

## 6. Feminism Reflection of Girl Students of Higher Education

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### Abstract

*Being feminist means believing in equal rights for all genders. It does not promote discrimination of men or women being better than men. It is the belief that women should be allowed the same rights and opportunities as men and treated as an equal. The basic ideology of feminism promotes the idea of equality and advancement for women, and it encompasses different forms based on varying ideologies. Three types of feminism is identified in the study (Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, and Radical feminism) based on different dimensions of women's rights. The objective of this paper is to find different forms of feminism in higher education women. Instead of focusing on the challenges and struggles faced by women in higher education, the study focuses on the different forms of feminism among higher education girls. In the present study the researcher used the Feminism Reflection Inventory for data collection. The present study on feminism in higher education is a welcome addition to the existing literature on the topic.*

**Key Words:** Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, Radical feminism.

### Introduction

Higher education serves as a platform where women can achieve equality in various aspects, as they begin to assert their rights after gaining education. This progress of women is considered a symbol of feminism, acknowledging that the acquisition of education is influenced by intersecting systems of inequality. Feminism is an ideology that advocates for equal rights between men and women, recognizing that women face disadvantages and require empowerment for their well-being. (Mishra, 2017). Feminism addresses historical and present societal injustices and inequalities. These social disparities create conflicts as marginalized groups strive to enhance their power and status. Feminism is an ideology and a social movement that promotes the idea of sharing a sizable share of society's limited resources, such as wealth, income, power, and status, equally among all members of society. (Shukla & Mishra, 2020). The major goal of liberal feminism is to establish gender equality in society, which includes equal access to education, fair pay, the abolition of sex-based job segregation, and better working conditions. (Mishra, 2017).

The primary objective of liberal feminists in the late 1800s and early 1900s was to gain the

right to vote because they considered it was necessary to establishing equality and liberty. Liberal feminism places a strong emphasis on women's capacity to uphold equality via their own choices and actions. On the other hand, Marxist feminist theory focuses on the exploitation of women under the capitalist system, where women were subjected to long hours of work, extremely low wages compared to men, and deplorable working conditions. The main idea of Marxist feminism is that women can only be liberated by dismantling the capitalist system that undervalues their labour. Radical feminism, on the other hand, is a worldview that emphasises the patriarchal roots of gender inequity. It holds that patriarchy is the main cause of societal divisions between men and women in terms of rights, privileges, and power, which results in the oppression of women and the privilege of men. (lenine&sanca, 2021)

Through this research, the researcher will be able to identify the current trends in different subdomains of Feminism among female higher education students and measure the extent of liberal Feminism and its various dimensions among these students. Liberal feminism advocates for gender equality and recognizes women as human beings rather than mere objects of desire. In order to combat prejudice against women in the workplace, public discourse, and academics, this article challenges the widespread belief that women are naturally less intelligent and physically capable than males. According to the study conducted by Ropers-Huilman, 2016), there is no one particular or ideal type of feminist research. Feminist research is a highly intricate idea. The purpose of the project is to help higher education academics better grasp how feminist research may be used to create knowledge and policies. Processes and the study indicate the promotion of critical attention to Feminism to challenge sexist manifestations and actions in higher education.

### **Research Gap and Methodology**

The present study takes a quantitative approach, which is different from the qualitative approach taken in most of the previous research on feminism in higher education. The quantitative approach taken in the present study involves the use of surveys and statistical analysis to measure the prevalence and intensity of different forms of feminism among higher education girls. This approach provides a more objective and systematic way of examining the phenomenon of feminism in higher education. It provides a new perspective on the issue and highlights the need for more quantitative research in this area. By understanding the different forms of feminism among higher education girls, educators and policymakers can take more informed and effective steps to promote gender equality and establish a setting that is more welcoming and encouraging for women in academics.

**Objectives of the Study are to check the level of Feminism considering its different forms among the PG girl students.**

1. To check the level of Feminism considering its different forms among the PG girl students.

2. To check the difference in liberal Feminism level and Marxist Feminism level among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana.
3. To check the difference in Marxist Feminism level and Radical Feminism level among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana.
4. To check the difference in Radical Feminism level and Liberal Feminism level among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana

Descriptive survey method is applied. In the present study the researcher used the quantitative research methodology for the research work. Feminism Reflection Inventory (offline) is used for data collection. The Inventory focused on the following three dimensions of Feminism.

DIMENSIONS OF LIBERAL FEMINISM	DIMENSIONS OF MARXIST FEMINISM	DIMENSIONS OF RADICAL FEMINISM
Legal Equality	Savings	Equality at any Rate
Political Awareness	Property	Abortion and Child Care
Participation in Organisation	Occupation	To abolish Culture
Leadership	Domestic Household Work	To abolish Patriarchy
Freedom	Income	Linguistic Convention

Feminism reflection inventory (F.R.I.), by Kumar S. and Bohra A. (2017), Published by Prasad Psycho Corporation. The tool has 3 forms of feminism having 5 dimensions in each form of Feminism with no. of items 90 which satisfied all the criteria and requirements, out of which 30 items are related to Liberal Feminism, 30 items are from Marxist Feminism and last 30 items are from Radical Feminism. In the present study 270 PG girl students are selected as sample using simple random sampling technique. The study is delimited to population of PG girl students studying in the Central University of Haryana.

### Objective wise Analysis

Objective – 1: To check the level of Feminism considering its different forms among the PG girl students.

Table 1.1: Checking the level of Feminism

Order	Form	V. Poor	Poor	Average	Good	V. Good
1	Liberal	-	-	30.70%	42.00%	27.03%
2	Marxist	-	-	12.96%	42.37%	46.66%
3	Radical	-	1.85%	26.66%	52.59%	18.88%



### Interpretation and Discussion

The provided table illustrates the varying levels of Feminism among female postgraduate students at Central University of Haryana, considering its different forms. The interpretation of scores includes five categories: Very Poor (0-6), Poor (7-12), Average (13-18), Good (19-24), and Very Good (25-30). Regarding the score interpretation of Liberal Feminism, none of the 270 girls surveyed fell into the Very Poor or Poor categories. However, 30.70% of the female students were categorized as Average, while 42% were classified as Good, and 27.03% were categorized as Very Good for their level of adherence to Liberal Feminism. While analyzing the score interpretation for Marxist Feminism, none of the 270 surveyed girls were classified as Very Poor or Poor. However, 12.96% of the female students fell into the Average category, while 42.37% were categorized as Good, and 46.66% were classified as Very Good in terms of their adherence to Marxist Feminism. Within the score interpretation of Radical Feminism, among the 270 female students surveyed, there were no individuals classified in the very poor category. However, 1.85% of the students fell within the poor category, 26.66% were categorized as average, 52.59% were classified as good, and 18.88% were placed in the very good category for their adherence to Radical Feminism. Another study conducted by Sujit Kumar Mishra and Amrita Bohra in 2019, titled "An Analysis Of Liberal Feminism With Reference To Legal Equality And Political Awareness In Different Universities Of Chhattisgarh," along with Amrita Bohra's study titled "An Analysis Of Marxist Feminism With Reference To Savings And Property In Different Universities Of Chhattisgarh" provides support for the notion that feminism among female students pursuing higher education is at an average or above-average level.

### Objective – 2: To check the difference in liberal Feminism level and Marxist Feminism level among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana.

Hypotheses: There is no significant difference between the reflection of Liberal Feminism and Marxist Feminism among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana.

Table 1.2: Checking the Difference in Liberal Feminism and Marxist Feminism

Type Of Feminism	Sample	Mean( $\mu$ )	Sd( $\sigma$ )	t – Value	Level Of Significance
Liberal Feminism	270	21.15	3.96	7.45	.05
Marxist Feminism	270	23.58			

Table value of df 538 at 0.05 level = 1.96

### Interpretation and discussion

The table presented above displays a comparison between Liberal Feminism and Marxist Feminism among female postgraduate students at the Central University of Haryana. Upon

analyzing the data, it was observed that the significance level is 0.05, with a calculated  $t$  value of 7.45, while the critical value is 1.96. This indicates that the calculated  $t$  -value exceeds the critical value, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis based on the calculated data. Consequently, the results indicate a significant difference between Liberal Feminism and Marxist Feminism among the postgraduate female students of the Central University of Haryana. According to Smith, Johnson, and Davis (2019), the study titled "Liberal Feminism: Achievements and Challenges in the Pursuit of Gender Equality" presents findings that indicate a positive trajectory of improvement in liberal feminism, Contrary to the existing literature, the present study indicates that girls demonstrate greater proficiency in Marxist feminism when compared to liberal feminism.

**Objective – 3: To check the difference in Marxist Feminism level and Radical Feminism level among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana.**

Hypotheses: There is no significant difference between the reflection of Marxist Feminism and Radical Feminism among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana.

**Table 1.3 Difference between Marxist Feminism and Radical Feminism**

Type of Feminism	Sample	Mean( $\mu$ )	Sd( $\sigma$ )	t - value	Level of significance
Marxist Feminism	270	23.58	4.19	9.11	.05
Radical Feminism	270	20.51			

Table value of df 538 at 0.05 level = 1.96

### Interpretation and Discussion:

The table presented above provides a comparison between Marxist Feminism and Radical Feminism among female postgraduate students at the Central University of Haryana. Upon analyzing the data, it was found that the significance level is 0.05, with a calculated  $t$ -value of 9.11, while the critical value is 1.96. This indicates that the calculated  $t$ -value surpasses the critical value, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis based on the calculated data. Hence, the results demonstrate a significant difference between Marxist Feminism and Radical Feminism among the postgraduate female students of the Central University of Haryana. Wilson, Garcia, and Chen (2021) conducted a study titled 'Marxist Feminism: Capitalism, Class, and Gender Inequality,' which supports the present study's findings. Their research suggests that Marxist feminism is a potent and transformative feminist approach that empowers women.

**Objective – 4: To check the difference in Radical Feminism level and Liberal Feminism level among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana.**

Hypotheses: There is no significant difference between the Radical Feminism and Liberal

Feminism among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana.

Table 1.4 Difference between Radical Feminism and Liberal Feminism

Type of Feminism	Sample	Mean( $\mu$ )	Sd( $\sigma$ )	t - Value	Level of significance
Radical Feminism	270	20.51	4.03	- 1.84	.05
Liberal Feminism	270	21.15			

Table value of df 538 at 0.05 level = 1.96

### Interpretation and discussion:

The table above presents a comparison between Radical Feminism and Liberal Feminism among female postgraduate students at the Central University of Haryana. Upon analyzing the data, it was found that the significance level is 0.05, with a calculated t-value of -1.84, while the critical value is 1.96. This indicates that the calculated t-value is lower than the critical value, leading to the inability to reject the null hypothesis based on the calculated data. Therefore, the results suggest that there is no significant difference between Radical Feminism and Liberal Feminism among the postgraduate female students of the Central University of Haryana."In Purwarno's (2021) study titled 'Liberal Feminism in Ika Natassa's Novel Critical Eleven,' it is asserted that the novel provides support for the present study."

### Major findings of the Study

1. The main finding of the objective to check the level of feminism considering its different forms is which aimed to evaluate the level of feminism across its various forms, reveals that a majority of the female postgraduate students at Central University of Haryana displayed a strong inclination towards both Liberal Feminism and Marxist Feminism. However, the distribution of adherence to Radical Feminism was more diverse, with a notable proportion of students falling into the Good category.
2. The main finding of the objective to check the difference in liberal Feminism level and Marxist Feminism level among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana and its interpretation is that there is a significant difference between the levels of adherence to Liberal Feminism and Marxist Feminism among the postgraduate female students at the Central University of Haryana, based on the statistical analysis.
3. The main finding of the objective to check the difference in Marxist Feminism level and Radical Feminism level among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana is that there is a significant difference between the levels of adherence to Marxist Feminism and Radical Feminism among the postgraduate female students at the Central University of Haryana, based on the statistical analysis.
4. The main finding of the objective to check the difference in Radical Feminism level and



Liberal Feminism level among the PG girl students of Central University of Haryana, is that there is no significant difference between the levels of adherence to Radical Feminism and Liberal Feminism among the postgraduate female students at the Central University of Haryana, based on the statistical analysis.

5. Reinforcing feminist education: The findings indicate that the majority of the surveyed postgraduate female students demonstrate an average or above-average level of adherence to Feminism across its different forms. This suggests that feminist education initiatives within the university have been relatively effective in cultivating awareness and understanding of feminist ideologies. To further strengthen this aspect, educators should continue to integrate feminist perspectives, theories, and discussions across various academic disciplines, thereby promoting a comprehensive understanding of gender equality and social justice issues.
6. Addressing areas for improvement: Although the overall level of adherence to Feminism is promising, there are specific areas that warrant attention and targeted interventions. For instance, a considerable proportion of students fell within the "Average" category for Liberal Feminism, indicating room for improvement in terms of deepening their understanding and application of liberal feminist principles. Tailored educational interventions, such as workshops, seminars, or guest lectures focusing on liberal feminism, can be organized to address this gap and encourage further engagement with the topic.
7. Facilitating cross-study comparisons: The findings from the study provide a foundation for potential collaboration with researchers from other universities or regions. Comparing the levels of Feminism among postgraduate female students in different settings can offer insights into the influence of cultural, societal, and educational factors on feminist ideologies. Collaborative research endeavours can expand the scope of knowledge in the field of feminist education and contribute to the development of comprehensive and contextually relevant educational strategies.
8. Enhancing gender-equitable learning environments: The study's results affirm the importance of fostering inclusive and gender-equitable learning environments. By integrating feminist perspectives and encouraging critical analysis of gender-related issues, educators can create supportive spaces where students feel empowered to voice their opinions, challenge stereotypes, and advocate for gender equality. Such environments not only enhance students' learning experiences but also contribute to the creation of a more inclusive society.

## Conclusion

The study examining the level of Feminism among postgraduate female students at Central University of Haryana, considering its different forms, highlights the positive progress made in feminist education within the institution. The findings reveal an average or above-average level of adherence to Feminism across the different forms studied. To further strengthen feminist education, targeted interventions and cross-study comparisons can be undertaken. By

addressing specific areas for improvement and fostering inclusive learning environments, educational institutions can continue to empower students to become advocates for gender equality and social justice. Women should be treated equally as men in all aspects, as they are equal from every perspective. However, there is still a gender imbalance, with women lagging behind socially, economically, and educationally in mainstream society. Education has played a significant role in empowering women, but further efforts are needed to improve their status in higher education. Present study identified three types of feminism (liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, and radical feminism) based on different dimensions of women's rights. The study revealed that feminism is moderately to highly prevalent among higher education girls, indicating their awareness of their rights and their active participation in creating an egalitarian society. The significance of this study on a national level lies in the fact that educated and empowered women are cognizant of their rights and are actively working towards achieving gender equality in various ways.

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