



## Emergence of New 'Woman' in The Literature - A Crusade To Emancipation.

### KEYWORDS

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**ABSTRACT** *The new generation of women have everything in their favour – spirit, intelligence and above all, the freedom to choose. The picture that emerges is of a self-reliant, emancipated and happy individual, intelligent, confident and assertive. Women were beginning to shed to their inhibitions : learning to say, where they felt convinced 'no' to the social constrictions and traditions.*

### INTRODUCTION:

It is necessary to understand the term, "NEW WOMAN" & the Social, Political & Psychological conditions that led to her creation. Broadly speaking, the 'new women' is one who, shorn of her "Feminine mystique", is aware of herself as an individual, she is free from her traditional, social and moral constructions and is able to live with a heightened sense of dignity and individuality.

The new women, then, is the product of a new economic order in which women casts aside her "invisibility" comes out of the metaphorical purdah and avails of the opportunities provided by education, enfranchisement and employment. She, with her made counterpart, struggles for achievement in the professional and economic spheres, and deconstructs the image of a submissive, repressed and self-effacing being. The picture that emerges is of a self-reliant, emancipated and happy individual, a person, sexually, uninhibited, intelligent, confident and assertive.

The "New woman was a feminist ideal that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> & had a profound influence on feminism well into the twentieth. The term 'New women' was popularized by British American writer Henry James to describe the growth in the number of feminist, educated, independent career woman in Europe and the United States. The new woman pushed the limits set by male-dominated society, especially as modeled in the plays Henrik Ibsen. "The New Woman-sprang fully armed from Ibsen's brain. Henry James's presented the 'New Woman'-a figure who was represented in the heroines of his novels, such as Isabel Archer in "The portrait of a lady" & Daisy Miller in the novella 'Daisy Miller'.

According to historian, Ruth Bordin, the term new woman was intended by him to characterize American expatriates living in Europe: women of affluence & sensitivity, who despite or perhaps because of their wealth exhibited an independent spirit & were accustomed to acting on their own. So, new woman always referred to women who exercised control over their own lives be it personal, social or economic.

Before considering the emergence of the new woman, it is better to know the term, "new" which has uncertain grounds. Who is this female who has captured the contemporary writers? Is the new woman one who, in a given period, does not follow the patriarchal patterns of social behavior? From one angle, then, even the sista of the Ramayana could be called 'new' for her times because instead

of serving her in-laws devotedly & selflessly in the absence of their sons, she insists on accompanying her husband. She has broken the social norms.

So, though the 'new' woman is conceptualized as a modern woman, she is not exactly 'modern' because the concept of modernity changes with times & the social milieu, equality with men, asserting her own personality and insisting upon her own rights as a woman.

A new woman attempts to evolve a pattern of her own thinking process & does not blindly toe the line set for her by the male-dominated order. In one sense, she is a rebel, but she is also conscious of herself as a 'being'. She is aware of her strength as a female individual. She becomes a quester & a female hero, able to take responsibility of her own 'self'.

The new woman is thus not only a sociological construct or a psychological projection, but a combination of the psycho-socio-historic-cultural process. In literature, she is not an intruder from the western feminist moot, reminiscent of the feminist anger & a reincarnation of theoretical constructs. She is an individual with capacity to reflect on her own position & speak for herself. She not only has economic independence but also psychological strength to stand on her own.

The concept of the new woman is located specifically within the experience of feminism. In the western literature, women started to move out of their invisibility & silence in the 19<sup>th</sup> when Ibsen's Nora in 'A Doll's House' provided a model for the new woman by saying "no no" to the male power structure. Nora transforms from a self-effacing child woman into an assertive person when she realizes that she has remained a child too long & that the male-dominated society has been unjust to her "self".

**The new woman was a feminist ideal which emerged in the final decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> c in Europe & North America in reaction to the role as characterized by the so-called cult of domesticity, ascribed to women in the Victorian era. Certain characteristics were seen as pertinent to the new ideal. By general consent, a 'new woman' was supposed:**

1. To have received an adequate education & to be able to use her knowledge wisely.
2. To earn money & thus be "financially independent"
3. To participate in political discussion & decision-making.
4. To decide herself if, when & whom she wants to marry

- & how many children she want to have.
5. To show outward signs of being different.
  6. Generally, to defy convention & social norms in order to create a better world for Woman.

Come all you false young men  
That leaves me here to complain  
For the grass that is now trodden  
underfoot  
In time it will rise again.

**An Early English Ballad**

**REFERENCE**

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