

Topic - Critical Analysis of Mary Wollstonecraft's:
A vindication of rights of woman.

⇒ Introduction:-

⇒ A vindication of the rights of woman; with structures on political, and moral subjects 1792 written by the 18th Century British proto-feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, is one of the earliest works of feminist philosophy.

⇒ A vindication of the rights of woman was written in 1791 and published in 1792, with a second edition appearing that same year.

⇒ In it, Wollstonecraft responds to those educational and political theorists of the 18th Century who believed that women should not receive a rational education.

⇒ A vindication of the rights of woman was a ground breaking work of literature which still resonates in feminism and human rights movement of today.

⇒ The book is divided into thirteen chapters, in which Wollstonecrafts addressed topics such as the importance of education, woman equality, treating woman with dignity and providing women with the proper training to be good wives and mother and intelligent companion for their husbands. For the first time, a book was published that argued for women's rights to be on the same footing as men's.

⇒ Mary Wollstonecraft is sometimes called "Mother of feminism" as her main goal was to see women gain access to segment of society largely off limits to them in the 18th Century.

Education And Equality: —

(2)

⇒ In 1791, the French Bishop and politician Charles Maurice de Talleyrand - Perigord had submitted a report to the French National Assembly, in which he reinforced the contemporary view that women should only receive an education in 'the paternal home'.

⇒ In response to this, Wollstonecraft published A vindication of the rights of woman, calling for equality between the sexes, particularly in the field of education. At the heart of her argument was the claim that women only appeared intellectually inferior to men because of their lack of public education.

⇒ According to William Gochwin, Wollstonecraft wrote the book quickly over the course of only six weeks, with the intention of publishing a second volume.

Edmund Burke And Thomas Paine: —

⇒ Mary Wollstonecraft wrote this pioneering book in part as a reaction to Edmund Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution, published in late 1790.

⇒ Wollstonecraft's initial response was to write A vindication of the rights of men (1790) a rebuttal of Burke that argued in favour of Parliamentary reform, and stated that religious and civil liberties were part of a man's birthright, with corruption caused in the main by ignorance.

⇒ This argument for men's rights wasn't unique — Thomas Paine published his Rights of Man in 1791, also arguing against Burke — but Wollstonecraft proceeded to go one step further.

Women's Rights in Wollstonecraft's time :- (3)

⇒ In the eighteenth Century, In the eyes of the Law, a Married woman had no property, no vote, no money of her own, nor any rights to her children.

⇒ Upon Marriage, a woman's legal rights and obligations were subsumed by those of her husband and she was legally under her protection and authority.

⇒ While single or widowed women could own money, property and run business, married women had no equivalent rights without pursuing expensive legal settlements.

Women's Education :-

The late 18th and early 19th Centuries saw fierce debates about the nature and purpose of women's education, and to what extent it should be based around domestic rather than academic skills.

While Wollstonecraft argued that denying women any proper education had made them unfit for meaningful roles in society.

Sarah Stickney Ellis (1799-1872), showing a social conservatism characteristic of many writers of the time, wrote in *The Women of England* (1839) that women have a religious duty to bring up the next generation properly, instilling moral values in young people for the benefit of society at large. University education was not seen as suitable for women, who could therefore not pursue professional careers.

Contemporarily ~~to~~ readers react to *Uindication* :- (4)
The reaction to *Uindication* in Wollstonecraft's lifetime was positive in her own liberal, intellectual dissenting circle, but otherwise very negative.

The rights of woman was generally received well when it was first published in 1792. Biographer Emily W. Sunstein called it "perhaps the most original ~~to~~ book of (Wollstonecraft) Century".