

#Metoo movement

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Manifest pedagogy

Thematic study questions on issues related to women are omnipresent in UPSC papers. Though explicitly mentioned in society under the topic “role of women and women organizations” questions related to women are asked in all four papers ranging from history (role of women in freedom movement as part of dormant history) to ethics (gender ethics). The right way to prepare for such topics is to ignore paper wise classification and study issues related to women linking with all disciplines. This saves your time and your time is precious.

In news

After the issue of sexual harassment was raised in Hollywood with the Weinstein Scandal, the Indian version of #Metoo kicked off with the allegations of sexual harassment against Nana Patekar.

Placing it in syllabus

1. Role of women and women organizations
2. Social empowerment
3. Social justice
4. Social history of India
5. Gender Ethics

Static dimensions

1. Women movements in India
2. Sexual violence as a topic in general
3. Constitutional provisions, policies, acts and schemes

against sexual harassment

Current Dimensions

1. #MeToo origins
2. Nature of the movement
3. #MeToo – criticisms
4. #MeToo as new social movement
5. #MeToo as 4th wave of feminism
6. #MeToo as an elitist movement
7. What is the future of #MeToo

Content

#Metoo as fourth wave of feminism

Feminist movements around the world have been classified in 4 waves and #Metoo is considered as part of fourth wave. 4th wave of feminism began in 2008 and continues till date. Its main focus is on sexual harassment, misogyny and assault against women.

What are the other 3 waves of feminism?

1st wave: 1900-1950

1. Its focus was on women suffrage, political candidacy and to an extent on property rights.
2. Its main focus was inequality in public life.
3. Rights demanded were, first political and later economic
4. Private life like family was kept out of its ambit.

2nd wave: 1960-80s

1. The focus moves to private institutions like family.
2. The famous call given under this is personal is political which means that personal arena like family is also considered a political area for struggle.

3. Issues of patriarchy are brought up.
4. Reducing inequalities in sex, family, work place and reproductive rights are considered it priority areas.

3rd wave: 1990-2008

1. The focus here is on individualism and diversity
2. Individualism issues deals with question of what it means to be a Feminist.
3. Diversity issue deals with making feminist movement more inclusive like less Eurocentric bringing post-colonial perspectives through issues of race and colour.
4. Lack of cohesion was a major criticism against the movement.

#MeToo as a Social Movement

Social movement are sudden abrupt social changes. Social changes are gradual. Social movements have been classified as old and new social movements.

New Social Movements began in 1960s in USA when students across USA and Europe protested US hegemony and actions in Vietnam War.

Is #MeToo a New Social Movement?

It has certain features of a new social movement.

1. Women irrespective of race, religion, caste and country subscribe to the idea hence it is based on an identity-identity of being a women.
2. It focuses on post material issues like dignity of women and not on material rights like property rights.
3. The techniques of protest are new like naming and shaming on digital media.
4. It is led by intellectuals and not attached to any parties, classes or caste.
5. It is based on the idea of new left and existentialism

which valorizes the spirit of liberty.

But it is not a movement in the complete sense as it is not inclusive and the social base is limited.

It is not an inclusive movement

It is not an inclusive movement as the social issues and groups included are not broad based

1. It is dominated by the urban women
2. Among the urban women it is restricted to upper and middle classes
3. Even among these sections it is further restricted to tech savvy groups
4. It excludes relatively deprived groups with in women groups like Dalit and tribal women
5. It focuses only on cis-genders and terminologies which are heteronormative. It leaves out transsexuals and homosexuals.
6. It deals with specifically one issue of women i.e., sexual harassment. It leaves out many other issues faced by women out of its narrative.

What next?

#Metoo movement though non inclusive has been revolutionary and progressive. But what after this?

We will get the answer once we look at the central drawbacks of the entire movement. The movement does not follow the due process. And if this is analyzed we will get what is to be done next.

Due process in this case is the extent to which state intervention is required to address sexual harassment issues. For example issues like staring at women, though by definition definitely constitutes sexual harassment, does it really need state intervention? If yes what kind of punishment should be

given? Rather than inviting state intervention (which is not to deny that staring is sexual harassment) in such cases a different narrative is to be built by society a narrative based on gender parities, gender sensitivity and gender inclusivity and this in all constitutes the due process and the future of the #Metoo movement.

Test Yourself: Mould your thoughts

Social movements unlike social change do not necessarily follow the due process. Critically analyze the statement in the context of recent #MeToo movement and suggest measures to bring due process in #MeToo movement.