

# Research Article on - Feminism Concept and Theories (Choice)

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**Abstract:-** Feminism is not inborn but taken up from the surrounding world, mainly present women as the weaker section in the society who were trapped in the different traditional roles set by the patriarchy. It present the issue of social conditioning of girl child and boy child from childhood, gender discrimination between both sexes and social roles conditioned by the society can be seen in this article. Feminism basically means emancipation of women which is used to describe the political, social, and economic status of women in this world. It aims at establishing more rights and protection with equal opportunities for both the genders but specially for women. The main purpose of this article is to free the unique thinking made for the women and to understand that inside each of us is a unique way to understand things and how we represent women in the society. Femininity is something which is groomed since ages and practiced in our society. But the main issue which this article talks about is the sub topic presented through the feminist theory. Also, it explores the role of choice in the term of feminist theory.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As we explore the concept of "choice", I will lead you through several perspectives. Our aim is, as always, not to take a choice and critique it to the point where it becomes impossible for us to use it anymore, but rather to broaden the concept, explain life as we know it, and make it possible for feminist theory, and the feminist movement to achieve their goals. To achieve our goal in relation to choice, we can ask a couple of questions. First, what does the choice mean in terms of individual identity? As I mentioned before, this is a very common element of our everyday understanding of life. So, how do we understand it based on our own identities? Or to put it another way, we individuals are all about making choices, and how do we understand such a capacity from a gendered perspective? Secondly, and this is very important, we often demand the option as a separate self because the choice is often based on an individual. Is there any other separate self that makes choices? Finally, we will discuss how the idea of choice is also embedded in the society with certain assumptions about gender and identity? It may be clear by now that the word assumptions and choice are very significant to understanding the main topic of choice. So, this is how we are going to approach the question of "choice".

Let's start with this commonsensical understanding. The choice is the one thing that everyone must make in modern capitalism and modern society. Every day, we make choices, including what toothpaste to use, what clothes to wear, and what food to eat. If you have the capacity to make a choice, even within limited constraints and stuff. So, often the question of choice is always positional in terms of gender and society. The role of gender is also important and appropriate based on person sex gender role influence human behavior toward men and women differently. For example different choices are inherent in both men and women regarding certain things like pink are for girls and blue for men, masculinity is for men and femininity for women, dolls for girls and bike guns for boys and so on. What you see around you, the pictures on the screen and in your mind's mentality. So, we are talking about the idea of choice, with the question of consumption. In such an understanding, the consumer is a primary citizen and those who cannot be consumers automatically become free from the world of choice, what Renata Salecl calls "the tyranny of choice", and the "tyranny of choice" is expected to be something that all of our labor under; rich and poor alike. Because, even the poor are told in many ways that because they did not choose the right things, that is why they are poor, but this is just to say that the word choice, its connotations, and its consequences surround us in the present moment.

Therefore, what are the ways in which feminist theory deals with choice? Let us start then, with the context of individual choice. The choice is seen in the present moment as a new mechanism of self-identity, as it led to many other moments, beginning in the late 1970s. It is, in many ways, influenced by the times we live in, which are primarily governed by capitalism. In such a utopia, the only action available to you is to make a choice. It is the only way in which you exert your identity in the world. According to critic Anthony Giddens, he says that this is a problem of late modernity and late modernity, coming as it does after World War II, during a period of increasing uncertainty and breakdown—the breakdown of ideas, concepts, signposts, certainties, the breakdown of structures, the breakdown of identities and the breakdown of nation states. During such an era, the choice becomes a hallmark of identity. It is a product of what Giddens calls "a milieu of doubt". In this state, nothing is certain any longer, and anxiety results from such uncertainty. To produce the only actions that we are able to produce, by

choice. There is a greater variety of things, but we do not know how to choose anything between those things in this world and, we all inhabit extremely diverse, extremely segmented life. What does it mean? It means that older notions of community and kin have collapsed into our understanding of ourselves and the world, and in the context of such a breakdown, the choice becomes a certain kind of rebellion. Giddens, as do other theorists of late modernity, also points out that this is a very fragmented way to live, meaning that when we discover the reality we live in is fictional, we find ourselves very disappointed.

It alienates us, it does not allow us any kind of security, which means that choice only always doubts for about a moment and then we have to make other choices. Now, such a context of individual choice may sound familiar to you from the assumptions of liberal feminism. Because here we have to understand that feminism can achieve its goals as long as it gives women the right to choose. Therefore, a female is an individual, with the capacity to choose and that is where we locate the possibility of liberation. The question here becomes very important: this kind of binary you will encounter again and again in relation to social theory or feminist theory.

Now, what is "structured versus" is very simply explained; structure versus agency is a representation of two possible vantage points for understanding an individual's life. As a result, we live in a structure that dictates how we live; are there certain rules that we must follow, like family, kin, state, nation, world, etc.? Are we free to act unfettered by any kind of structure, or do we have agency? In other words, what is encapsulated under the term, structure versus agency? In that sense, structure versus agency is not really realistic. It's neither structure nor agency, it's either one or the other. It's either people have agency or they're slaves to structures. Instead, the truth always lies somewhere in between, and such an in-between is often an encapsulation of life as we know it. In liberal feminism, the question of agency is paramount and very important. The question of whether a woman is able to act in any situation, and has the opportunities and the freedom to act is the side on which liberal feminism weighs. Such a notion, however, is subject to a very easy critique because as we well know individuals make small choices, but are often under tremendous constraints depending on their position in society, and this can be illustrated for example by questions such as career choice if women want freedom, why do not they work, why do not they just take up a job? Which simple question elides the understanding that women are subject to multiple constraints, within which they have to make this decision of whether to have a career or not. This is why, for example, women who work are always asked the question, how do you take care of the home, in terms of working women? So, instead, if we think about it as occupational fate, that might be able to capture the structure versus agency paradox much better than liberal feminism.

Anderson, for example, speaks about work on career choices and the psychology of career choices, in an article

called "Choice, can we choose it?". Let us see it as an example from the article by Anderson to be able to understand, how is it that we locate it within the structure-agency. All people has to choose a particular career from different options, as choice is a complex process that is influenced by different variables in the society. The issue is implicit and lack on those limit and their selection to particular area. It means that, if we locate people's choices only within a choice framework, then we frame the certain things that I referred to earlier. Therefore, people ask questions – Why is it that women always choose careers in banks, and schools in their own country and not internationally? Is it because they want a less working hour schedule? But why is it that they want a less working hour schedule, do we then generalize to say that, women actually just do not want to work? I do not know why such a kind of thinking is made about women and careers when clearly, they cannot work long hours like men. A 9 to 5 or fewer working hours allows women to be able to juggle a life-work balance. Also because they are expected to work at offices, schools, and banks and are also considered to be responsible for taking care of their family and home. Meanwhile, this is not the case with men, they are just seen as providers.

In the structure versus agency debate, however, it would be a mistake to say that everything is about structure. Of course, we are all aware of constraint and structure, we are intelligent beings. But within that structure, do we not act, do we not have joy, do we not have hope, and not find ways to do more than is expected of us, in which case how can there not be agency and structure? However, the agency part of the debate constructs choice as the only act that matters. In other words, if you are oppressed, it is because you did not choose the right thing, if you are unsuccessful, it is because you did not choose the right thing, if you are miserable, it is because you chose badly. No matter what the situation is, if there is something wrong in a woman's life, it's ultimately due to her wrong choices, but the question is do we really have that agency to choose?

Let us start with the first model of choice, which is, rational choice theory. Now, rational choice theory, of course, comes from economics and in many ways considers the explanation of the agency part of the choice debate. We consider rational choice to be the result of technical rationality in rational choice theory. Through a range of actions, rationality is seen in action. Of course, rational choice takes into account a very particular conception of the individual as free, as thinking, as sentimental, and as always seeking to maximize the result of choices. What does that best possible result mean? Let's talk about it a little bit. In order to make an informed decision, one must identify possibilities, have information about each possibility, and identify the rewards and costs of each possibility. People offer you certain things, the world offers you certain other things, and there are pros and cons to each; you evaluate and determine which is the best possible life from choosing a, b, or c; c gives you the best possible life according to our assumption and according to society "a" gives the best life but we choose the one which is based more rationality. In

the process, all of these things are given to all individuals with the understanding that they will get information, and will be able to access whatever choices they desire, this is the rational choice theory for individuals. The assumptions that support and secure such rational choice theory are also about society. In society, the actions of individuals explain the nature of society, they all add up to something. Therefore, complex phenomena in society can be understood, through the actions of individuals. The individual is the elementary unit or a combined unit of social life through which life functions. There is only a set of individuals and these are the units through which society functions.

Now, there are many feminist critiques of this form of theory not in the modern world but in the past ages too, they attribute to women thinking in the service of the household as a primary unit rather than the self. Whereas, men always make a profit by maximizing individual choices. This helps to explain why men and women make different kinds of decisions. Males think about themselves, and women think about the home. Men decide how to manage the family since women prioritize the home and do not make decisions that allow them to maximize earnings. Men decide how to balance work and the home. Yet you also imply that women are limited to thinking about the home in this statement. So, it stands to reason that they will never maximize profits to the same extent as males do. So, there is both a critique and a structural restriction embedded in the same set of assumptions. Markets are constructed as competitive and that is why men compete with one another in making choices. Whereas the household is constructed as harmonious, and therefore, women make choices to be able to preserve that peace, rather than to be able to “win”. I am saying this in order to explain how rational choice theory envisions men and women as making different choices.

In other words, a woman making the kind of choices that a man makes is considered to be, not woman-like and not having the same kind of affinity for the household, as men do. Such a theory then becomes important to explain both things, society and the ways in which gender operates. It does not take into account, any kind of structural constraints in the ways in which gender, men, and women operate in a highly gendered society. People have sought to try and change such an understanding of choice, and instead put forth the possibility of what they call, purposeful choice, which is not a rational choice. Where rationality is the quality of individuals that is either present or absent, but that people act with a purpose that is in keeping with the nature of their desires.

Here, let us discuss the post-structuralism as a 20th century subject associated with the work of Jacques Derrida and his followers but it is originated from the Ferdinand de Saussure structuralism. Poststructuralism is something very important in part of choice which have attracted many people because they set an attitude that develop a certain response for the growth and identification of logic which means they offer no structure for example (if we ask a group of people to imagine a cat or dog

for everyone there's a different image of cat and a dog which means every person have a different representation of things) but on the other hand it also offers a stress between notions of social construction and choice. Now, social construction is a popular phrase because in many ways, thinking about society is also necessary that we think about concepts as constructed. Constructed is not the same as saying true or false. It merely means that they are constructed and they can be understood as constructions or objects in the mind. Do we think of people as constructions of the social order on the one hand, and as constructing agents on the other, without making mistakes on either side? The construction of schooling and socialization of different sectors emphasize the determining effects of the social structure and ideology that had been an inherent pessimism, but also for the ways in which they seem to cover up the real thinking person who can choose to resist, change, and make a difference.

Therefore, we turn to the poststructuralist choosing subject which seems to have both sets of words in it, actually three sets of words, structuralism, choice or choosing, and subject which seems to be about individuals formed within the constraints of society. What are post-structural accounts? Post-structural accounts are critiques of both rationality and humanism and suggest that the consciousness and of rationality may be toppled, by both conscious and unconscious desire and an individual is not always rational, justified, continuous, or coherent, the idea that structures in society act upon us, to create in us desires that seem to come from within us but are actually the result of socialization; an individual's choices, or what is called rational choices, can be subverted by such desires. Sometimes, you act in ways that you do not want to act in, mainly because you are coveting these actions.

One is the subject of discourses; discourses act onto us, i.e., through us; as a result, we respond to them and alter our behavior in response to social cues like what we hear, see, and feel. We are bound to be constrained by these discourses because we are also subject to them. This means, individuals do not have the right to endlessly be whoever they want to be, there are limits to these that change from person to person depending on your location and life, depending on race, caste, class, and gender in such a society. And now, we come to the punchline, one of the ways in which gender operates is that men have greater access to discourses of autonomy and choice. Men have lesser constraints in the ways in which they are allowed to be rational in choosing subjects. And of course, here I say men as a general category, but this also differs by race, caste, and class. So, you already know that there are inequalities shot through even the category of men and you come one ladder down; between men and women, there are greater differences. Is preserved in the understanding of rational men versus irrational women who are not making the right choices. In such a scenario, the feminist theory says that choice is an illusion. Choice, consequence, and agency are considered to be related but when choice itself is precarious, the consequences are already given and the agency is limited. Therefore, the choice

is the simultaneous act of free will, even as one submits to the existing order. What does that mean? It means that sometimes we are doomed to make the same choices, which otherwise appear as free choices. It feels like people are choosing particular things when they could have chosen something else, but given that they have constrained subject positions, they will make the same choices again and again, and again. Such, are the ways in which structure and agency, battle one another. So, choice is important to understand feminist theory because half of the part of feminism contains choices.

## II. CONCLUSION

So, here we get to know that the concerned topic in the feminist theory which talked about choice making in society at different level .Choice is something very important because choice make us realize about the surrounding in which we are living. Making a correct choice can change the condition of the women in the society because what people think about women's choice is only to stay in the kitchen and house to do household chores. Correct choice can end discrimination against girls and women, end all violence and exploitation, eliminate all harmful practices like forced child marriage etc., ensure full participation of women in other activities if they have the correct knowledge of choice and the other issues, can access the reproductive health and right, equal rights in the economic and property and empowerment of women can be seen if they know what the word choice mean to them .It also encourage women to embrace the opportunities they have in life and to see the choice they make and acceptable to the society .Yet in order to succeed and create a change for women the first and foremost change to be done in the society which include inequality and a patriarchal status quo.

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