

Question:

Describe any two Western Schools of thought about feminism in detail.

I. Exordium:

Feminism is a range of social movements, political movements, and ideologies that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the sexes. From these movements, feminist theory has emerged that support the stance of feminism. Mary Wollstonecraft's - A Vindication of Rights of Woman, Ain't I a woman by Sojourner Truth, and Susan B Anthony's speech after her illegal voting truly laid the foundation of numerous schools of thought. Owing to that, Jagger's Feminist Politics and Human Nature categorized the schools of thought as liberal feminism, Marxism, radical feminism, and social feminism.

Liberal feminism

Social feminism

Radical feminism

Western Schools

of Thought

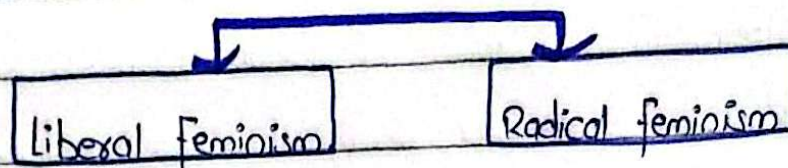
Psychoanalytic feminism

Marx theory of feminism.

Schools of Thoughts

about Feminism

Two main schools of Thought about feminism discussed below in detail, are



1) Liberal Feminism

According to Rosemarie Tong, Liberal feminism began in 18th and 19th centuries and has continued through to present day. It focuses on the principle of liberty, autonomy, and individualistic character of women and blames institutional constraints for gender inequality.

Historical Background:

Liberal feminism draws its roots from first wave of feminism when Mary Wollstonecraft wrote the first feminist masterpiece, *A Vindication of Rights of Women* (1792), and insisted women to make independent decisions other than those made by the patriarchal society of for

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them. She celebrated the rational thought of woman to attain full personhood. She urged women to be educated enough to not be the "toy of man".

Key Principles of Liberal feminism:

Liberal feminists, also known as egalitarian feminists, believe that gender inequality exists and it can only be reduced if men and women are considered equally. Both sexes enjoy equal rights and opportunities. It asserts that patriarchal society holds the false belief that women are, by nature, intellectually and physically less capable than men. Therefore, on the whole, egalitarian feminists stressed upon:

- The principle of individualism
- No discrimination on the basis of sex
- Equality means Equal Opportunities
- Freedom of Choice in every aspect
- Equal possession of reason and rationality
- Institutional Constraints are root cause of inequality.
- Liberty - the core concern of liberal feminists

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Goals of Liberal Feminism:

The goal of liberal feminism is creating a just and compassionate society in which freedom flourishes. Only in such society men and women can thrive. John Stuart Mill wrote "The subjection of women" (1869), and Harriet Taylor wrote Enfranchisement of Women (1851) and joined Wollstonecraft in celebrating rationality. Liberal feminists claimed that ~~the~~ women needed suffrage in order to become men's equals. They claimed that the vote gives people the power not only to express their own political views but also to change those systems, structures, and attitude that contribute to their own or other's oppression.

Men, their rights, and nothing more;

women, their rights, and nothing less.

(Susan B. Anthony)

Famous Liberal Feminists and Organizations

Liberal Feminists

Susan B. Anthony

Stuart Mill

Organizations

National Organization for
Women.

National Women's Political

Naomi Wolf
Mary Wollstonecraft

Caucus:
Women's Equity Action League
All Pakistan Women Association
(APWA).

Criticism of other Schools of thought on liberal feminism

Liberal feminism does not come without criticism from other feminist schools of thought. Radical feminism believes that liberal feminists want autonomy and liberty, but they acknowledge the fact of a patriarchal society. Some called liberal feminism as white feminism because it lacks the debate on the rights of colored women. Owing to this, a theory of intersectionality is proved as a great hindrance on the way to the liberalist school of thought.

Similarly, Marxist feminism criticizes liberal feminists for not considering power relations and failing to term men as oppressors.

Radical Feminism

Tong defines a radical feminist as one who "insists the sex/gender system is the fundamental cause of women's oppression". Unlike the liberal

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feminists who work within the system for change
the radical feminists want a new system altogether.
Radical feminists proclaimed that all women are
"sisters" and "the personal is political."

Historical Background:

Radical schools of thought arose during the
second wave of feminism in the 1960s. Moreover,
this school of thought also drew its roots
back to women who participated in anti-war and
New left movements in 1960s and 1970s. Women
found themselves excluded from equal power by men,
thus splitting in various feminists groups.

Key Principles of Radical Feminism:

Radical feminism revolves around the concept that
women are oppressed and men are the oppressors.
This school of thought talks about liberation
from men and not equality- because patriarchy
force women into various sexual activities just to
oppress them.

• "If prostitution is a free-choice, why are
women with the fewest choices the ones

mostly ^{found} doing it."

(Catherine Mackinnon)

✓ Pornography is one way of objecting of women by men.

• Pornography and Women equality are incompatible."

(Andrea Dworkin)

✓ The standards of beauty for a woman are defined by patriarchal notions of attractiveness.

"What would Prince Charming have for occupation if he had not awake Sleeping Beauty."

(Simon De Beauvoir)

Goals of Radical Feminism:

One of the major goals of Radical Feminism is the restructuring of the patriarchal society to eliminate male supremacy. Moreover, this school of thought aims at acquiring women's supremacy or separatism of women from male dominance.

They seek to challenge patriarchy existing in social norms and institutions, through purely political process. This includes challenging traditional roles, opposing the sexual objectification of women and raising public awareness about violence against women.

Famous Radical Feminists and Organizations

Simon de Beauvoir

Kate Millet

Catherine Mackinnon

Redstockings

New York Radical

Feminists

Radical Women

Criticism of other Schools of thought on Radical feminism

One of the biggest criticisms of radical feminism is its uncompromising nature made by men's feminism. They believe that adoption of separatism of women is not necessary. Secondly, Marxist feminism ignores economic inequalities that sometimes urge women to engage in businesses such as pornography and prostitution. However, the sole focus of radical feminism is patriarchy, causing oppression and inequality.

Analysis:

Liberal and radical feminism are similar and different at the same time. One demands equal rights from the patriarchal society while the other blames patriarchy for causing gender inequality. The

Aurat March in Pakistan is the notable case in point where bold slogans could be heard pointing towards the exclusion of patriarchal mindset.

Similarly, the outrage of Roe v Wade's judgement against abortion rights is also an example of liberal feminism. For the past six years, Aurat March has been held on March 8, International Women's Day and in 2025 Women Action Forum held a joint press Conference to present their 14-point charter of demands - addressing urgent issues such as gender-based violence, and in particular, the recent amendment to the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act 2025 (PECA).

Conclusion:

Two western school of thoughts are discussed. One is liberate feminism that focuses on autonomy and liberty while demanding public and private sphere rights from patriarchal society. The second one radical feminism that is radical in nature and considers patriarchy as the root cause of gender inequality. However, both schools of thought are subject to the criticism as well.