

# History Revolves: Princess Diana versus Duchess Meghan; a Comparative Analysis based on Chosen Biographies

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## Abstract

*This research article aims to compare and contrast Princess Diana Spencer and Duchess Meghan Markle based on the selected biographies. The methodology for this research article is feminism. The discussion section includes the interpretations of Diana and Meghan based on feminist ideology. The similarities and differences between Diana and Meghan are analysed. The influence of feminism plays an unavoidable role in the life of Diana and Meghan. The implementation of feminist interpretations varies between Diana and Meghan. The era of survival, the approach of royalty, the interpretations of general people etc... also differ between Diana and Meghan. According to these influential factors, the implementation or inheritance of feminist ideologies varies. At the same time, the underlying basic feminist notion that drive Meghan and Diana towards empowerment is similar. Diana received appreciation and depreciation as equal to Meghan. The Paparazzi's cruelty to Diana and Meghan's life is similar. But Meghan was not the victim of either paparazzi or royal cruelty equal to Diana. That is a difference. So, the possible result of this research article would be the estimate of both positive and negative aspects of Diana and Meghan along with the comparison of their similarities and differences of Diana and Meghan since both Diana and Meghan are the perfect combinations of similarities and differences with the underlying feminist notion.*

**Keywords:** Comparison, Feminism, Differences, Similarities.

## Introduction

Diana Spencer and Meghan Markle were well renowned. There is always a comparison between the two for many reasons. Diana and Meghan were not groomed from childhood to be British Royalty members. Their entry and exit from the British Royalty scenario created tremendous attention from the media and people. People's awe towards British royalty was revised due to Diana and Meghan. It became a debate such as modernity versus British royalty. British royalty was criticised for its lack of upgrading to current trends, emotionless rigidity, extravagant unnecessary norms, lack of importance for new thoughts and ideas, hostility to outsiders, etc... Either Diana or Meghan can be liked or disliked but one cannot ignore the impact of Diana, Meghan in British royalty.

## Similarities and Differences between Diana and Meghan Diana and Meghan; Feminist or Feminine

Diana and Meghan were directly or indirectly influenced by feminism. When there aroused a situation demanding the sacrifice of their identity and self-respect neither Diana nor

Meghan tolerated it. Their resistance is refusal with grace and rigidity. Feminist notions were not well appreciated by British royalty if executed by outsiders. Princess Diana's feminism gained her the name people's princess due to her feminist notions. Her feminism encouraged numerous humanitarian issues. She played a significant role in removing of taboo around HIV-positive patients. Charles always tried to frame her as unsuitable for British royalty due to his overwhelming jealousy of Diana's increasing popularity among people. Diana's people-friendly activities were quite contrasting to the rigid monotonous seclusion of British royalty. Diana always longed for a supportive family right after her parent's separation. Diana could no longer receive that support either from Charles or British royalty. Even her childhood was not filled with joy since her parents separated. She used to refer to her stepmother as " acid Raine "despite later reconciliation. The yearning for a perfect family was always there for Diana.

In the case of Meghan, she also had separated parents, but this separation induced feminist ideologies in Meghan. Meghan was a better student in terms of academics and extracurricular activities whereas Diana was better in extracurricular activities. Meghan was more confident, and consistent in facing challenges. Diana was emotional and easily a minor problem can make her depressed. But at the same time, when Charles and the British Royalty were against her, she was very bold. She was bold enough to emancipate herself from the entire British Royalty. In this case, Meghan's situation was somewhat different. Meghan faced challenges as equal to Diana, or sometimes even more than Diana because Meghan was biracial, a divorcee, a film actress, and an American. Diana was a white British spinster who worked as a nanny/teaching assistant/instructor etc... The major difference between Diana and Meghan is the support they received/denied from their respective life partners.

When Harry did not want Meghan to face the repeated trauma, once his mother underwent, he renounced the entire royal position. While Charles expected Diana to be the virginal lamb, massacred at the altar of the British royal throne. Marital fidelity was not a supporting point for either Charles or Diana. Moreover, it is highly miraculous that people's support for Diana who was emancipated from the British royalty was higher to the level of questioning the negativities of the royal system. Whereas in the case of Meghan, Meghan was first accused as the reason for separation. Only the staunch support, from Harry and notable feminist organisations, could minimise it but not eradicate it. Diana holds an image of a miracle who could redeem people from miseries.

Meghan holds an image modern-day feminist, who advocates for women's empowerment and not for women's chauvinism. Fortunately, Diana could get the love, respect, and support, of people to whom she wants to be a princess. Charles's expectation of Diana as either a beautiful cloth showcases or a royal slave showing implicit submission to him was unfulfilled. Diana wants her position to serve needy people. Such a self-empowered, kind-hearted, woman could not move according to either the whip of British royalty or the whip of paparazzi. This feminist resistance to Diana was wrongly canvassed as her incapability to be stuck in British royalty. She also fought against Charles's betrayal of

Camila Parker Bowles. The paparazzi were very keen on exhibiting her personal love affairs, and intimate photos, after her legal separation from Charles, to brand her as unfaithful and unsuitable to fit into British royalty.

This was due to the rise in people's hatred towards British royalty for neglecting Diana's welfare. The paparazzi, the indirect weapon of British royalty was cruel till the last minute of her death. Even after her death, it was people's overwhelming hatred and anger which bend British royalty's rigidity to carry out her funeral rites with royal respect. Diana was an unintentional feminist. Diana's humanitarian feminism was very much liked by people. She wanted to be the people's princess. The continuous gender-stereotyped expectations from British royalty, media and even from people (seldomly), demanded submissive inferiority from Diana.

Diana in no way accepts that. Diana's expectation of a loving, respectful, life partner was an ultimate failure. Though her marriage was crumbling and her mental health was unstable, Diana's media coverage at the time was overwhelmingly positive. Harry did not want Meghan to face the same ill fate faced by Diana. Diana and Meghan were feminists in their ways but they never felt feminine as inferior which is reflected in celebrating motherhood, never discarding their feminine pride even though seldomly they were ridiculed. Diana was certainly not a conscious feminist, whether of the contemporary pay gap and women-on-boards variety or the more ideologically driven type. But she did draw strength and power from her appeal to women. Diana's feminism was predominantly situational, and unintentional.

Meghan's feminism was deep-rooted. Diana and Meghan never step back from their feminist ideas despite numerous negativities. The negative criticism of Meghan was minimised only after stern, consistent support from Harry and considerable support for Meghan from notable feminist notions. So, to survive and rejuvenate Diana, carried out certain measures which appeared as feminist approaches.

Meghan on the contrary, was a feminist even before facing struggles from British royalty. Meghan was fortunate to have Harry as her husband. Harry was neither a male chauvinist nor a fake British royal. Unfortunately, Diana's husband Charles was neither a good husband nor a people-

friendly British royal. In 2015, the Duchess became the UN Women's Advocate for Women's Political Participation and Leadership. In addition to her role with UN Women and One Young World, Her Royal Highness became a Global Ambassador for World Vision in 2016.

The Duchess visited Rwanda on a clean water campaign that would work to allow young children to continue their education. Additionally, in 2017, Markle undertook a second learning mission with the organisation when she visited India with World Vision to bring greater awareness to girls' lack of access to education. These early experiences helped to shape her lifelong commitment to causes such as social justice and women's empowerment. So right from there is a lot of difference between Diana and Meghan but the underlying feminist notion is similar. Meghan was successful in a campaign to rectify a gender-stereotyped television advertisement. After a round table discussion at the University of Johannesburg to talk about the challenges facing women pursuing higher education, she announced that the Association of Commonwealth Universities was awarding gender grants to three major universities in South Africa. Many of Diana's social reforms were out of instant mercy for humankind.

Meghan continued her focus on female empowerment and gender equality by meeting with a group of female leaders, activists, and change-makers to better understand how gender-based violence has shaped the country and is currently affecting women. Although supporting charitable causes is not new to Meghan or the Royals, her visit to South Africa resonated with locals and the rest of the world because she used it as an opportunity to highlight gender-based violence, a devastating crisis that's been making headlines as the war on women intensifies. Meghan's feminism was deep-rooted and it was not instant. Meghan's negative criticism was due to Diana's lack of a saviour image among people. Neither of them considers their feminine pride inferior. White femininity and black femininity also play a role. Diana and Meghan were interpreted on the levels of politics, society, gender, etc... Diana was seen as a humanitarian, and Meghan was seen as a feminist. Anyways, Diana and Meghan altered the notion of viewing women in British royalty. The feminist interpretation of Diana and Meghan is often converted to a political interpretation. Diana and Meghan were never hesitant to be feminine and

feminist. The British royalty viewed the femininity of Diana and Meghan as incapability. The British royalty viewed the feminist views of Diana and Meghan as unnecessary. Thus, Diana and Meghan fought against all odds. Meghan and Diana were similar but different in unique ways.

### **Fashion Icon or Mockery Puppet**

People's Princess Diana was loved by most of the British public for her individuality, empathy, and fashion sense. Extravagant press attention was not a boon for Diana. Outwardly, their wedding appears happy, but neither Charles nor Diana was happy in their marriage life. The image of Diana among people was very popular even after her death. None of her agonies could destroy her despite being depressed often. The Duchess of Cambridge is also very popular in both positive and negative ways. Diana's beauty efforts were predominantly appreciated and she was considered a fashion icon. But the predominant beauty efforts of Meghan were ridiculed stating two major reasons: her fashion sense did not suit the classic style of the British royalty or the demands of the British royalty traumatised the fashion element of Meghan. The underlying secret to this negative critical approach to Meghan is her life background.

The difference between Meghan and Diana is, Meghan was an American, biracial film actress but Diana was a white British woman. Any genuine feminist reforms of Meghan are always misinterpreted in negative ways by the paparazzi, by the supporters of the British royalty, and even by people to some extent. Any emancipating measures carried out by Diana were predominantly seen as feminist actions with importance. When Diana could confidently exhibit her fashion sense, Meghan could exhibit her fashion sense with caution. Irrespective of the purposes for which Diana meet people, she was judged beyond her clothing. Meghan was first judged by her clothing irrespective of how high empowerment measures she execute.

### **Royal Pride or Priceless Freedom**

The differences between Diana and Meghan are Diana's mocking was accepted as her intellectual ability to joke but Meghan's light-hearted comedies were often misinterpreted with villainous notions. Diana was excellent at concealing her true emotions many times, except in those heavy traumatic times. Meghan's face was predominantly an open

book exhibiting her true emotions. There is also a significant reason for this. Diana was in a situation, where people viewed her as a miracle, the paparazzi hunted her for headlines due to her popularity. Meghan was not seen as a miracle; the paparazzi chased her predominantly to defame her. Moreover, her genuine feminist ideas gained gradual or minimal importance. The exclamation for Diana was higher than Meghan's. Even before the explanation of her strand about an issue Diana could have a huge positive response from people. Even after the lucid clarification of her strand about an issue, Meghan was in the situation to handle negative criticism. Meghan faced numerous struggles compared to Diana. Meghan was severely criticised when Meghan and Harry quit their royalty. When Diana's emancipation empathized for lack of support from Charles and British royalty, Meghan's emancipation from British royalty was criticised as an act of family breaking. Harry's support for Meghan was initially criticised as non-royal because of gendered stereotyped British royalty, Media and even some sectors of the public. But Harry was very clear since he could not save Diana, victimised by British royalty, and paparazzi, he was very clear to renounce so-called British royal prestige since he doesn't want Meghan to be the victim again. Meghan was not hesitant in making her own choices.

Diana was not so particular in her choices since even before her wedding she wanted to cancel it after knowing Charles – Camilla's love affair, unfortunately, the situation was out of Diana's control. Meghan was confident, and mature right from her childhood which is quite a contrast to her fragile, mischievous childhood of Diana. But Meghan and Diana were similar in the aim to utilise their powerful positions for people-friendly measures and not to exhibit the extravagant atrocity of the British royalty. Meghan is owning her role by engaging personally in issues she cares about and using her position to raise awareness around organizations doing inspiring work and bringing global attention to gender-based violence and the importance of the fight for gender equality. Although Meghan is a powerful voice against gender inequality, there are thousands more like her who are finding their voices and rising to join the fight against gender-based violence. Both Diana and Meghan were criticised as cravers for popularity for their social reforms. Neither Diana nor Meghan did not crave

popularity because they were popular without taking an effort. But this negative criticism did not stop either Meghan or Diana from continuing their social reforms. While Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are technically members of the Royal Family, they removed themselves from their roles as senior working royals earlier this year, meaning that, in theory, the unspoken rules of senior royals wading into political waters don't apply to them. Diana was seen as a motherly creature who could redeem people from miseries. That aura itself was sufficient to wipe off the negative criticism and she was seen as the victim to empathise. Meghan's negative criticism is based on gender and racial discrimination. Both of them emancipated from British royalty when their self-respect is questioned. Both Diana and Meghan had mental health struggles. Both Diana and Meghan suffered from extravagant attention from the press. Both Diana and Meghan were considered to be outsiders when entered into British royalty.

The whips of the British royalty were on Diana and Meghan. This paparazzi's only motive is money earning and neither concerned about Diana's privacy nor Meghan's privacy. This repeated extravagant media attention created the necessity of portraying themselves as cloth showcase. Paparazzi objectified Diana and Meghan and paid zero attention to subjective emotional responses. Paparazzi intended to expose the secrecy castle of Diana but to conceal Meghan's true empowerment intention. Both women admitted they struggled with self-harm. Meghan had suicidal thoughts. Diana, meanwhile, suffered from postpartum depression and cut herself. Meghan asked to seek treatment, but she says she was told it wasn't a feasible option. Diana's cure for mental illness was never expected at her time. Diana and Meghan were affected by overwhelming popularity. Meghan was fortunate since not affected by Harry's jealousy. Diana's increasing popularity was not accepted by jealous Charles. British royalty could not tolerate the popularity of Diana and Meghan since both of them are outsiders. Both Meghan and Diana have parallel experiences. Meghan was married and entered into British royalty after having a strong professional career. In addition to this, she was empowered from a young age. Diana did not have a successful professional career before entering British royalty. Surprisingly, Diana and Meghan have to undergo numerous even though the years between the two

were huge. That is even though the years passed, the whips of the British royalty remained the same. These were two women who entered the royal family with very different backgrounds and at very different points in their lives. Any slightest deviations from the taming by Diana and Meghan were considered a sin by the British royalty. The British royalty interfered in the atrocities of the paparazzi only when the paparazzi caused a negative name for the British royalty. When Diana and Meghan were traumatised by the unnecessary atrocities of the paparazzi, the role of the British royalty was not effective. Paparazzi was preying on Diana and Meghan's privacy. Meghan was fortunate because Harry supported her. Meanwhile, paparazzi also circulated false news about Meghan and Diana. Particularly Diana and Meghan faced numerous false news after separating from the British royalty. Meghan and Diana could not tolerate the cruelties they faced inside the British royalty. When the support is not given from the British royalty Diana and Meghan never failed to move out. The British royals and Charles could not tolerate the genuine popularity of Diana. On the other hand, Harry was extremely happy about Meghan's popularity. Diana and Meghan played a vital role in the reformulation of gender roles in British royalty. Diana and Meghan directly / indirectly altered the ways the people viewed the British royals. That is, they both proved power is not an authority but a responsibility.

### Conclusion

Diana and Meghan are feminists in their unique way. Diana and Meghan were similar but different. Both daughters of divorced parents, love giving back with many philanthropic activities, both are considered by many as Royal rebels,

both went to an all-girls school, both had a tumultuous relationship with the media, and both were only engaged for a year before marriage. Princess Diana and Meghan Markle may never have met in person. But the late royal's presence, twenty-four years after her death, appears to be stronger now more than ever by her daughter-in-law's side as their stories collide. And it's dreamlike, tragic, and wondrous all at once. A heart-breaking fairy tale. The main difference between Diana and Meghan is the way the world approached them, and the way they approached the world.

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