence
1963	Libya and Iran
1971	In Switzerland, women vote in Federal elections
1980	Iraq grants women the right to vote and run for public office

Milestones in Suffrage

1990	Women vote in all Swiss cantons
1999	Qatar
2005	Kuwait
2006	The United Arab Emirates
2011	King Abdullah grants women suffrage and the right to stand for parliamentary elections in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
2019	Vatican City is the only country with no universal suffrage

Backlash

- Feminist activity at the beginning of the 20th century caused serious controversy which translated into a number of outspoken and vehement publications attacking “feminists” for being immoral, bad mothers and lesbians.

Thank You