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Describe any two Western schools of thought about feminism in detail

## Introduction:

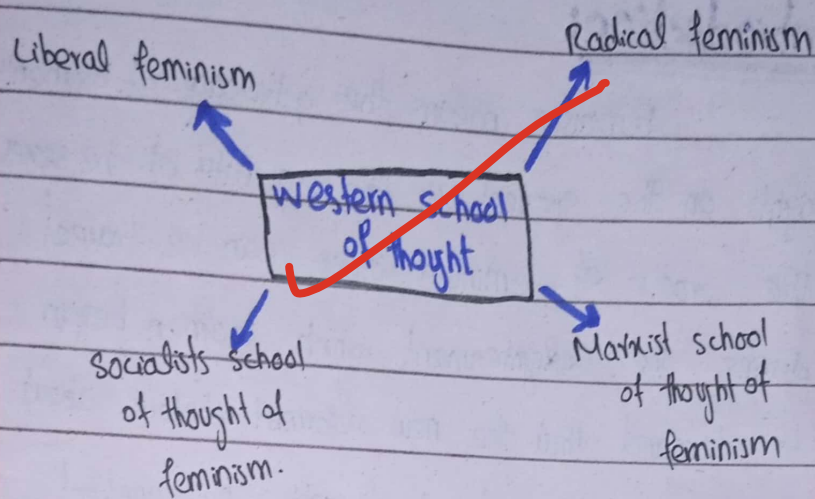
Feminism means the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes. The roots of feminism voices can be traced during the Enlightenment which women began to demand that the new reformist rhetoric about liberty, equality and natural rights be applied to both sexes. In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft had published "A vindication of the rights of women" in the seminal English language feminist work published in English. Sojourner Truth famous "Ain't I a woman" speech was delivered in 1851.

There are various schools of thought to describe the perspective of feminism such as Liberal, Radical, Marxist and social feminism. Here the following Liberal and radical discussed in the answer by their main principles, history goals and issues. And major personalities and criticism by other <sup>types of</sup> feminism.

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## Western School of thought about feminism



Two main school of thought of feminism are discussed below:

### Liberal Feminism

#### Historical background:

Liberal feminism conceives of freedom as personal autonomy living a life of one's own choosing and political autonomy being co-author of the conditions under which one lives. According to Rosemarie Tong, Liberal Feminism began in 18th and 19th centuries and has continued through to the present day. Its long history is a testament to how

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well it has been able to adapt and change to the many issues confronting women.

### Definition:

The main focus of liberal feminism is on gender inequality. This group of feminists observes that men and women are not treated equally, and that the inequality that exists between them is neither biological nor of personality difference but is rather socially organized.

### Strands of Liberal Feminism

#### Individualism:

The core of liberal feminism is liberalism which in turn is based on idea of individualism. Individualism further believes that only those human beings fall in this category that has reason and is rational. They believed both men and women possess reason and rationality.

#### Discrimination:

As both men and women possess 'reason' and 'rationality' so there should be no discrimination on the base of sex.

#### Egalitarian and reformist in Nature:

It does not criticize the social structure

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or institutions, rather endeavors to refer them through women favored laws. It is the same reason liberal feminists are called reformists.

### Public-Private Divide:

central to this <sup>Perspective</sup> is that division of labour which divide production in terms of <sup>both</sup> gender as private and public merely serves as domination over women.

Liberal feminism changed this perception and demand that government should participate in the private sphere to safeguard the lives of women.

### Goals and issues:

The goal of liberal feminism is to create a "just and compassionate society in which equality and freedom flourishes." only in such a society can women and men thrive equally. Liberal feminism's primary goal is the gender equality in the public sphere equal access to education, equal pay, ending job segregation, better working conditions won primarily through legal changes.

liberal feminism in theory and work

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that focuses more on issues like equality in the workplace, education etc. Thus, liberal feminists also tend to support marriage as an equal partnership, and more male involvement in child care.

### Famous liberal feminists and organizations

#### Feminists

#### organizations

Susan B Anthony (The trial of Susan B Anthony)

National organization for women

Stuart Mill (Subjugation of Women)

National women political caucus

Naomi Wolf (Vagina: A New Biography)

Women's Equity Action League

Mary Wollstonecraft (A Vindication of Rights of Women)

All Pakistan Women Association (APWA)

### Criticism:

Critics of liberal feminism point to a lack of critique of basic gender relationships, a focus on state action, and a lack of analysis of ways in which women are different from men. Critics often accuse liberal feminism of judging women and their success by male standards.

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This feminism opposes laws that give either men or women advantages or privileges.

## Radical Feminism

**Historical background:** Radical schools of thought arose during the second wave of feminism in the 1960s.

The radical feminism argue that subordination, exploitation and oppression experienced by women throughout human history is sustained largely through the institution of family where patriarchal ideology is maintained through the process of socialisation. For the radical feminists, therefore, patriarchy is identified as the most significant structure of social domination and oppression of women.

### **Definition:**

Radical feminists see society and its institutions as patriarchal - most of which are dominated and ruled by men. Men are the ruling class and women are the subject class.

**View of Alison Jagger and Paule**

**Rothenberg:**

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✓ women were, historically, the first oppressed group.

✓ women's oppression is the most widespread existing reality in eventually every aspect of society.

✓ women's oppression cause the most suffering to its victims, quantitatively and qualitatively.

### Goals:

Radical feminism activists focus has been concerned with visible sources of gender discrimination, such as gendered job markets and inequality wage scales, and with getting women into positions of authority in professions, government and cultural institutions.

### Feminists and organizations

#### Radical Feminists

Simon de Beauvoir (The second sex).

Kate Millet (Sexual politics)

Catherine MacKinnon (Towards a Feminist Theory of states)

Adrea Dworkin

#### organizations

Redstockings

New York Radical Feminists

Radical women

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### Success:

- ✓ Success in breaking down barriers in public and private affairs and helped women enjoy equality.
- ✓ Legalization of abortion and reproductive rights
- ✓ Overcoming belief that men are superior to women.

### Criticisms:

- ✓ During early years, the radical feminists were criticized for emphasizing sex based discrimination at the expense of race and class based discrimination.
- ✓ Radical feminism was criticized because it tended to be white and middle-class.
- ✓ Ignores the progress that women have made in many areas e.g. work, controlling fertility, divorce.
- ✓ Too unrealistic due to heterosexual attraction separatism is unlikely.

### Analysis:

Liberal and radical feminism both are same at the <sup>same</sup> time. One demand equality rights from patriarchal states by overcoming institution, other blame patriarchal society for gender inequality. The Aurat



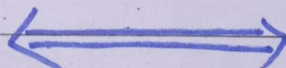
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March episode in Pakistan is the example of radical feminism where slogan such as "Apari khana khud garam kar" point toward the patriarchal society. Similarly, women in Development could be considered example of liberal feminism in which economic rights for women are being demanded.

### Conclusion:

Above discussed the two western school of thought of feminism. The first is liberal feminism which demands liberty and autonomy in the public and private sphere from the patriarchal society. The second is radical feminism in which considered patriarchy as the route of gender inequality. It also calls out men as oppressors. However, both school of thought are being criticized by the feminists.



good attempt!!!