
FEMINIST JURISPRUDENCE: RETHINKING JUSTICE THROUGH GENDERED LENSES

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Introduction

Feminist Jurisprudence is a critical legal theory that explores the relationship between law and gendered power structures. This school of thought, which has its roots in the larger feminist movement and is influenced by the opinions of Catharine MacKinnon, Carol Gilligan, Simone de Beauvoir, and other intellectuals, questions the patriarchal origins of legal systems and advocates for a rethinking of laws from the viewpoints of women. Feminist jurisprudence is a branch of legal theory that studies how law has historically treated women and how it continues to reflect male-dominated structures. It challenges the traditional idea that law is neutral or objective and shows how gender influences the creation, interpretation, and application of laws.

In 1978, Ann Scales came up with the term "feminist jurisprudence" while organising Celebration 25, a celebration and conference commemorating the 25th anniversary of the first female Harvard Law School graduate. The term was first used in the inaugural issue of the Harvard Women's Law Journal.¹

Two major thinkers in feminist jurisprudence are **Catharine MacKinnon** and **Carol Gilligan**, who offer different but powerful insights into the relationship between gender and law.

Catharine MacKinnon, a radical feminist legal scholar, argues that law is not neutral but instead shaped by the values of men. She believes that the legal system reflects a "**male perspective**" and often fails to address the real experiences of women. For example, in her famous work *Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, MacKinnon explained how sexual harassment was a form of discrimination that law had ignored.² She criticized the law for treating women's issues, such as sexual violence, as private or unimportant.

¹https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/epgpdata/uploads/epgp_content/S000020LA/P000850/M025707/ET/1513744315FeministJurisprudencefinal.pdf

² Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Sexual Harassment of Working Women: A Case of Sex Discrimination* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1979).

MacKinnon also introduced the idea of the "**dominance theory**", which says that gender inequality is not just about difference but about power.³ According to her, men have more power in society, and the law helps maintain this imbalance. She believes that legal reforms should not only aim for equality in words but must change the structures that support male dominance.⁴

On the other hand, **Carol Gilligan**, a psychologist, focused on how women think and make moral decisions differently from men. In her book *In a Different Voice*, she challenged earlier theories of moral development that were based only on male experiences.⁵ Gilligan introduced the concept of an "**ethic of care**", which means women often make decisions based on relationships, compassion, and care for others—unlike the male-oriented "ethic of justice," which focuses on rules and rights.⁶

Gilligan's work influenced feminist legal theory by showing that women's ways of thinking are not inferior, just different.⁷ Her ideas suggest that laws made only from a male perspective might miss or undervalue women's lived realities, such as caregiving roles or emotional labor.

Together, MacKinnon and Gilligan show two sides of the same coin. MacKinnon focuses on how power structures hurt women, while Gilligan highlights how law ignores women's different moral and emotional experiences. Both support a legal system that hears women's opinions and incorporates them.

Philosophical Origins and Development

The study of the connection between gender and the law is known as feminist jurisprudence. It critically analyzes how traditional legal systems reflect patriarchal values, exclude women's voices, and contribute to gender inequality. Feminist jurisprudence goes beyond mere legal reform; it seeks to reconstruct law by taking into account women's experiences and perspectives. The history of feminist jurisprudence is closely linked with the broader feminist movement and has evolved through various waves, each with distinct aims, strategies, and

³ Ibid.

⁴ Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence", 8 *Signs* 635–658 (1983).

⁵ Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1982).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Carol Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development", in Eva Feder Kittay and Diana T. Meyers (eds), *Women and Moral Theory* 19–33 (Rowman & Littlefield, 1987).

impacts.⁸

Origins and Foundations

The origins of feminist jurisprudence can be traced to early feminist thought in the 18th and 19th centuries. One of the earliest feminist philosophers, **Mary Wollstonecraft**, in her seminal work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), challenged the legal and social structures that subordinated women.⁹ She called for equal education and rationality among women, planting the seeds for future feminist legal thought.

During this time, women were legally and socially confined to domestic roles. Laws denied them basic rights such as owning property, voting, or receiving equal education.¹⁰ They were considered dependents of their fathers or husbands. Legal systems, especially in Europe and North America, were structured around male dominance, reflecting the patriarchal norms of the time.¹¹

First Wave of Feminism (1850–1920)

The first feminist wave concentrated on legal injustices, especially those pertaining to women's suffrage. Significant activism for the rights to vote, own property, and obtain education and work occurred during this time. The landmark **Seneca Falls Convention** in 1848 in the United States, where the "Declaration of Sentiments" was signed, demanded equal rights for women and became a foundational moment in feminist legal advocacy.¹²

Legal reform during this period included the Married Women's Property Acts in the UK and the USA, which allowed women to own and control property independently of their husbands.¹³ However, the movement largely catered to the interests of white, upper-class women, often excluding the voices of working-class women and women of color.¹⁴

⁸ See, for example, Katharine T. Bartlett, "Feminist Legal Methods," *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 103, No. 4 (1990), pp. 829–888.

⁹ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Penguin Classics Edition, 1992.

¹⁰ Carol Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law*, Routledge, London, 1989, pp. 1–10.

¹¹ Deborah L. Rhode, "Justice and Gender: Sex Discrimination and the Law," *Harvard University Press*, 1989.

¹² Elizabeth Cady Stanton et al., *Declaration of Sentiments*, Seneca Falls Convention, 1848.

¹³ Lee Holcombe, *Wives and Property: Reform of the Married Women's Property Law in Nineteenth-Century England*, University of Toronto Press, 1983.

¹⁴ Angela Davis, *Women, Race & Class*, Random House, New York, 1981.

Second Wave of Feminism (1960–1980s)

Feminist jurisprudence was extended by the second wave of feminism. Inspired by civil rights movements, this phase focused on broader social, political, and cultural inequalities. It examined issues like reproductive rights, workplace discrimination, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape.¹⁵

Legal theorists such as **Catharine MacKinnon** and **Carol Gilligan** played vital roles during this phase. MacKinnon argued that sexual harassment was a form of sex discrimination and criticized the law for maintaining male standards as the norm.¹⁶ She challenged the supposed neutrality of law, exposing how it perpetuated male dominance. Carol Gilligan, in her book *In a Different Voice*, introduced the idea that women reason about ethics and law differently, valuing care and relationships over abstract justice.¹⁷

Feminist legal scholars critiqued the **Critical Legal Studies (CLS)** movement for ignoring gender and for being dominated by male perspectives.¹⁸ Feminist jurisprudence emerged as a separate and serious critique of the law's role in maintaining social hierarchies, especially patriarchal ones.

Third Wave of Feminism (1990s–2010)

The **third wave** of feminism brought in the concept of **intersectionality**, coined by legal scholar **Kimberlé Crenshaw**.¹⁹ Intersectionality emphasized how gender interacts with race, class, sexuality, disability, and other social identities, affecting women's experiences with law differently.

This wave questioned the assumption of a universal "woman's experience" and critiqued earlier feminists for marginalizing women of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other underrepresented groups.²⁰ It recognized that legal reforms needed to address these multiple layers of

¹⁵ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1963.

¹⁶ Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, Yale University Press, 1979.

¹⁷ Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Harvard University Press, 1982.

¹⁸ Drucilla Cornell, "The Philosophy of the Limit," *Critical Legal Studies Journal*, Vol. 10, 1987.

¹⁹ Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989, pp. 139–167.

²⁰ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Routledge, 1990.

discrimination.

Feminist legal theory during this wave also engaged with **postmodernism**, challenging fixed identities and objective truths. Feminist postmodernists argued that law must reflect lived experiences and accommodate diverse narratives, rather than relying solely on abstract, universal principles.²¹

Fourth Wave of Feminism (2010–Present)

The fourth wave of feminism is distinguished by its global reach, digital activity, and emphasis on topics such as reproductive justice, consent, sexual violence, and gender identity. Movements like **#MeToo**, **#TimesUp**, and campaigns against marital rape have drawn attention to ongoing injustices faced by women despite decades of legal reform.²²

In legal circles, fourth-wave feminists continue to fight for:

- Marital rape has been classified as a criminal offence.
- Stronger implementation of **sexual harassment laws**.
- Gender-neutral laws that include **transgender and non-binary persons**.
- Representation of women in legal institutions, including courts and bar councils.

Social media has become a powerful tool for highlighting injustices and pushing for faster legal responses. For example, public outrage after the **Nirbhaya gang rape** case in India in 2012 led to the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013**, which strengthened laws against sexual offenses.²³

Feminist Jurisprudence in India

In India, feminist jurisprudence followed a different trajectory. While it was influenced by

²¹ Margaret Davies, *Asking the Law Question*, Lawbook Co., 1994.

²² Tarana Burke, founder of the Me Too Movement, <https://metoomvmt.org> (last accessed 15 June 2025).

²³ *Criminal Law (Amendment) Act*, 2013, No. 13 of 2013, Government of India.

global movements, it was deeply rooted in colonial and postcolonial contexts.²⁴

First Phase (1850–1920): This period was led by male reformers like **Raja Ram Mohan Roy** and **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar**, who fought against practices like *Sati* and supported widow remarriage.²⁵ The British passed reform laws such as the **Widow Remarriage Act (1856)** and **Bengal Sati Regulation (1829)**.²⁶

Second Phase (1920–1980): Women took leadership roles in the national freedom movement. **Sarojini Naidu** became the first female president of the Indian National Congress.²⁷ Women participated in the independence struggle, raising awareness about their rights and equality.²⁸

Third Phase (1980–2010): Legal reforms began addressing domestic violence, sexual harassment, and gender discrimination. The **Vishaka Guidelines (1997)** were a landmark in recognizing sexual harassment at the workplace,²⁹ and the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**, provided civil remedies for abuse.³⁰

Fourth Phase (2010–Present): The feminist legal movement in India has expanded to include **LGBTQIA+ rights, transgender rights, and intersectional feminism**. The Supreme Court's judgment in **Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)** decriminalized homosexuality,³¹ while **Independent Thought v. Union of India (2017)** criminalized child marital rape under 18 years of age.³²

Feminist jurisprudence has evolved from demanding the right to vote to challenging deep-rooted social and legal structures that maintain gender hierarchies. It is not just a critique of law, but a transformative vision of justice that seeks to make law inclusive, empathetic, and representative of all people, especially the marginalized.

From Wollstonecraft to MacKinnon, from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Nirbhaya's legacy, the journey of feminist jurisprudence is long but impactful. It continues to shape law and society

²⁴ Flavia Agnes, *Law and Gender Inequality: The Politics of Women's Rights in India*, Oxford University Press, 1999.

²⁵ Amiya P. Sen, *Rammohun Roy: A Critical Biography*, Penguin Books India, 2012.

²⁶ Bengal Sati Regulation, 1829 (Regulation XVII of 1829); Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856.

²⁷ Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 104.

²⁸ Neera Desai and Maithreyi Krishnaraj, *Women and Society in India*, Ajanta Publications, 1987.

²⁹ Vishaka & Ors v. State of Rajasthan & Ors, AIR 1997 SC 3011.

³⁰ *Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act*, 2005, Act No. 43 of 2005.

³¹ *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India*, (2018) 10 SCC 1.

³² *Independent Thought v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 800.

by challenging inequality and redefining justice.³³

Schools of Legal Feminism: A Comprehensive Analysis

Feminist jurisprudence, often referred to as legal feminism, is a branch of legal theory that critically examines how law contributes to the social, political, and economic subordination of women. It highlights the patriarchal biases entrenched in legal systems and advocates for reforms to ensure gender justice. Over the decades, various schools of feminist jurisprudence have emerged, each offering a unique perspective on how gender inequality is perpetuated through law and how it can be addressed.

These schools—liberal, radical, cultural, postmodern, and intersectional feminism—do not always agree with one another, but they all aim to challenge the male-dominated narratives embedded within legal systems. Understanding these schools provides a richer and more nuanced view of the feminist legal struggle and its multifaceted dimensions.

1. Liberal Feminism

Core Belief: Equal treatment under the law.

Liberal feminism is perhaps the oldest and most widely recognized form of feminist jurisprudence. It emerged during the first wave of feminism, which was primarily concerned with obtaining equal legal rights for women, such as the right to vote, access to education, and employment opportunities.³⁴

Liberal feminists argue that the law must treat women and men equally, and any form of discrimination—whether in hiring, wages, property rights, or education—must be eradicated. They believe that most of the inequalities women face are due to outdated laws and cultural practices rather than the structure of the law itself.

Legal Focus:

- Equal pay for equal work

³³ Ratna Kapur, “Feminist Critiques of Law and Legal Reform in India,” in *Gender and Politics in India*, ed. Nivedita Menon, Oxford University Press, 1999.

³⁴ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 1792; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Declaration of Sentiments*, 1848.

- Anti-discrimination laws
- Access to education and public employment

Criticism: While liberal feminism has been successful in achieving many legal reforms, critics argue that it fails to address deeper power imbalances and does not account for differences in women's experiences based on race, class, or sexuality. It assumes a "one-size-fits-all" model of equality, which can exclude marginalized groups.

2. Radical Feminism

Core Belief: Law and society are inherently patriarchal.

Radical feminism emerged during the second wave of feminism and takes a more critical stance toward legal structures. It views patriarchy—male dominance over women—as the root cause of women's oppression. Radical feminists argue that the legal system itself is a tool used by men to maintain their power and control over women, especially over their bodies and reproductive choices.³⁵

Unlike liberal feminists, who seek reform within the existing legal framework, radical feminists believe that the law must be fundamentally transformed. They focus on issues like sexual violence, reproductive rights, and the objectification of women.

Legal Focus:

- Laws against marital rape
- Reproductive rights (e.g., access to abortion)
- Sexual harassment and pornography regulation

Criticism: Radical feminism has been criticized for being overly focused on gender to the exclusion of other forms of oppression. Some also argue that it can be too confrontational or essentialist, assuming a universal female experience that may not resonate with all women.

³⁵ Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, 1981.

3. Cultural Feminism

Core Belief: Women have distinct values and virtues that should be embraced.

Cultural feminism emerged as a response to both liberal and radical feminism. It asserts that men and women are fundamentally different—not just biologically, but also emotionally, psychologically, and socially. Instead of aiming to make women like men (as liberal feminism does), cultural feminism celebrates traditionally feminine traits such as empathy, nurturing, and cooperation.

Proponents argue that the legal system, which is built on masculine principles like competition and individualism, should be restructured to reflect feminine values.

Legal Focus:

- Family law reforms
- Childcare and maternity benefits
- Laws promoting community and cooperation

Criticism: Cultural feminism has been criticized for reinforcing gender stereotypes and essentializing women. By focusing on the supposed innate traits of women, it can inadvertently support the idea that women are suited only for specific roles like caregiving and domestic work.

4. Postmodern Feminism

Core Belief: There is no single "truth" about women's experiences.

Postmodern feminism challenges the idea of a universal female identity or experience. It argues that concepts like "woman," "gender," and "law" are social constructs influenced by language, power, and culture. Postmodern feminists are skeptical of grand narratives and prefer to focus on individual experiences and localized forms of oppression.³⁶

³⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, 1990.

They critique earlier feminist theories for attempting to speak for all women, especially when those voices come from privileged groups. Instead, they emphasize the need for multiple perspectives and reject the notion of fixed legal categories.

Legal Focus:

- Deconstruction of legal language
- Questioning legal objectivity
- Emphasizing narratives and lived experiences

Criticism: While intellectually stimulating, postmodern feminism is often seen as too abstract and lacking in practical solutions. Its rejection of universal values can make it difficult to build cohesive legal strategies for reform.

5. Intersectional Feminism

Core Belief: Women's experiences with law are shaped by multiple identities.

Intersectional feminism, a concept introduced by **Kimberlé Crenshaw**, acknowledges that women are not a homogenous group. It examines how race, class, caste, sexuality, disability, and other identities intersect to influence women's legal experiences. A Dalit woman in India or a Black woman in America may face forms of oppression that are invisible to mainstream feminist analysis.

Intersectional feminists argue that laws and policies must be inclusive of all women—not just those belonging to dominant social groups. They also critique how mainstream legal systems often ignore marginalized voices.³⁷

Legal Focus:

- Caste- and race-based discrimination
- LGBTQIA+ rights

³⁷ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989.

- Inclusive policies for disabled and tribal women

Criticism: Intersectional feminism is widely accepted, but some argue that its complexity makes legal reform harder. By focusing on multiple identities, it may lack a unified vision or strategy.

The schools of legal feminism offer diverse approaches to understanding and combating gender inequality within legal systems. While liberal feminism focuses on equal rights, radical feminism demands structural change. Cultural feminism highlights the importance of traditionally feminine values, postmodern feminism questions universal truths, and intersectional feminism ensures that all women's voices are heard. Together, these schools enrich feminist jurisprudence by offering multiple lenses through which to critique and reconstruct the law. For feminist legal theory to be truly transformative, it must draw from all these schools, adapting their insights to suit the complex realities of gender justice in a global and intersectional world.

Feminist Jurisprudence in the Indian Context

While feminist jurisprudence in the West has a longer intellectual history, India presents a unique context where constitutional provisions have created a legal framework supportive of women's equality.³⁸ Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39, and 42 of the Indian Constitution lay the groundwork for legal protection and affirmative action for women.

- **Article 14** guarantees equality before the law.
- **Article 15** prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex.
- **Article 15(3)** allows the state to establish specific measures for women and children.
- **Article 16** ensures equal opportunity in public employment.
- **Article 39** demands that women receive equal compensation and health protection.

³⁸ B. Sivaramayya, *Feminism and Law*, Eastern Book Company, 1999.

- **Article 42** requires maternity leave and fair and decent working conditions.³⁹

Legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon praised the Indian constitutional framework for acknowledging sex as a structural disadvantage, which Western constitutions often fail to do.⁴⁰

Legal Framework and Policy Support in India

India has passed many laws to protect the rights of women:

- **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**
- **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961**
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**
- **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961**
- **Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005**

These laws deal with issues of livelihood, bodily integrity, property rights, motherhood, and workplace equality.

Moreover, institutional mechanisms such as the **National Commission for Women (NCW)** and affirmative policies like the **73rd Constitutional Amendment** (reserving one-third seats for women in local governance) further reinforce feminist jurisprudence in action.

Judicial Contributions to Feminist Jurisprudence

Feminist jurisprudence has been significantly shaped and applied by the Indian judiciary:

1. **Gita Hariharan v. Reserve Bank of India (1999)⁴¹**: Challenged guardianship rules that prioritized fathers over mothers. The Supreme Court invoked international norms

³⁹ Constitution of India, 1950.

⁴⁰ Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Are Women Human? And Other International Dialogues*, Harvard University Press, 2006.

⁴¹ Gita Hariharan v. RBI, (1999) 2 SCC 228.

like CEDAW and emphasized equal parental rights, though it fell short of automatic recognition of maternal guardianship.

2. **Air India v. Nargis Mirza (1981)**⁴²: The Court invalidated service rules that discriminated against air hostesses on grounds of age, marriage, or pregnancy, holding that such policies violated fundamental rights.
3. **Municipal Corporation of Delhi v. Female Workers (2000)**⁴³: Extended maternity benefits to daily wage female workers, aligning domestic law with Article 11 of CEDAW.
4. **Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan (1997)**⁴⁴: A landmark judgment that laid down guidelines to combat **sexual harassment at the workplace**, in the absence of legislation. The judgment emphasized the duty of employers to prevent and address such issues.
5. **Anuj Garg v. Hotel Association of India (2008)**⁴⁵: The Court struck down provisions restricting women's employment in bars, rejecting outdated notions of "protection" and promoting **individual autonomy**.
6. **Mahila Utkarsh Trust v. Union of India (2014)**⁴⁶: The Gujarat High Court declared that restrictions on night shifts for women under the **Factories Act** violated fundamental rights.

These cases reflect the courts' increasing commitment to upholding women's rights and incorporating international gender justice standards into Indian jurisprudence.

Challenges and Way Forward

The application of feminist jurisprudence in India is beset by a number of obstacles, notwithstanding constitutional and legislative frameworks.

⁴² Air India v. Nargis Mirza, AIR 1981 SC 1829.

⁴³ Municipal Corporation of Delhi v. Female Workers, (2000) 3 SCC 224.

⁴⁴ Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan, AIR 1997 SC 3011.

⁴⁵ Anuj Garg v. Hotel Association of India, (2008) 3 SCC 1.

⁴⁶ Mahila Utkarsh Trust v. Union of India, 2014 SCC OnLine Guj 7914.

These consist of:

- Continuing patriarchal views in the formulation and application of laws.
- The underrepresentation of women in the judiciary and legal profession.
- Top-down legal reforms that frequently do not involve women; conservative or male-dominated institutions' opposition to gender-sensitive legislation.

In his observations, Justice Dipak Misra highlights the necessity of removing long-standing restrictions and acknowledging women as independent legal entities with the capacity to challenge conventions, exercise their rights, and influence legislation.

In India, feminist jurisprudence needs to advance from only establishing nominal equality to attaining genuine justice. Intersectionality, dignity, consent, and physical autonomy must all be ingrained in laws and their interpretations in order for them to not only exist but also to speak to lived realities.

Conclusion

Feminist jurisprudence is not just a critique but a constructive legal philosophy that seeks to transform law from an instrument of oppression into a tool of empowerment. In India, although the constitutional promises are strong, actual realization remains partial and uneven. The journey from legal equality to substantive justice for women is ongoing and demands continued judicial sensitivity, legislative activism, and grassroots participation. As Catherine MacKinnon noted, once sex equality is conceptualized and implemented as a unifying principle, it will connect the fragmented pieces of equality law into a coherent, transformative legal system. Feminist jurisprudence holds the promise of such transformation—toward a legal system that acknowledges, accommodates, and celebrates the diverse realities of women.

Feminist jurisprudence helps us see that justice should not be one-size-fits-all. A truly fair legal system must recognize and respond to gender-based experiences and challenges. By rethinking law through a gendered lens, we move closer to achieving real equality and justice for all.

Feminist jurisprudence also examines structural inequalities in areas like family law, property

rights, and workplace laws. In many cases, the law has ignored issues like domestic violence, unequal pay, and inheritance rights that deeply affect women's lives. Even when laws are passed to protect women, their enforcement is often weak due to gender bias.

Feminist jurisprudence, both globally and in India, has emerged as a vital critique of the law's deep-rooted patriarchal structures. Across its varied schools—liberal, radical, cultural, postmodern, and intersectional—feminist legal thought has challenged the traditional notions of objectivity, neutrality, and universality in legal systems. Globally, it has exposed how law often upholds male dominance, whether through exclusionary rights, inadequate protections against violence, or gendered economic inequalities. In India, feminist jurisprudence has evolved through unique historical phases—from colonial-era reforms like the abolition of Sati to contemporary movements addressing sexual violence, workplace harassment, and intersectional discrimination. Landmark judgments like *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan*, *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*, and *Joseph Shine v. Union of India* reflect a growing judicial sensitivity toward gender justice, even as challenges persist.

The integration of feminist perspectives has led to significant legislative and constitutional reforms, yet societal resistance and patriarchal attitudes continue to hinder full realization of gender equality. A truly inclusive legal system must recognize the multiple identities and experiences of women, transcend formal equality, and work toward substantive justice. In both global and Indian contexts, feminist jurisprudence remains not just a theory but a necessary tool for democratic and human rights-oriented legal transformation.