

FEMINISM AND WOMEN WRITERS IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Since time immemorial women have been treated as a vulnerable section of society. It is indeed an irony to see that they have never enjoyed the kind of opportunities as enjoyed by males. The condition of women has been pathetic in our male-dominated society. As a result, they have to face more challenges in their lives. Gradually, women realized that as human beings, they should also enjoy equal rights and opportunities with men. Even in the field of literature, they were never taken seriously in the patriarchal social construction. They became victims of gender discrimination. This feeling gave rise to a movement called Feminism. It gathered momentum in the 1960s. The movement basically aimed at achieving equality with men in terms of opportunities, rights, and participation in all spheres of life. Increasing number of women writers started projecting the plight of women in their works. Women's liberation and emancipation became important. The pioneer writers of this area, who have produced commendable works and need to be mentioned are Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Elaine Showalter. They openly discussed the plight and problems faced by women and diverted the attention towards woman as reader and woman as writer. The gender discrimination was openly discussed. The Indian woman writers were not far behind they also presented their perspectives regarding the pathetic condition of women under male hegemony. Today, the worth and works of women writers are being acknowledged and acclaimed worldwide. Their talent and potential are getting recognition everywhere in all spheres of life.

KEYWORDS: *Patriarchy, Gender Discrimination, Hegemony, Feminism, Liberation*