

Discuss the development of Marxist / socialist feminism and the philosophical stance they hold to discuss gender issues and exploitation. with ver

### Introduction:

→ Marxist / socialist feminism - emerged late 19-20 centuries - as powerful critique of patriarchy and capitalism. The women's subordination is not merely a social or cultural or moral issue but also deeply rooted in economic structure and material inequality. As Friedrich Engels (1884) stated that "A modern family contains in germ, not only slavery but also serfdom since from the beginning it is related to agricultural labour." This idea became the foundation of Marxist feminism, linking economic dependence with gender oppression.

## Historical Development Of Marxist And Socialist Feminism:

(a) Origination in Marxist Philosophy:  
Marxist feminism draws from the work of Karl Marx and Engels, who analysed how capitalism creates class-based exploitation. Engels extended this

concept to gender, arguing that private property transformed women into dependent by confining them to domestic labor.

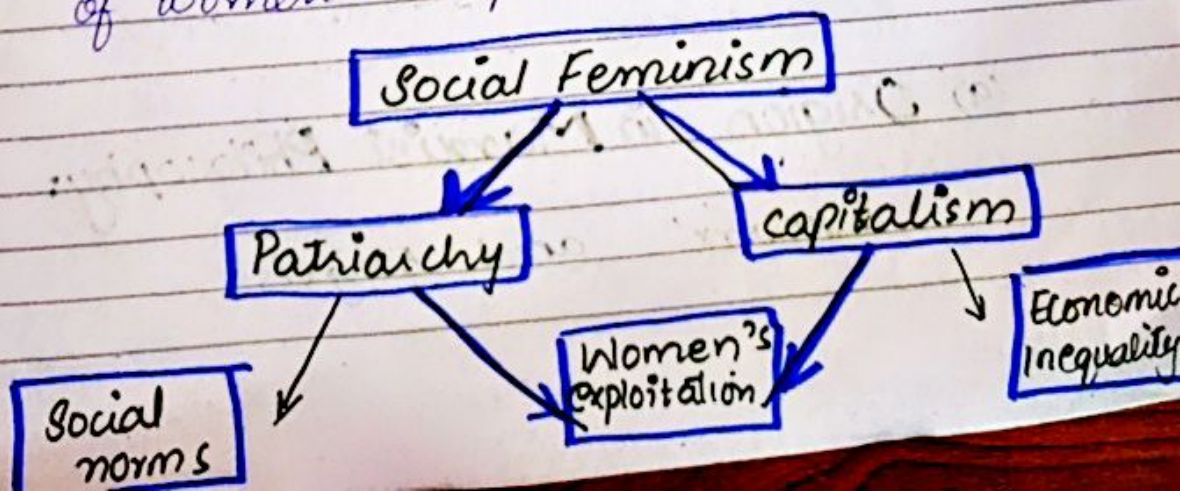
"The first class oppression is coincides with that of female sex by the male."

(Friedrich Engels)

### (b) Emergence of Socialist Feminism<sup>1884</sup>

By the 1970s, feminists such as Heidi Hartmann (1979) and Juliet Mitchell (1971) found that the traditional Marxism is too narrow. That is why they added radical feminism that focus on patriarchy with that of Marxist's critique of capitalism. And they both basically formed socialist feminism.

Capitalism and patriarchy are "two headed Beasts" that must be fought together. Therefore, social feminism, therefore argues that patriarchy and capitalism are interconnected systems of women's exploitation.



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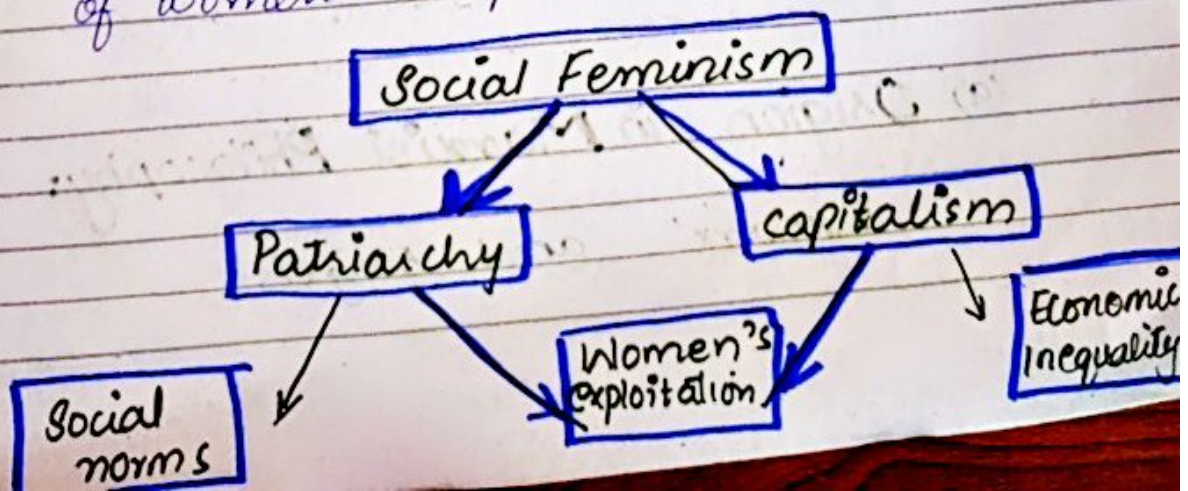
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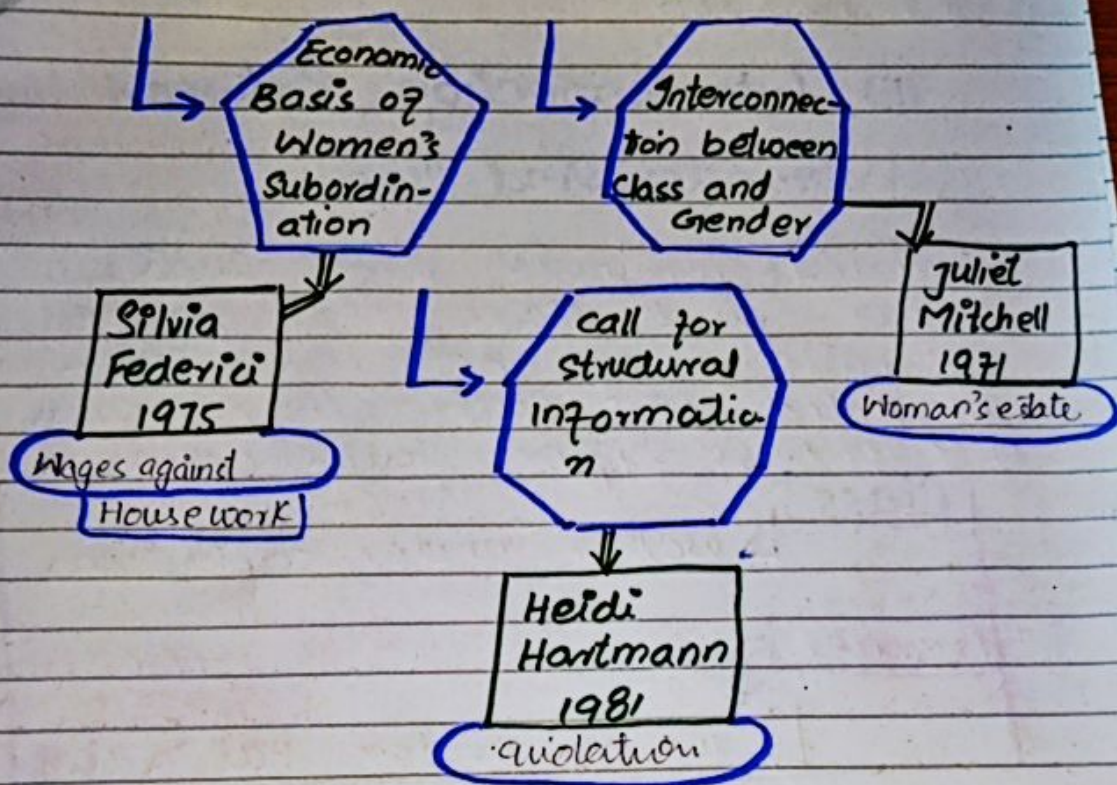
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## (a) Philosophical Stance on Gender And Exploitation.



### (i) Economic Basis Of Women's Subordination:

Marxist Feminists argue that labor division under capitalism places men as productive (paid) work, while it keeps women as reproductive (unpaid) roles. This creates economic dependency.

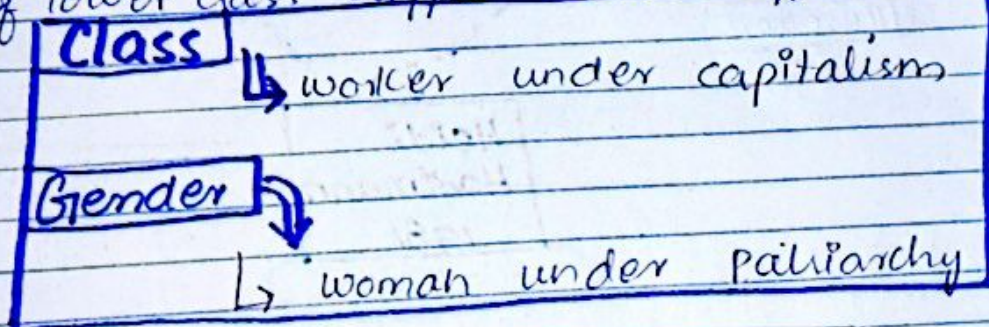
"They say it is love, we call it is unwaged work."

Silvia Federici 1975  
- wages against house work

women's unpaid labor benefits capitalism by reproducing the workforce for free. yet it remains invisible and unrecognized.

## (ii) Interconnection Between Gender And Class:

Socialist feminists argue that gender and class cannot be separated. they both are interconnected to each other. women of lower class suffer double oppression as



[Juliet Mitchell 1971] argued

that

"Women's oppression operates through 'production, reproduction, sexuality, and socialisation'."

Therefore this shows that economic structure and social norms reinforce one another to maintain inequality.

### (iii) Call for Structural Transformation

Both marxist and socialists feminists not only demand equality (gender) but also want to restructure economic and social system. They argue that that equality cannot be achieved through mere reforms. For achieving true freedom and equality there is a strict need to abolish capitalism and patriarchy.

"We need a theory that explain the material base of male dominance."

Heidi Hartmann 1981

### (c) Real life Implications And Contemporary Relevance:

1- Gender Pay gap



ILO (2024).

Women earn 20-25% less than men globally



reflects capitalist gender inequality

2. unpaid care work



UN Women 2023  
women perform 76% of unpaid work

reflects/shows persistence of economic & subordination