

Q6) Compare and Contrast Liberal feminism and Radical feminism. Among these two, which one is best applicable to elevate women status in Pakistan?

Ans) ① Introduction:-

2) Overview In a broader perspective, feminism includes the acting, speaking, writing and advocating on behalf of women's issues and rights. And also identifying injustices to females in the social status quo. Feminism is a range of movements and ideologies that share a common goal; to define, establish and achieve equal political, economic, cultural, personal and social rights for women. Liberal feminism and Radical feminism are among the main theories of feminism. Feminist theories are the extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical discourse, which aims to understand the nature of gender inequality. It examines women's social role in a variety of fields.

② Radical and liberal feminism:-

The combination of Radical and liberal feminism is not a usual one but often proves to be useful while tackling complex issues. Despite drastic differences between the two, these two views of feminism do hold some similarities with each other by virtue of their



common goal is simply the equality of the genders.

## ② What is Liberal feminism - Bird's eye view.

Liberal feminism is the earliest form of feminism with Mary Wollstonecraft as its earliest proponent. It is philosophically based on individualism, the belief that all individuals are of equal worth and treatment regardless of their gender. The demand for equal rights lies at the core of liberal feminism. The Suffragette Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was also based on ideas of liberal feminism. Some other liberal feminists include Harriet Taylor Mill and John Stuart Mill.

## ③ What is Radical feminism - overview

Radical feminism insists on highlighting the role of patriarchy in sexual oppression of women. They seek to abolish the entire structure of patriarchy. The central feature of radical feminism is the belief that sexual oppression is the most fundamental feature of society and that other forms of injustice; class, exploitation, racial hatred and so on - are merely secondary (Andrew Heywood, Political Ideologies). Pioneer radical feminists have been Simone de Beauvoir (The Second Sex, 1949), Germaine Greer (The Female Eunuch, 1970), Kate Millet (Sexual Politics, 1970), Andrea Dworkin, Catherine MacKinnon, etc.

The major achievement of radical feminism is the "Personal is political" Movement



which brought issues related to women's bodies and personal lives such as abortion and divorce into the political sphere and demanded to be legislated upon.

## 5) Comparison and Contrast :-

### 5.1) Similarities between Liberal and Radical Feminism.

Both accept the premise that women should be granted the same rights and privileges as men in all spheres, including the social, economic and political fields. They both view the structure of our present society as being unfairly tipped to the sides of male and that this must be drastically changed. Both emerged during the second wave of feminism and focused on oppression of women as a whole. Liberal and Radical feminism both seek to ensure that women have access to resources and human rights in a gender equal environment. However, they do not necessarily employ similar methods in achieving these results.

### 5.2) Differences between Liberal and Radical feminism.

#### (i) Definition

Radical Feminism  
Radical feminism is a strand of feminism that identifies

Liberal Feminism  
A strand of feminism that advocates



## Radical

patriarchy as the root cause of all gender issues and advocates a complete reordering of the society, in order to eliminate male supremacy.

## liberal

eliminating gender inequality through having equal rights for men and women in legal, political, social and other spheres within the existing system.

### ② Views

Gender related issues can only be eliminated through a radical restructuring of society, removing male supremacy from all spheres.

Gender inequality can be eliminated by giving same rights to women as men, through social, political, legal and other means within the existing society.

### ③ Existing System

Advocates complete restructuring of society.

Does not focus on the root cause of gender issues, and does not advocate complete restructuring.

### ④ Nature

More militant form of feminism, having revolutionary views.

Not militant or radical like radical feminism.

### ⑤ Aim

Aims to eliminate patriarchy

Making adjustments to the existing system.



	<u>Radical</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
Central issues / Key concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Reproductive rights for women</li> <li>* recognizing rape as an expression of patriarchal power.</li> <li>* Analyzing and changing traditional gender roles</li> <li>* Prostitution under patriarchy as oppression of women</li> <li>* Pornography as an industry, leading to harm women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* right to vote.</li> <li>* right to work.</li> <li>* right to education.</li> <li>* right to equal pay.</li> <li>* being equal in marriage and partnership</li> </ul>

## ⑥ FEMINISM IN PAKISTAN — Radical or Liberal?

Feminism in Pakistan has undergone significant shifts from time to time. Liberal feminism is most prominent in leftist liberal circles, and is often supported by left-leaning political parties. It is often characterized by liberal values of freedom, liberty, human rights and secularism. It also implicitly supports the concept of LGBT, which is a matter of conflict and controversy among the feminist thinkers.

The other form of feminism which exists in the country is the most traditionalist



form of feminism, based on religious rights. But with the passage of time, there can be seen a major shift from the previous articulations of feminism in Pakistan. While the past forms were only aimed at elimination of anti-women laws and practices in our own culture and society, the new stance has more political undertones and blindly believes in following western radical trends. For instance the slogan "Men Jim, Mei Margi" contrasts

the seeds of radical movements like LGBT. (4) Examples The most recent example can be taken of the movie "Joyland", which received mixed reviews and response by the society. While the traditional feminists opposed it, liberal feminists were in support of it.

Similarly "Aunt March" can also be viewed as radical feminism which primarily opposed the patriarchy in the country. Thus, feminism in Pakistan has undergone different shades and tones. Many forms of it are found in Pakistan, including liberal and radical feminism as well.

"My films are motivated by a keen interest in highlighting issues that affect marginalized populations who are caught in difficult circumstances."

(Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy)



Some liberal feminists of Pakistan include Shiraz Mazar, Hina Rabbani Khan, Arma Jahangir etc while Meherbano and Marvi Sarmad include the radical feminist thinkers.

⑦ Radical or liberal? — which variation of feminism is best for Pakistan?

Pakistan, a country where gender inequality and gender discrimination is deeply rooted, strongly needs the protection of women rights in all spheres of life. To prevent this discrimination, women should be educated and gender sensitized to improve their status in the society.

The present era of feminism is unable to fully advocate its purpose in true spirit of the word "feminism". Thus, Pakistan requires a best form of feminism to be applied seriously in all spheres of life. Because still women are facing many issues in proper protection of their rights.

Patriarchy is still a chief obstacle which hinders women empowerment in the country.

Women are facing domestic abuse, harassments, rapes, lack of proper education, right access to criminal justice and many more problems. UN women Pakistan stated in a report that:

'In Pakistan, less than two per cent women who experience violence, seek help from the police.'



"In Pakistan, 49% of women are literate, compared to 71% of men" (Agha, 2020).

"40% of women require permission from family members to seek or continue paid employment" (2021).

7.1) A balanced version of both can prove to be effective for Pakistan:-

Considering the above mentioned discussion, a balanced fusion of both liberal and radical feminism can be best applicable to elevate status of women in Pakistan. Liberal feminist approach should be the dominant while fusing "patriarchy element" from the radical feminism. As liberal feminism advocates for equal social, political and personal rights for women, it would suit appropriately to the country.

However, patriarchal norms proves to be a major menace in our society which are mostly unjustly abused against women. Therefore, minimizing the negative impacts of patriarchy should also be included in the approach for Pakistan. As radical feminism and its approach is more militant, requiring complete restructuring of society, it would be practically impossible to apply it. On the other hand, liberal feminism, with a good positive approach can prove to be a game changer for Pakistan, provided that it, also focuses upon the patriarchal elements. It would make the global gender gap report even more better for the country, which is currently, "142 out of 146."



### ③ Conclusions:-

Thus, radical feminism advocates for complete restructuring of society while liberal feminism advocates for making adjustments to the existing system. A balanced fusion of both can work fruitfully in Pakistan, with liberal feminism being the dominant one.

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