

Contextualizing Gender
Prof. Rashmi Gaur
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Lecture - 38
Global Gender Movements

Welcome dear participants to this module. In the previous module, we had discussed an important essay by Judith Butler ‘Gender Politics and the Right to Appear.’ This had been taken from Butler’s 2015 critical work ‘Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly.’

Today, we shall discuss how gender movements around the world have influenced the fight for gender equality in the last few decades. In the coming modules, we will analyze movements such as MeToo which had sent shockwaves throughout the world upsetting long held systems of gender operation and discrimination.

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Gender Movements and Collective Action

- Gender influences all aspects of social world. Collective action associated with gender has historically transformed the perceptions of masculinity and femininity.
- Gender studies today goes beyond the heterosexual binary to encompass the lived experience of people who may identify as trans/queer/gender non-conforming.
- One’s race, class, sexuality, religion and other identities cannot be separated from the experience of gender.*

* Naples, N. A. (2020). *Companion to women's and gender studies*. John Wiley & Sons.



Source: The Conversation




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Gender influences all aspects of social world. Collective action associated with gender has historically transformed the perceptions about masculinity as well as femininity. Gender Studies today goes beyond the heterosexual binary to encompass the lived experience of people who may identify as trans or queer or gender non-confirming. One’s race, class, sexuality, religion and other identities cannot be separated from one’s


experiences of gender. Therefore, experiences of discrimination, marginalization and violence spur collective action in relation to gender identity.

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- Collective action involves the process of concerted efforts exerted either by individuals or groups towards specific targets such as an oppressor, governments, private enterprise or other power holders. (Naples, 2020)
- The goals of collective action encompass a variety of political, social, ideological and material change.
 - Examples of collective action include protests, local community organizing, public actions, passive non-compliance, boycotts, strikes and other forms of resistance.



Source: The Writer's Bloc



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Naples has suggested that collective action involves the process of concerted efforts exerted either by individuals or groups towards specific targets such as an oppressor, governments, private enterprise, or other power holders. The goals of collective action encompass a variety of political, social, ideological and material changes. As Judith Butler has commented gender is being constantly performed and constructed through social relations, interpretations and cultural expectations.

So, these social movements play a huge role in determining the future of gender rights, equality, and cultural acceptance. In this module, we will highlight the dynamics of local, regional, and transnational collective action. It seeks to emphasize the role of social movements in gender change by examining the diverse and multiple organized movements around gender.

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- Until the 1970s, scholarship on social movements largely neglected questions of feminism and gender, and the fields of gender and social movements consisted of separate literatures.
- Consequently, the major theories of social movements did not recognize the impact of gender on the emergence, nature, and outcomes of social movements.
- But as mass feminist activism flourished in the United States and around the globe, the scholarship on gender and social movements came closer.
- By the 1990s, a new wave of research began to reconceptualize the relationship between gender and social movements by attending :
 - How gender affects social movement structures and processes
 - And also, how social movements, in turn, affect gender.



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Major theories of social movements up till 1970s did not recognize the impact of gender on the emergence, nature, or outcome of social movement. Scholarship on social movements by 1970s had by and large neglected questions related with feminism or gender, and the fields of gender and social movements consisted of separate literatures and scholarships.

However, as mass feminist activism flourished in the USA and also around the globe, the scholarship on gender and social movements came closer. By the 1990s, a new wave of research began to reconceptualize the relationship between gender and social movements by attending: firstly, how gender affects social movement structures and processes and secondly, also how social movements in turn affect gender.

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- The literature on gender and social movements has exposed many underexplored dimensions of social activism and has been foundational for the development of intersectional approaches to social movements (Anna Chatillon and Verta Taylor*)
- As several critics point out, research to understand the processes by which social movements become gendered, burgeoned in the 1990s, and studies that examined social movements through a gender lens found that protest is gendered in multiple ways.

*<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756384/obo-9780199756384-0253.xml>




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The literature on gender and social movements has exposed many underexplored dimensions of social activism and it has also been foundational for the development of intersectional approaches to social movements. As several critics have pointed out, research to understand the processes by which social movements become gendered, burgeoned in the 1990's and studies that examined social movements through a lens of gender also found that protest is gendered in multiple ways.

The earliest work in this area was centered on women's movement both feminist as well as anti-feminist.

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- During the 1990s, studies began to theorize the ways that gender influences every facet of social movement dynamics and outcomes.
- This approach included movements not focused specifically on gender, and argued that social movement analysis must attend to gender as a relevant explanatory factor. (Taylor, V. 1999. "Gender and social movements: Gender processes in women's self-help movements").
- Studies on social movement activity of women's, feminist, and transgender activists and the gender dynamics of sex-segregated and mixed-sex movements came out in the beginning of the 21st century. (Einwohner, 2000; Ferree and Mueller, 2004; Zemlinskaya, 2010, Roger 2018, Hurwitz and Crossley, 2019)



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The 1990s approach which had started to theorize the ways that gender influences every facet of social movement dynamics and outcomes also included movements which were focused not specifically on gender, and argued that social movement analysis must attend to gender as a relevant explanatory factor. Studies on social movement activity of women's, feminist and transgender activities and the gender dynamics of sex-segregated and mixed-sex movements came out in the beginning of the 21st century.


Academic agreement gradually emerged that not only women's movements, but also masculinity, gender neutrality and transgender experiences influence the dynamics of movements. Butler's arguments about performativity and precarity to examine the ethics and politics of public assembly become more pertinent in the context of such studies.

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Characteristics of a Social Movement

- Analyses of women's movements contribute to understanding the dynamics of social movements, including gender dynamics.
- In order to address the way women's movements organize, there is a need to identify the characteristics that comprise a social movement.
- The movement process is characterized by:
 - i. A shared collective identity.
 - ii. Identified grievances.
 - iii. Mixed organizational structures containing social networks, formal organizations, and grassroots groupings.
 - iv. A variety of methods, from conventional ways of participation to more transgressive or contentious means.*

* Naples, N. A. (2020). *Companion to women's and gender studies*. John Wiley & Sons.



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Analysis of women's movements contribute to understanding the dynamics of social movements, including gender dynamics. In order to address the way women's movements organize, there is a need to identify the characteristics that comprise a social movement.

The movement process is characterized by several things. They include a shared collective identity, identified grievances, mixed organizational structures containing social networks, formal organizations and grassroots groupings and lastly, a variety of methods from conventional ways of participation to more transgressive or contentious means.

Women's movements incorporate issues that are important for the comprehension of social movements in general such as face to face relationships, emotions, solidarity beyond persons and the politicization of everyday life.

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- The decade of 1960s – era of post-industrial economy - was a period of transformation in collective action.
- Conventionally, social movements demanded specific changes in public policy to seek amelioration in materialistic qualities, i.e., better salaries etc. Whereas the new movements put emphasis on human rights, or on social changes in identity, lifestyle and culture.
- This change is attributed to a post-modernist/post-materialist preference for autonomy and self-expression.
- Social movements may be defined as informal networks, based on shared beliefs and solidarity, which mobilize about conflictual issues, through the frequent use of various forms of protest (della Porta and Diani).




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The decade of 1960s is considered as a period of transformation in collective action. This is also known as the decade of post-industrial economy. Conventionally, social movements had demanded specific changes in public policy to seek amelioration in materialistic qualities for example, they demanded better salaries, better amenities at the workplace etcetera. Whereas, the new movements put emphasis on human rights or on social changes in terms of identity, lifestyle or culture.


This change is attributed to a postmodernist, post-materialist preference for autonomy and self-expression. Social movements may be defined as informal networks, based on shared beliefs and solidarity, which mobilize about conflictual issues through the frequent use of various forms of protest.

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- Sociologist Alberto Melucci suggests that social movements are based on solidarity, are carriers of a conflict and transgress the limits of the system in which action occurs.
- When we study the experiences of non-Western women's movements, there are premises that need to be reconsidered to provide a global understanding.
- Women have played a central role in the Arab Spring movements across the Middle East and North African Countries.
- The largest proportion of human rights organizations in Africa were women's rights organizations in countries like Tanzania and Kenya.
- There is a larger sense of heterogeneity, autonomy and cross-cultural unity in these movements.



Arab Spring Movement
Source: Morocco World News



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In this context, the work of Alberto Melucci is often quoted. Melucci had suggested that social movements are based on solidarity, are carriers of a conflict and transgress the limits of the system in which action occurs. When we study the experiences of non-western women's movements, there are premises that need to be reconsidered to provide a global understanding. Women have played a central role in the Arab Spring movements across the Middle East and North African countries.

The largest proportion of human rights organizations in Africa were women's rights organizations in countries like Tanzania and Kenya. There is a larger sense of heterogeneity, autonomy and cross-cultural unity in these movements. In these global women's movements, the subject of the action is not the individual, but the community. In other words, women's rights are better understood in terms of the actual or imagined communities within which people live and also, through their embeddedness in local social relations and cultural norms.

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Gender Movements in the United States

- One of the very first movements which can be cited in this context, is the suffrage movement.
 - Historically, the United States has played a crucial role in the feminist struggle for equality. The right to vote was won by women after a long struggle:
- USA: 1920; UK and Canada :1918, France :1944
- Seneca Falls Convention (July 19–20, 1848) passed 12 resolutions: 11 unanimously, to gain certain rights and privileges that women were denied. The ninth resolution demanded the right to vote; passed narrowly upon the insistence of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. It nonetheless culminated in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.



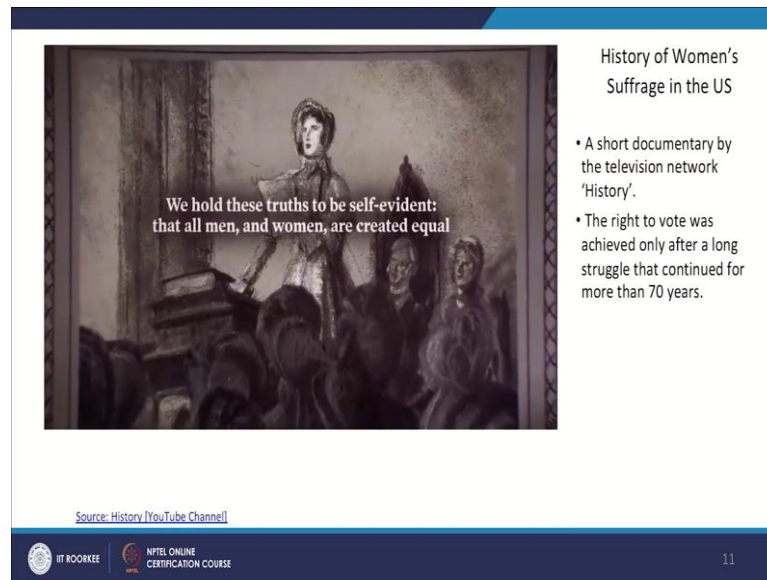
The slide features two images. The top right image is a historical document titled "The Sentiments of the Seneca Falls Convention" with a list of resolutions. The bottom right image is a photograph of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, an elderly woman with glasses, speaking in a room with bookshelves.

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One of the very first movements which can be cited in this context is the suffrage movement. Historically, the USA has played a crucial role in the feminist struggle for equality. The right to vote was won by women after a long struggle as the dates in the following point exhibit. In the USA, it was won by women in 1920, UK and Canada, two years before that in 1918 and in France, it could be given only by De Gaulle's government in exile in 1944.

Seneca Falls Convention which is often cited as the point of beginning in the context of the suffrage movement had passed 12 resolutions. 11 were passed unanimously to gain certain rights and privileges that women were denied in the contemporary society. The ninth resolution demanded the right to vote, and it was passed narrowly upon the insistence of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Nonetheless it culminated in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.

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History of Women's Suffrage in the US

- A short documentary by the television network 'History'.
- The right to vote was achieved only after a long struggle that continued for more than 70 years.

Source: History (YouTube Channel)

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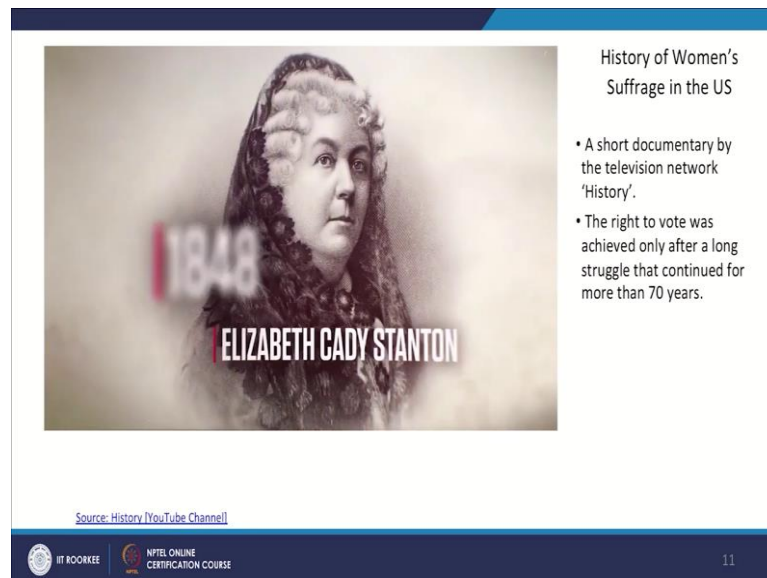
We would look at a short documentary by the television network, History. The right to vote was achieved only after a long struggle that had continued for more than 70 years in several countries.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men and women are created equal. No, that is not the Declaration of Independence. It is actually from the Declaration of Sentiments. A document signed at the first ever Women’s Rights Convention in 1848. Back then, women in the US were not allowed to do a lot of things men were like vote. And it would take them another 70 years to be granted that fundamental right. Why? Well, many thought encouraging women’s involvement in politics would undermine society. The prospect of women voting was threatening to the white men who held power.

In 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott decided to organize factions across the country that were campaigning for suffrage or the right to vote. The convention at Seneca Falls New York addressed women’s rights and inspired other conventions and meetings. Stanton considered it the beginning of the women’s rights movement. After the Civil War, the 15th amendment was introduced which would give black men, but not women of any color the right to vote. Suffragists were split. Stanton and Susan B Anthony opposed the amendment objecting to the exclusion of women.

They formed the National Woman's Suffrage Association hoping to pass a constitutional amendment that included women. By the turn of the 20th century, the women's suffrage movement had gained renewed momentum. Parades, marches and pickets drew great attention to the cause. Between 1910 and 1918, a number of states and territories expanded voting rights to women. In 1912, 15,000 suffrage supporters took to the streets of New York City. In 1918, President Wilson also came out in favor of suffrage declaring it was needed as a war measure. Wilson argued that women had been providing vital roles during World War 1 and that their votes should be counted in order to make the world safe for democracy. Finally, in 1919, the Federal Women's Suffrage Amendment, the same one written by Susan B. Anthony back in 1878 was passed by the house and the senate. And on August 26th, 1920, the 19th amendment was officially incorporated into the US constitution prohibiting denying the vote to a US citizen based on gender."

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History of Women's Suffrage in the US

- A short documentary by the television network 'History'.
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Source: [History \(YouTube Channel\)](#)

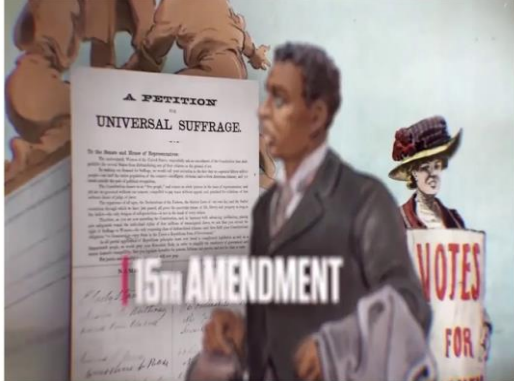
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For years, the drive for women suffrage was presented mainly as a story of middle-class white women and also of iconic national leaders like Anthony or Stanton. But in recent decades, scholars have taken a less top-down view emphasizing the movements multiple starting points and patchwork progress through hundreds of state and local campaigns. For instance, after the amendment which declared that states could not discriminate in voting based on gender, women of color especially from the south felt that they are still

being discriminated against as they were still barred from the polls. So, Pan-American feminism was a positive outgrowth of the US suffrage movement.

The suffrage movement is known for its concern with women's right to vote. However, it had also advocated equal access to education, equal pay and other social welfare issues too. Women's protest movements to secure entry to higher education institutions and right to their own womb or right to abort had continued for a very long time.

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History of Women's Suffrage in the US

- A short documentary by the television network 'History'.
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Source: History [YouTube Channel]

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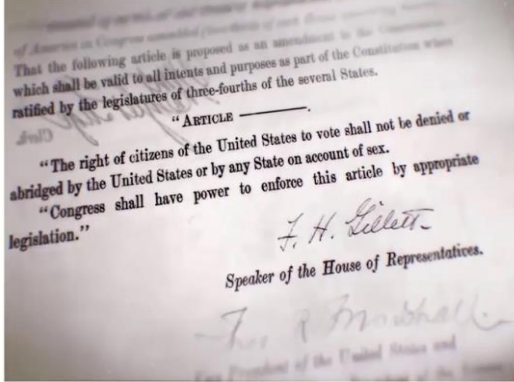
In this short flashback documentary made by NBC news, we are told that the fight for gender equality pertaining to issues like abortion rights and equal pay had been a long one.

“The decision to have a child should not be a matter to be decided by the male-dominated legislators. The 1960s and 70s ushered in big changes for women in America. From family life to the workplace to reproductive rights, there was a charge for change known as a women's rights movement. But long before then, came the fight for women's suffrage which granted American women the right to vote in 1919. That movement led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and paved the way for the second wave of feminism in the 60s and 70s.

In 1960, family planning was transformed as the FDA approved birth control pills for contraceptive use, opening a new chapter for the career women. About 3 years later, at

the urging of Esther Peterson, President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act. Also, that year, Betty Friedan published 'The Feminine Mystique' which documented what she saw as the oppression of middle-class women. We are housewives when you know in the beginning in the end although, we have to be much more than that in the world now.

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History of Women's Suffrage in the US

- A short documentary by the television network 'History'.
- The right to vote was achieved only after a long struggle that continued for more than 70 years.

Source: History/YouTube Channel

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By the 1970s, women of all ages, races and backgrounds had joined in the fight for equality. Gloria Steinem campaigned for a constitutional amendment to guarantee equal rights for women. And in 1972, congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment, though the amendment was never ratified. The following year, the Supreme Court would make a decision that would have a profound effect on the lives of American women. In the landmark case Roe versus Wade, the high court ruled that a woman has a constitutional right to choose to have an abortion.


Abortion services were made safer and more accessible to women after the ruling which would face repeated challenges in later years. Although Roe versus Wade was decided in 1973, the fight over abortion rights and women's equality continued to this day in the US and around the world."

The women's liberation movement of the 1970's with its best-known slogan "the personal is political" led women to break down the power relations to argue that political


processes are profoundly gendered. Parallel to the developments pertaining to gender equality in the United States, there were several other international historical developments which can also be cited.

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- In 1945, the UN Commission on the Status of Women was set up, which provided a focus for international women's organizations campaigning for women's rights.
 - The UN Decade for Women (1975–85) was inaugurated at the 'first-ever global conference on women' in Mexico City in 1975 and it raised the issue of women's integration into the development process.
 - Similarly, the International Tribunal of Crimes Against Women was held in Brussels in 1976.
- Scholar of international feminism, Agnes Miles, suggests that within the context of broad globalization processes, women's group in all regions are more often acting locally, while thinking globally.
- The formation of Development Alternative with Women for a New Era (DAWN) as an international organization of Third World feminist researchers in 1984 helped to bring attention to several gender movements around the world.



Source: dawnnet.org



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The UN Commission on the status of women was set up in 1945, which provided a focus for International Women's Organizations campaigning for women's rights. So, the UN Decade for Women between 1975 to 1985 was inaugurated at the first ever global conference on women in Mexico City in 1975. It raised the issue of women's integration into the developmental processes. Similarly, the International Tribunal of Crimes against Women was held in Brussels in 1976.



Agnes Miles, who is a scholar of international feminism, has suggested that within the context of broad globalization processes, women's group in all regions are more often acting locally while thinking globally. The formation of DAWN that is the Development Alternative with Women for a New Era as an international organization of third world feminist researchers in 1984 helped to bring attention to several gender movements around the world.

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- With the ending of the second world war in 1945, a new wave of international gender-based mobilization took off as women became active in efforts to secure independence for their countries.*
- In India's struggle for independence, Gandhi's arrival transformed politics and society. He was deeply involved with the issues relating to India's women and incessantly opposed those constraints which limited the involvement of women in the national awakening.**

*Richardson, D., & Robinson, V. (2020). *Introducing gender and women's studies*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

**Norvell, L. (1997). Gandhi and the Indian women's movement. *British Library Journal*.




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With the ending of the Second World War in 1945, a new wave of international gender-based mobilization took off as women became active in efforts to secure independence for their countries. In India, however, the struggle for independence had started to raise the needs and demands of women towards the emancipation of their social life much earlier.


And the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi had transformed politics and society. He was deeply involved with the issues related to India's women and incessantly opposed those constraints which had limited their involvement in the national awakening.

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- He condemned the customs of purdah, sati, and dowry, and strongly urged women to fight for their own self-development.
- In the 1925 edition of *Young India*, he wrote:
 - To call women the weaker sex is a libel. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, not greater courage? Without her, man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, then the future is with women.
- In the struggle for women's emancipation in India, many eminent women joined Gandhi. Among them was Sarojini Naidu, a distinguished poetess and political crusader.
- She became the first President of the Indian Women's Association, founded in 1917.



Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu in 1931
Source: alamy.com



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He condemned the customs of purdah that is the veil, sati and dowry and strongly urged women to fight for their own self-development. His writings in various contemporary newspapers are a testimony to his strong commitment towards the betterment of the situation of women in India.

And I quote, “to call women the weaker sex is a libel. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man’s superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, not greater courage? Without her, men could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, then the future is with women.”

In the struggle for women’s emancipation in India, many eminent women joined Gandhi. Among them was Sarojini Naidu, a distinguished poetess and political crusader. She became the first President of the Indian Women’s Association which was founded in 1917. Naidu had worked tirelessly to spread the message of Gandhi among women. She preached against child marriage, purdah or the veil and maintained that the progress of India depended on the emancipation of women.

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- Internationally, since the 1970s, the process of political, economic, social and cultural convergence, understood as globalization, has removed many barriers between the nation-states.
- As the forces of globalization continue to bring global movements closer together, the local context of collective action is being intertwined with movements that transcend nation-state boundaries.
- Transnational feminist networks contributed valuable resources and extended support to local efforts that advocate gender equality.*



Source: thecanadianencyclopedia.ca



*Conway, J. (2012). "Transnational Feminisms Building Anti-Globalization Solidarities." *Globalizations* 9(3): 379-393.

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Since the 1970s, the international processes of globalization have removed several barriers between the nation states. As the forces of globalization continue to bring global movements closer together, the local context of collective action is being intertwined with movements that transcend nation-state boundaries. Transnational feminist networks contributed valuable resources and extended support to local efforts that advocate gender equality.

Across the world, socio-economically privileged feminists communicated through associations, annual meetings, and publications and in some cases, they served as consultants to the United Nations. Simultaneously, women from more economically and socially marginalized communities participated in connected forms of on the ground collective action.

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Contemporary Gender Movements

- Transnational ties have become increasingly important in collective efforts around gender violence.
- Transnational struggles may form virtual and tangible solidarities to strengthen and expand visibility to collective actions.
- For example, the 2017 Women's March became the largest protest in US history with support from several million people across the world.
- People came together around a range of political and social issues that disproportionately impact women and people of colour.



2017 Women's March
Source: NBC News



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Transnational ties have become increasingly important in collective efforts around gender violence. Transnational struggles may form virtual and tangible solidarities to strengthen and expand visibility to collective actions. For example, the 2017 Women's March became the largest protest in US history with support from several million people across the world. People came together around a range of political and social issues that disproportionately impact women and people of color.

For different gendered groups who experience marginalization, social recognition and rights are at the core of their activities and are crucial components to the study of collective action.


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- In the case of Argentina, the “Ni Una Menos” (Not One Less) movement responded to state inaction and social media commentary about the rise of murder of women across the country.*
- The public acts of violence against women and the lack of political will to address the violence, galvanized women across the nation.
- The movement spread to neighboring countries like Chile and Peru and connected with other activist groups from the LGBTQ community.

*Friedman, J. and Constanza, T. (2016). “#NiUnaMenos: Not One Woman Less, Not One More Death.” North American Congress on Latin America.



Ni Una Menos Movement in Argentina
Source: The Guardian




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In the case of Argentina, we can talk about the ‘Ni Una Menos’ (Not One Less) movement which had responded to state inaction and social media commentary about the rise of murder of women across the country. The public acts of violence against women and the lack of political will to address the violence, galvanized women across the nation. This movement quickly spread to neighboring countries like Chile and Peru and connected with other activist groups from the LGBTQ community.


The movement which had originated in Argentina transcended the national boundaries of Latin America with the help of social media. They use the hashtag of #NotOneLess meaning we must not lose even one more woman to violence.

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- Racial violence is tightly linked to other forms of oppression like class exploitation and sexism.
- Patricia Hill Collins argues that “violence is the conceptual glue that binds intersecting systems of power together” (Collins, 2017).
- Collins attributes the concept of flexible solidarity to black women’s collective action.
- Black women cannot separate themselves from racism, sexism and classism and consequently face more barriers within their efforts to contest these forms of oppression.



Source: Wellesley College




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Racial violence is tightly linked to other forms of oppression like class exploitation and sexism. Patricia Hill Collins argues that violence is the conceptual glue that binds intersecting systems of power together. Collins attributes the concept of flexible solidarity to black women’s collective action. Black women cannot separate themselves from racism, sexism and classism and consequently face more barriers within their efforts to contest these forms of oppression.

Recent grass root responses to violence highlighting how intersecting systems of power obscure sexism inherent in our social structures. Collins takes example of the official website for the Black Lives Matter movement. The webpage defines the intersectional description of their mission as one that acknowledges not only the killing of black people by systematic powers, but also the unjust marginalization of women, trans people and the undocumented workers.


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- Nancy Naples (2020) notes that although the #BlackLivesMatter movement's mission acknowledges intersecting oppressions; critics have argued that the movement's focus has overwhelmingly been on the violence against black men.
- As a result, the #SayHerName movement emerged to call attention to the police violence toward black women.

Source: Janelle Monae

- Therefore, contentious politics must remain "intentionally intersectional" (discussing race, class, gender, trans discrimination) in its approach to combat political domination and violence (Collins, 2017).



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It is important to refer to Nancy Naples arguments at this point. She notes that although the Black Lives Matter movements mission acknowledges intersecting oppressions, critics have argued that the movements focus has overwhelmingly been on the violence against black men only.

As a result, the hashtag say her name movement emerged to call attention to the police violence toward black women. Therefore, contentious politics must remain intentionally intersectional that is discussing race, class, gender and trans discrimination in its approach to combat political domination and violence.

This way, gendered collective action challenges the separation between actors and overlapping forms of operations and privileges.

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Transgender Movements

- Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity or gender expression differ from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.*
- Most transgender organizations hold that even defining the term 'transgender' is somewhat limiting, as many people who view themselves as transgender may not fit a specific definition.
 - The antonym of transgender is 'cisgender' or a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person was identified as having at birth.

* Nownes A. (2019). *Organizing for transgender rights*. SUNY Press.



Source: The New Yorker





IT ROOKIE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 22

Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity or gender expression differ from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Most transgender organizations hold that even defining the term transgender is somewhat limiting as many people who view themselves as transgender may not fit a specific definition. The antonym of transgender as we know is cisgender, a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person was identified as having at birth.

Transgender people especially transgender women are at a higher risk of violence and sexual assault in comparison to cisgender people. They also struggle more prominently in accessing basic needs such as housing, employment or legal protection.

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- Although the modern term “transgender” was coined only in 1965, the history of transgender identity dates back to Sumerian and Akkadian texts from 4500 years ago referring to transgender or transvestite priests known as ‘gala’.
- In 1952, American trans-woman Christine Jorgensen's public transition brought widespread awareness to sex reassignment surgery.



Source: Vectorstock.com



- Modern transgender and gay activism began with the 1959 Cooper Donuts Riot in Los Angeles.



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Although the modern term ‘transgender’ was coined only in 1965, the history of transgender identity dates back to Sumerian and Akkadian texts from 4500 years ago referring to transgender or transvestite priests known as ‘gala.’ In 1952, American trans-woman Christine Jorgensen’s public transition brought widespread awareness to sex reassignment surgery. Modern transgender and gay activism begin with the 1959 Cooper Donuts Riot in Los Angeles.

This occurred 10 years prior to the better-known Stonewall Riots in New York City. People who were openly gay at the time were in rebellion and risked arrest and imprisonment. The grassroots fights for trans right became more publicly visible as trans and gay people started to oppose and resist the police harassment.

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- FTM International (Female to Male) is the oldest organization for 'trans men' in the United States. It was founded by Lou Sullivan in San Francisco in 1986.
- The goal of the organization is to shift the general public's perceptions of what it is to be a transgender man.
- In the 1980s, feminist and lesbian organizations began to debate whether transgender women should be accepted into women's groups and events.
- The 1990s saw the establishment of Transgender Day of Remembrance to honor those who had lost their lives to transphobic violence.
- International Transgender Day of Remembrance is observed annually on November 20.



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FTM International (Female to Male) is the oldest organization for trans men in the United States. It was founded by Lou Sullivan in San Francisco in 1986. The goal of the organization is to shift the general public's perception of what it is to be a transgender man. In the 1980s, feminist and lesbian organizations began to debate whether transgender women should be accepted into women's groups and events.

The 1990's saw the establishment of Transgender Day of Remembrance to honor those who had lost their lives to transphobic violence. An international transgender day of remembrance is observed annually on 20th November. In the year 1990, the landmark film 'Paris is Burning' documented gay and trans New York ball culture transgender marches and parades around the time of pride celebrations. We have analyzed this film in our discussion of Judith Butler's work 'Bodies that Matter' which was published in 1993.

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- In 1992, transgender activist Leslie Feinberg circulated a pamphlet titled "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come".
- Feinberg's pamphlet begins by calling on the trans community to compose their definitions, invoking language as a tool that unites people divided by oppression.
- His book *Transgender Warriors* brought the word "transgender" more fully into use. He defined "transgender" as a broad category, including drag queens and gender-nonconforming people from history.
- The visibility of transgender people rose after 2000 as there was better media coverage of the trans community.



Leslie Feinberg
Source: buffalo1news.com



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In 1992, transgender activist Leslie Feinberg circulated a pamphlet titled ‘Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come.’ Feinberg’s pamphlet begins by calling on the trans community to compose their definitions invoking language as a tool that unites people who have been divided by oppression.

His book *Transgender Warriors* brought the word transgender more fully into use. He had defined transgender as a broad category including drag queens and gender-nonconforming people from history. The visibility of transgender people rose after the year 2000 as there was better media coverage of the trans community.

Transgender movements today are at crossroads in terms of the politics of working with different groups such as LGBTQI and cisgender women’s movements. All of these are processes that demonstrate the importance of coalitional politics and the relational practices of feminists or LGBT work.

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#MeToo and Hashtag Feminism

- Social media and the internet are significant sites of political engagement.
- Digital activism can create new forms of affective ties and garner solidarities from around the world.
- One such form of digital activism is 'hashtag feminism' and probably the most well-known example of it is the #MeToo movement.
- #MeToo exploded into public consciousness in 2017, when the actress Alyssa Milano tweeted about her treatment by Harvey Weinstein, a powerful Hollywood film tycoon.



Alyssa Milano
Source: Wikimedia Commons




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Social media and the internet are significant sites of political engagement. Digital activism can create new forms of effective ties and garner solidarities from around the world. One such form of digital activism is hashtag feminism and probably the most well-known example of it is the #MeToo movement. #MeToo exploded into public consciousness in 2017, when the actress Alyssa Milano tweeted about her treatment by Harvey Weinstein, a powerful Hollywood film tycoon.


The hashtag #MeToo began trending online on 24th January 2017 and was used 12 million times in the first 24 hours on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

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- Scholars like Diane Richardson and Victoria Robinson (2020) point out that the #MeToo movement originally started in 2006 by Tarana Burke.
- Burke is a Black community activist from the United States and had herself experienced sexual abuse.
- She used the phrase #MeToo to provide support to young Black women like herself who have been victims of sexual abuse or violence.
- Burke is currently the senior director at 'Girls for Gender Equity', a nonprofit organization in Brooklyn, and she conducts MeToo workshops encouraging victims to speak out.



Tarana Burke
Source: Vogue.com



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Scholars like Diane Richardson and Victoria Robinson have pointed out that the MeToo movement had originally started in 2006. It was started by Tarana Burke. Burke is a black community activist from the USA and she had herself experienced sexual abuse.

She had used the phrase MeToo to provide support to young black women like herself who had been victims of sexual abuse or violence. She is currently the senior director at Girls for Gender Equity, a nonprofit organization in Brooklyn and she conducts MeToo workshops encouraging victims to speak out.


After enduring sexual harassment, it is important for the survivor to feel safe before speaking out and Burke's workshops are immensely empowering. In 2017, Time Magazine named Burke and other silence breakers as person of the year. Burke has been internationally celebrated for her work and earned the Sydney Peace Prize for her contributions. Burke points out that a MeToo indictment of a powerful persona is not a moment of celebration, but it is a cathartic moment for the survivors. It is a moment for them to have a sense of relief and get justice for their traumatic experience.

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- Once somebody openly speaks out about their sexual harassment, they usually face probing questions and sometimes even tagged as liars in the beginning.
- Burke says that the movement originally began with the aim of bringing the hope to the victims that 'healing' is possible and to let them know that they are not alone or abandoned.
- She also dismisses the charges against the movement which is perceived as something that "brings men down".
- Burke insists that the primary aim of the #MeToo movement is to support the victims and end sexual violence.



Source: The Daily Show




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Once somebody openly speaks out about their sexual harassment, they usually face probing questions and sometimes are even termed as liars in the beginning. Burke says that the movement originally began with the aim of bringing a hope to the victims that healing is possible and to let them know that they are not alone or abundant. She also dismisses the charges against the movement which is perceived as something that brings men down. She insists that the primary aim of the MeToo movement is to support the victims and to end sexual violence.

Burke points out strongly that this movement is not about taking down powerful men that it is not exclusively a woman's movement. Survivors can belong to any gender category or can be even gender nonconforming.

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- In the same interview, Burke attests that we have to dismantle the notions about 'womanhood' and 'sexuality' – “where a girl develops a body and she is solely responsible for protecting herself from perpetrators” (Burke, 2018).
- Most often all of the rules and onus of restriction are imposed on the young girl, when adults are wholly responsible for the aspect of safety.
- Burke also says that since the #MeToo movement became viral through social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, we should build towards online platforms being able to provide resources to the survivors and their allies.



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In the same interview, Burke attests that we have to dismantle the notions about womanhood and sexuality where a girl develops a body, and she is solely responsible for protecting herself from perpetrators. Most often all the rules and onus of restriction are imposed on the young girl, when adults who are wholly responsible for the aspect of safety are not considered as responsible in the similar fashion.

Burke also says that since the MeToo movement became viral through social media platforms, we should build towards online platforms being able to provide resources to the survivors and their allies. When used properly, online platforms can provide tools for people to become active in their communities and it will have the power to interrupt sexual violence.


For Burke, a true cultural shift will not happen until we are re-socialized about how we think of and about sexual violence and how do we take a part the rape culture and its foundations.

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- According to Nancy Naples (2020), “MeToo is a particularly consequential form of ‘hashtag’ feminism” (48).
- There are many other websites and hashtags that preceded #MeToo and are linked to feminist activism.
- Other popular hashtags include #BeenRapedNeverReported, #YesAllWomen, #WhyILeft, and #NotOkay to cite a few examples.
- They enable women to experience solidarity, create feminist networks and lead to the development of a feminist consciousness.



Source: www.indianwomenblog.org




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MeToo has been termed as a particularly consequential form of hashtag feminism. There are many other websites and hashtags that preceded the MeToo movement and are also linked to feminist activism. Other popular hashtags include #BeenRapedNeverReported, #YesAllWomen, #WhyILeft and #NotOkay to cite a few examples. They enable women to experience solidarity, create feminist networks and lead to the development of a feminist consciousness.


Hashtags have also emerged in the wake of MeToo to raise financial aid to support women fighting sexual harassment in the workplace such as the times up organization.

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- #MeToo also focuses attention on the workplace; it is, therefore, concerned with the relationship between sex and power.
- Various establishments of power, like Hollywood, are newly scrutinized and acted upon. Even political institutions have not been immune to its reverberations.
- For example, in 2017 General Elections in the UK, more women than ever before were elected and this was in the wake of a scandal erupted following #MeToo.



Source: www.usnews.com



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MeToo also focuses attention on the workplace. It is therefore, concerned with the relationship between sex and power. Various establishments of power, like Hollywood are newly scrutinized and acted upon. Even political institutions have not been immune to its reverberations. For example, the 2017 General Elections in the UK found that more women than ever before have been elected and this was in the wake of a scandal which had erupted following the MeToo.

Such incidents also exposed sexual harassments which were endemic in political institutions. Since then, attention has focused on the disturbing levels of violence and sexual harassment experienced by women politicians particularly, minority ethnic women globally.

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- At the international level of the UN and that of national governments, gender movements have had a major impact and have influenced several transformations in terms of public policy and cultural changes.
- In most countries of the world, however, political power predominantly remains masculine and progress towards gender parity is slowly gathering momentum.
- A reconceptualization of gender with equal terms of freedom is necessary to resist the masculinization of politics.
- This will significantly curtail the violence and abuse directed against women and gender minorities.



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At the international level of the UN and that of the national governments, gender movements have had a major impact and they have also influenced several transformations in terms of public policy and cultural changes. In most countries of the world, however, the political power has remained as predominantly masculine and therefore, progress towards gender parity is slowly gathering momentum.



A reconceptualization of gender with equal terms of freedom is necessary to resist the masculinization of politics. This will significantly curtail the violence and abuse directed against women and gender minorities. So, there is clearly a long way to go before everyone irrespective of their gender or sexual orientation, enjoy equal access to resources and movements such as MeToo with its shock waves can impede the status quo resisting positive change.

In the coming modules, we will analyze in detail how MeToo and Time's Up movements strengthened digital feminist activism and how they contested the boundaries of sexual violence.

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Thank you.