**Introduction to Political Scinece:**

Politics exists everywhere. It is all-pervading and as old as human beings. Politics prevails in every sphere of human life. Whether one likes or not virtually no one is completely beyond the reach of some kind of political system.

Political science is a social science and like its sister subjects it revolves around man and his social (Political) environment. Being one of the oldest social sciences its nature and scope of the study have undergone several changes over the centuries.  Political Science first began with the Greeks. The term ‘Politics’ is derived from the Greek word**‘Polis’** which means ‘city-states’ (Polity meaning Government, politeia meaning Constitution) and each city in those days was an independent state, a principality in its own right. E.g. Athens, Sparta, Corinth etc.

Aristotle is regarded as **“the father of Political science”** on account of his far reaching and permanent contribution to the field of politics. He called politics the Master Science because politics determines the environment within which every person will organize his life.  No one can escape from the parameters set by politics. In his famous book ‘Politics’ Aristotle wrote , “ Man is by nature a Political Animal and he who is by nature or by accident is without state is either above humanity or below it.” Politics is the control room of all human activities.

**Definitions of Politics or Political Science:**

The word politics has different interpretations. From Plato to Easton it has been interpreted in different ways. Definitions of politics vary according to the variety of activities that have been considered political from time to time. Though the study of politics existed in some form since the time of Aristotle, the discipline was indistinguishable from moral philosophy and the study of society in general until early 19th century. Its independence as a field of study was established only in the later part of 19th century.

**Early Definitions or Traditional View of Politics:**

According to the traditional political scientist from the early part of 20th century such as J W Garner, Henry Sidgwick, R G Gettel and others Politics deals mainly with study of state and government or related institutions.

**R G Gettel** defined politics as “the study of the state in the past, present and future, of political organization and political function, of political institutions and political theories.”

According to **Laski**“the study of politics concerns itself with the life of man in relation to organized states.”

According to **Garner**, “Political science begins and ends with state.”

According to **Leacock**, “Political science deals with government.”

Thus from above definitions it is clear that the traditional view of politics was narrow, static and limited and included only the study of state and government, its structure and organisation etc.

**Modern view of Political Science:**

**1) Power view**

The dawn of the 20th century saw fresh ground being covered by political scientist such as Laswell, Powell, Merriam, Morgenthau, weber etc. A more realistic analysis of political activity is contained in the definitions of politics in terms of power.

**Harold Laswell** defining politics in empirical terms maintains that politics is the study of the shaping and sharing of power. The fundamental issue in politics according to him is who gets what, when and how?

**Robert Dahl** holds that, “politics involves to a significant extent power, rule or authority.”

According to **Shaw and Pierce** politics is the struggle for power to make authoritative decisions for the whole society.

Definitions emphasizing power focused attention on the fact that functions are more important than forms or structures. Power is indeed a central idea of politics and examining this element takes political enquiry into the core of the matter.

**2) Legitimacy of the government:**

As the power view of politics was found to be defective and inadequate, attempts were made to modify it by an appeal to the legitimacy of the government.  It was said that only legitimate power would become the basis for the acceptance of the government. David Easton assigned a moral function to the exercise of power by asking for the “authoritative allocation of values for the society.” This view also suggests that modern political analysis is concerned with political system. Demands are made on the system and they are processed and policy decisions are made. This has to be done under the authority of the government i.e. policies have to emanate from legitimate or rightful sources.

**3) Controversy and Conflict:**

Another important element in the study of politics is controversy and conflict. Vermon von dyke observes, “Politics consists of struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues.” Conflict is basic to politics. Therefore conflict resolution or reconciliation of antagonistic interest becomes essential in political studies.

**4) Consensus & General Arrangements:**

The study of politics also includes the element of consensus and general arrangements of society. Politics is necessitated because diversities in social environment cause conflicting demands on the common good. “If men were angels no government would be necessary.” Governments and political system act as mediator to generate consensus in the society.

**5) Internationalism:**

Another view is that politics is concerned with internationalism. The study of internationalism is necessary for world peace, and to have modern welfare state.

**6) Behavioral approach:**

Almond Powell and other modern American writers have studied political science by sociological, anthropological and psychological methods and criticised the traditional theory of political science on the grounds of parochialism and formalism. Their contention is that the political theorist in the past concentrated mainly on the state, government, institutions and their legal norms, rules, regulations or political ideas and ideologies. They did not concern themselves with the performance of institutions, their interaction and political behavior of man. This marked the beginning of Behavioural approach in politics and later also adopted a comparative studies of different political systems across continents.

**Changing nature of Politics: Is Political science a Science or Art?**

Whether politics can be considered a science has been a long standing controversy. Aristotle adopted a scientific approach to the study of the discipline. He separated the study of politics form ethics and law, examined and compared constitutions (158) and classified governments into meaningful categories. On the other hand James Bryce, Charles Beard and Harold Laski are of the opinion that politics is not a science. It is said that the nomenclature Political Science owes its origin to William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft.

Science is systematised body of knowledge about any phenomenon which is governed by its own laws. Science is based on collection of data, generalisations, accuracy and verification or experimentations. Let’s try to test political science on these grounds.

**Political Science is not a Science:**

**1) Lacks Precise and Uniform Definitions:**

A Science has a set of its own terms and their precise and standard definitions.  Political science lacks precise definitions, terminologies and methods. There is no general agreement among political scientist regarding these. Methods and principles of political science are not universally acceptable and applicable. E.g. terms like freedom, democracy, nationalism do not have uniform definitions. They can be and have been defined and interpreted in different ways.

**2) Lacks Investigation and generalistions:**

Political science also lacks scientific method of investigations, observations and generalisations. It is possible to obtain exact results in science which is not the case with political science. E.g. Democracy is regarded as the best form of government by many but in reality it is not a success in countries where there are ignorant and incompetent masses.

**3) Lacks Experimentations:**

Another difficulty in political science is that it not possible to have laboratory experiments in political science. Political researcher has to deal with human beings. The habits, sentiments, moods, and temperament of people differ from place to place and from time to time. They cannot be controlled as well under any circumstance. E.g. electoral behavior of voter is determined by various factors such as caste, class, religion etc. No government can claim that its people will react in a particular way to a policy or programme announced.

**4) Lacks Objectivity:**

While there is objectivity in the study of physical sciences, it is lacking in studying problems related to state and government. A completely impartial, indifferent, unbiased attitude may not be possible to analyse political problems and questions. A political scientist has to deal with human beings in relation to sate, society and government and in such relations the element of subjectivity is most conspicuous. Views of political thinkers are bound to be prejudiced or coloured on account of racial, religious, linguistic or nationalistic factors.

 **5) Lacks Predictability:**

Is is nearly impossible for a political thinker to predict the future course of events. In fact events take course quite contrary to the expectations of the observer. This happens because politics studies human behaviour and social constructs which are vulnerable to change. Constantly changing socio-economic and political situations restrict a political observer form making predictions.

Thus it was rightly observed by **Burke** that, “ there is no science of politics any more than there is science of aesthetics- for the line of politics are not the lines of mathematics. They are matter incapable of exact definitions.”

**Political Science is a Science:**

1) If by the term science we mean a systematized body of knowledge political science can certainly be called as a science. Dr. Finer rightly says that, “we can be prophets of probable if not seers of certain” political science has been able develop a systematised body of knowledge on broad terms like state, government etc. after due observation, comparison and some sort of experimentation.

2) It is possible to conduct some experiments through which political scientist can benefit. It is well known that Aristotle based his ‘Politics’ on his study of the working of 158 constitutions. Likewise, Lord Bryce compared the working of democracy in various countries and then came to conclusions with regard to relative merits and demerits of democracy. B N Rau constitutional advisor to the government of India also made a comparative study of various constitutions and presented a report to the constituent assembly.

3) It is true that there is no consensus among experts regarding the method, principles and conclusions of political science. But political science is a dynamic study of living subject-matter. It deals with man and his institutions. As man is dynamic, the same is true of the institutions created by him. The nature of man changes with the changing conditions.

The view of Lord Bryce is that political science is a science, although it is undeveloped and incomplete. Prof. R N Gilchrist believes that general laws can be deduced from given material and those are useful in the actual problems of the government.

**Scope of Political Science**

There is no unanimity among scholars regarding the scope of political science. There is lack of precision in the definitions and meanings of political science and that creates confusion regarding the precise boundaries of the subject.

According to Willoughby, political science has to deal with three great topics: State, Government and Law. The view of Prof. Goodnow is that political science divided itself into three distinct parts: the expression of the state will, the content of the state will as expressed and the execution of the state will. At the UNESCO conference held in September 1948, distinguished political scientists from the various parts of the world marked out the subject-matter of political science which included 1) Political theory 2) Political Institutions 3) Political Dynamiics and 4) International Relations.

As the importance of political science is increasing day by day , its scope is also increasing and becoming wider. Thus in general scope of political science includes following things:

**1) Study of State and Government:**

Political science is the science of state and government. It deals with the nature and formation of the state and tries to understand various forms and functions of the government. Scholars like Bluntschli, Garris and others believe that the scope of political science is restricted to the study of the state alone. Scholars like Leacock attach more importance to the study of government that to the state.

Political science makes a thorough investigation into the origin of the state. It also deals with the elements of the state, sovereignty and law, ends and functions of state, the rights and obligations of the individual, political institutions, forms of government, elections, political parties, public opinion, local bodies and international bodies etc. it studies state as it is, as it has been and as it ought to be.

**2) Study of Political Theory:**

Political theory is a major branch of political science. On the basis of the political ideas or thoughts of political thinkers, political theory formulates definitions of the concepts like democracy, liberty, equality, ground of political obligation etc. It deals with some rudimentary concepts of political science. Speculations of political philosophers and other ideologies are put together in one volume which is given the title political theory.

**3) Study of Political Institutions:**

The study of political institutions includes a study of constitutions and comparative governments. It deals with the nature of different political institutions, including government, explains their merits and demerits, their structure and working and arrives at different conclusions on comparative basis. The study of public administration and local governments may also be included under this heading.

**4) Study of Political Dynamics:**

The study of political dynamics has become important in the twentieth century. It means the current forces at work in government and politics. It covers a wide range of and includes political parties, public opinion, pressure groups, lobbies etc. A scientific study of the working of these political dynamics helps us to explain the political behavior of individuals and groups. The study in this field is often done in collaboration with other social sciences like sociology, anthropology and psychology etc. Human nature is not static but dynamic. Hence the study of political dynamics becomes extremely essential to understand changing concepts.

**5) Study of adjustment of individual with the state:**

It is interesting to study the nature of relationship between individual and state and to examine how man adjusts within the society. Man is the root of politics. The state guarantees certain rights and liberties to its citizens and also imposes certain reasonable restrictions on them. Maximum state intervention can lead to loss of liberty and complete absence of the state intervention can lead to a state of anarchy (Chaos). It is a difficult problem to adjust and reconcile the authority of the state with the individual liberty.

**6) Study of international relations and international law:**

It includes wide range of topics like diplomacy, international politics, international law and organisations like UN.  With technological advancement and progress in human knowledge the world has come closed and become like one family. Human society today is viewed from a world perspective. Therefore the study of international relations today has become an independent discipline.

**7) Study of disagreements and their resolution:**

Disagreement is at the root of any political process on account of conflicting interests, contradictory view and opinions, socio-economic inequalities and scarce resource available to resolve these issues. Hence politics is all about making choices and arriving at policy decisions suitable to the broad demands and needs of people in the society. Elections are said to be the most effective means of resolving conflicts in any society. Apart from it Legislature, Judiciary, Pressure groups also are some other means to resolve political conflicts at public level.

Thus political science over period of time has covered wide range of subjects under its scope. Beginning from traditional study based on state, government, law and institutions to modern study focusing on process, political dynamics, political socialization, political cultures, political development and informal structures like pressure groups etc. It is not that traditional boundaries in the study of political science have been obliterated they merely have been extended to give sharpness and depth hitherto unknown.

**Approaches to the study of Political Science**

**Introduction:**

Political Theory emerged out of the observation and the analysis of politics in different places and situations. The need for laws, procedures and authority was felt universally and they were created and applied with some degree of success, consistencies were observed, alternatives were thought and theories emerged. There was always a gap between theory and practice, desirable and the actual, the ideal and the possible. Various approaches have emerged to the study of political science such as:

1) Normative Approach

2) Empirical- Behavioural Approach

3) Feminist Approach

4) Post-Behavioural

5) Plural and Neo-Plural Approach

6) Marxist Approach

7) Green Approach etc.

**Normative Approach:**

The oldest approach to the study of politics initiated by Greek philosophers like Plato & Aristotle is known as the normative approach. The normative approach is rooted in theory and oriented towards ideals and norms. The philosophers set the standards through intuition and logical deduction. They tried to arrive at the ideals that would establish the ‘good life’ which was seen as the goal of political activity. Norms such as Liberty, Equality and Justice were seen as essential conditions of good life and their dimensions and ways of realization were prescribed by the philosophers. The study of politics became the study of norms that will establish the best order of things in an organized community. Hence this approach is known as the normative approach. It is also called as the philosophical approach, Legal approach, Formal Approach, historical approach and institutional approach.

**Significant Features of Normative Approach:**

**1) Value-loaded Approach:**

Normative approach is ethically oriented; it deals with the good, the right and the just. The ideals cannot but be formulated in ethical terms. It was loaded with values of what is desirable and what is to be detested. Normative approach suggests certain norms, values or ideals or the ethical dimension of politics which ought to be realized. It aims to attain what is desirable or ideal. It is loaded with some universal values like Liberty, Equality, Justice, Fraternity, the right or the good. There for E H Carr considers this approach as Utopian (Unreal).

**2) Philosophical Deductive Method:**

Traditional political scientist adopted a philosophical deductive method for political enquiry. It implies drawing conclusions from some general, universal propositions which are supposed to be true. Thinkers like Plato and Aristotle began their political enquiry with some self-evident, universal assumptions from which they deduced certain conclusions. Their attempt is hence described as ‘abstract theorising’, or ‘a priori thinking’ or ‘philosophizing rather than practicing’.

**3) Prescriptive Approach:**

Normative approach is also called as a prescriptive approach than a descriptive approach.  Normative study is an evaluative study of principles and actions. Concepts and theories were formulated as the parameters for evolving institutions and instruments of governing. It gives less importance to description of the reality and more to prescription of values and ideals.

Important thinkers who contributed to the normative approach:

**Plato** in his classic work ‘republic’ talks about an ideal state which is governed by a ‘Philosopher King’. According to him a philosopher king is a person possessing unique and unparalleled virtues who only can guarantee highest and best form of justice to the people.

**Aristotle** combined in him element of both a philosopher and an empiricist. He made a comparative study of around 158 constitutions. He made value judgments on forms of government and laws. He prescribed good and perverted forms of governments.

Apart from these Greek philosophers some modern thinkers also have contributed to the fund of normative thought. **John Locke**propounded the theory of Natural Rights and government by consent as the solution for tyranny of rulers. He developed the social contract theory where he suggests that basis of any government has to be the consent and good of people.

The French philosopher **Rousseau** conceived of ‘General Will’ as the ideal will as it ought to be, to which all individuals must conform to realize their own freedom. He was attempting reconciliation between individual liberty and state authority.

The German idealist **Hegel**deified the state; according to him state was ‘March of God on Earth’. He prescribed that individual self is to be sacrificed for the better self: the state.

**Criticism:**

1) It ignores to contemplate on ‘what is’ in its inclination to study ‘what ought’ to be.

2) It is a value-laden approach which sometimes moves away from reality and turns out to be utopia. It is based on some preferences, prejudices and personal judgments.

3) It is a subjective area of study.

4) It lacks inter-disciplinary approach.

**Empirical Approach**

**Introduction:**

Right down to the end of the nineteenth century politics was largely, if not, exclusively seen as a normative discipline mostly forming part of moral philosophy. The beginning of empiricism began early in the 20th century. But until the post-world war II period it was not an acknowledged approach to intellectual enquiry in politics. The change from the normative to empirical approach was a turn from ideals to facts, from value-loaded prescription to value neutral description and from institutional to behavioral study.

Arthur F Bentley, sociologist at the Chicago University published a book ‘The Process of Government’ in 1908. He explained the group basis of all political behavior. In the same year Graham Wallas published Human Nature in Politics, bringing out the psychological dimensions of political actions.

New Aspects of Politics (1925) by Charles Merriam (Intellectual God-father of Behavioural Approach), the Science and Methods of Politics (1927) by George E Catlin, Quantitative Methods in Politics (1928) by Stuart Rice and Psychology and Politics (1930) by Harold Laswell were the most notable publications of this era that gave rise to the empirical dimension in political studies.

**Hallmarks of Empirical Approach:**

**1) Scientific and Empirical Tools:**

In the post-world war II period the newly emerged states copied democratic system form their colonial masters which were later found to be inappropriate to suit in their socio-economic and cultural milieu. The empiricists developed appropriate tools for the purpose of political enquiry such as political culture, criteria of modernization, and indicators for development and categories for analysis. Therefore empirical scientist introduced scientific techniques such as observation, quantification, measurements, calculations, surveys, hypothesis testing and use of aggregate data into political studies and thus aimed to give operational meaning to political concepts.

**2) Value Free Approach:**

Empirical approach divorces itself from values and focuses on facts. It is a value neutral and a scientific approach to study and frees politics from moral, ethical and philosophical values of life.

**3) Focus on Behavioural Aspect:**

In place of the legal institutional study hitherto followed, the emphasis in empirical approach now was on political behavior. The focus is on man, not ideals. Politics was concerned with now how man exercised authority, persuaded and coerced, expressed his demands shared and compromised with his fellows. Politics was more concerned with the motivations, prejudices, actions and policies, with voting behavior, activism, apathy and indifference.

**4) Inter-disciplinary approach:**

Empirical approach also clarified the link between politics and other disciplines. Behavior in politics cannot be studied in isolation, because people behave in particular ways because of attitudes and dispositions developed through group life. Therefore empirical approach emphasized on the close link between political science and other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and economics.

**5) Emphasis on wide range of areas:**

Thinkers like David Easton developed system model (Input- Conversion- Output- Feedback) to study political phenomenon. On the other hand Arthur Bentley and David Truman focused on the significance of groups and their influence on the working of the state. This led to the study of pressure groups as a separate topic in politics. Empirical approach widened the scope of political studies by including Power analysis, Decision Making Analysis and Role Analysis (Almond’s Structural-functional Approach) into its stride. It also aimed at recommending policy on the basis of the study made.

**Criticism:**

1) Empiricists believe that an empirical science of politics based on facts alone is possible. But the normative theorists believe that politics cannot be and should not be purely scientific. It cannot be totally value-neutral. Because, a) values, interests and curiosity of the investigator influence his choices of topics. b) The prescientific knowledge not requiring any proofs has to be accepted. c) Biases of the investigator cannot be easily kept out.

2) Empiricist has no criteria for relevance. In striving for neutrality and objectivity they have gone in for a new complicated ridiculous jargon. In an attempt to eschew values they reject all ground for evaluation and treat all values as equal.

3) Study of politics should have a purpose behind it. It should enable us to act rightly, to choose the best, to make decisions about how best to live with fellowmen. This aspect is completely ignored by the empirical approach.

**Feminist Approach**

**Introduction:**

Feminism is a social theory which advocates equal rights and social status of women.  It is often used for the ‘Empowerment of Women’, championing the cause of women’s rights and privileges and gender equality. Feminists hold as stated by Catherine Mackinnon that “Women have been unjustly unequal to men because of the social meaning of their bodies.” Feminist thinkers ruthlessly criticize the established theories of state on the grounds that they ignore the subjugation of women, and ignore gender differences in structures of political power at all levels.

Feminism as a political force became popular throughout the western world, especially in USA and UK in the form of demand for political rights (Voting Rights) of women. It was a struggle against unjustified supremacy of male over women in the human society.

Feminist activists campaign for women's rights – such as property, and voting rights, also promoting bodily integrity, autonomy and reproductive rights for women. Feminist campaigns have changed societies, particularly in the West, by achieving women's suffrage, gender neutrality, equal pay for women, reproductive rights for women (including access to contraceptives and abortion), and the right to enter into contracts and own property. Feminists have worked to protect women and girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. They have also advocated for workplace rights, including maternity leave, and against forms of discrimination against women. Feminism is mainly focused on women's issues, but because feminism seeks gender equality, some feminists argue that men's liberation is a necessary part of feminism, and that men are also harmed by sexism and gender roles.

**Various brands/types of Feminist Approach:**

**Liberal Approach:**

This approach is universally recognized as the most reasonable, fair, just and effective approach. It is deeply rooted in the philosophy of liberalism that highlights the capital significance of certain political values such as Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, political rights of women in representative democracy and certain fundamental rights of women. Liberal feminism is a form of feminism that argues that equality for women can be achieved through legal means and social reform. Liberal feminism leans towards an equality or sameness argument with men. Liberal feminism conceives of politics in individualistic terms and looks to reform present practices in society, rather than advocating for a wholesale revolutionary change. Feminist writers associated with this tradition include early feminist Mary Wollstonecraft and second-wave feminist Betty Friedan. Liberal feminists are often seen among other types of feminists as conservative and overwhelmingly white and middle class.

**Marxist Approach:**

This approach understands gender oppression and atrocities of men over women in the context of historically evolved socio-eco-political order

**Socialist feminism**

Socialist feminism focuses upon both the public and private spheres of a woman's life. It argues that liberation can only be achieved by working to end both the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression. It broadens Marxist feminism’s argument that capitalism is the source of all women’s oppression. It incorporates radical feminism's theory of the role of gender and the patriarchy. Socialist feminism confronts the common root of sexism, racism and classism: the determination of a life of oppression or privilege based on accidents of birth or circumstances. Socialist feminism is an inclusive way of creating social change.

**Cultural feminism:**

Cultural feminism believes that a female nature or female essence is essential to society. It opines that there are fundamental personality and psychological differences between men and women, and that women's differences are not only unique, but superior. This theory of feminism takes note of the biological differences between men and women - such as menstruation and childbirth and extrapolates from this the idea of an inherent "women's culture." For example, the belief that "women are kinder and gentler than men," prompts cultural feminists call for an infusion of women's culture into the male-dominated world, which would presumably result in less violence and fewer wars. Cultural feminism seeks to improve the relationship between the sexes and often cultures at large by celebrating women's special qualities, ways, and experiences, often believing that the "woman's way" is the better way, or that the culture discussed is overly masculine and requires balance from feminine perspectives.

**Radical feminism:**

Radical feminism is a branch of feminism (1960’s and 70’s) that views women's oppression (which radical feminists refer to as "patriarchy") as a basic system of power upon which human relationships in society are arranged. It seeks to challenge this arrangement by rejecting standard gender roles and male oppression. The term radical in radical feminism (from Latin) is used as an adjective meaning of or pertaining to the root or going to the root. Radical feminists locate the root cause of women's oppression in patriarchal gender relations, as opposed to legal systems (liberal feminism) or class conflict (like socialist or Marxist feminism).

**Eco-feminism:**

Ecofeminism is a social and political movement which unites environmentalism and feminism. Eco-feminists argue that a relationship exists between the oppression of women and the degradation of nature. Eco-feminists  are concerned with connections between sexism and the domination of nature. They are also concerned with racism and other characteristics of social inequality. Some current work emphasizes that the capitalist and patriarchal system is based on triple domination of the "Southern people" (those people who live in the Third World, the majority of which are south of the First World), women, and nature. This is sometimes referred to as global north and south.

**Three waves of Feminism:**

**First-wave feminism** was a period of activity during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In the UK and US, it focused on the promotion of equal contract, marriage, parenting, and property rights for women. By the end of the nineteenth century, activism focused primarily on gaining political power, particularly the right of women's suffrage, though some feminists were active in campaigning for women's sexual, reproductive, and economic rights as well.

Women's suffrage was achieved in Britain's Australasian colonies at the close of the 19th century, with the self-governing colonies of New Zealand and South Australia granting women the right to vote in 1893 and 1895 respectively. It was followed by Australia permitting women to stand for parliamentary office and granting women the right to vote.

In Britain the Suffragettes and the Suffragists campaigned for the women's vote, and in 1918 the Representation of the People Act was passed granting the right to vote to women over the age of 30 who owned houses. In 1928 this was extended to all women over twenty-one. In the U.S., notable leaders of this movement included Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony, who each campaigned for the abolition of slavery prior to championing women's right to vote. These women were influenced by the Quaker theology of spiritual equality, which asserts that men and women are equal under God. In the United States, first-wave feminism is considered to have ended with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (1919), granting women the right to vote in all states.

**Second wave feminism**is largely concerned with issues of equality other than suffrage, such as ending discrimination. Second-wave feminists see women's cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked and encourage women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and as reflecting sexist power structures. The feminist activist and author Carol Hanisch coined the slogan "The Personal is Political", which became synonymous with the second wave.

In the early 1990s in the USA, **third-wave feminism**began as a response to perceived failures of the second wave and to the backlash against initiatives and movements created by the second wave. Third-wave feminism seeks to challenge or avoid what it deems the second wave's essentialist definitions of femininity, which, they argue, over-emphasize the experiences of upper middle-class white women. Third-wave feminists often focus on "micro-politics" and challenge the second wave's paradigm as to what is, or is not, good for women, and tend to use a post-structuralist interpretation of gender and sexuality.

The term **post-feminism** is used to describe a range of viewpoints reacting to feminism since the 1980s. While not being "anti-feminist", post-feminists believe that women have achieved second wave goals while being critical of third wave feminist goals. The term was first used to describe a backlash against second-wave feminism, but it is now a label for a wide range of theories that take critical approaches to previous feminist discourses and includes challenges to the second wave's ideas. Other post-feminists say that feminism is no longer relevant to today's society. Amelia Jones has written that the post-feminist texts which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s portrayed second-wave feminism as a monolithic entity.