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# The US Women's Struggle for Gender Equality up to 1970s

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## **Declaration**

This work's main idea is our own initiation. This research is based on different previous works which collaborated our work progression arriving at the conclusion. The works are involved either by paraphrasing, summary, or direct quotation; accompanied with full acknowledgments to their contributions to our research. Ergo, we declare as we consider that any kind of plagiarism will result in the failure of our project.

## **Acknowledgements**

We must be thankful to all those who have blessed us with their assistance and support in this journey. The first of many is our dear supervisor, Mr. Nebeg who has been of some marvellous support and guidance. He was the reason for us not to be strayed or misled. Thank You.

Not to forget the main reason for us to be enthusiastic about US history in the first place, our beloved teacher, Ms. Kaid. We appreciate everything that you have done for us. In addition to our last year teacher of methodology Mr. Aribi, who has provided us with the basis of academic writing.

## **Dedication**

We dedicate this work to those who inspired us and kept us motivated throughout the years we spent together. We mention, first of all, our parents, who were a financial and emotional support from the moment of birth to this day. We also mention our families' members, classmates, teachers, and friends who all were a source of aid.

## **Abstract**

This research aims to examine the struggle of the US women throughout the ages. It will be based on gathered data and analysis of women's struggle towards gender equality starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Women's situation has changed in regards to their roles in society. They fought together and gained the right to vote which opened a doorway to liberation. Women were subjugated since the early signs of creation. They had almost no rights to be mentioned and their lives were of inhuman conditions. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, Europe wasn't the right place for women; as they were seen as properties and regarded as servants created to fulfil men's needs. A new hope was on the horizon which was the New World colonization. It gave people a glimpse of a new life and brand new chance for freedom. They rolled in those ships with the thousands and abandoned everything they had to arrive at the land of the dreams. Yet, after few years, the infection of the brutality and oppression followed them. Therefore, they had no other chance but to fight. The gathered data and the progress achieved through this research allowed us to comprehend that women were not absolutely idle during the ages of oppression as we first thought; very few of them actually stood up for themselves via literature. Although, their influence and effect to the public was of minimal consequence, they at least tried to make a difference. Fortunately, we have also found out that the new formed government indeed was a great opportunity for women. For they took advantage of the new hope, the fresh enthusiasm, and the will for a new and improved government free of all the oppression and segregation. Progressively, they started demanding for better lives. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the starting point of the struggle, followed by a century of difficulties and achievements as well. Passing through all the hardships shaped the reality of the modern woman which is different than before. The modern woman has more rights and better position in society. All their efforts were rewarded with success. They became a bit more equal to men than they were before.

## **List of Abbreviations**

US = United States (of America).

WWII = Second World War.

WRM= Women's Rights Movement..

NWSA = the National Woman Suffrage Association.

AWSA = the American Woman Suffrage Association.

NAWSA = the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

ERA = Equal Rights Amendment.

WASP = Women's Army Service Pilots.

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## **General Introduction**

Throughout history of men, women were the subject of humiliation, segregation, discrimination, subjugation and racial profiling. Women were poorly educated, treated and fed. They were seen as lesser beings than men. They had no right to speak for themselves and no opinions to be cared about, their primary reason for existence was seen nothing other than procreation. They were seen as a way of amusement and family utilities. This was prior to the discovery of the New World which was seen as a safe haven for the oppressed and subjugated ones. Yet, this was not the case because their sufferings continued in the colonies, and later, in the so-called New Democratic Nation as well; not to forget the African slaves who were brought from their homes involuntarily and unwillingly to serve the needs of the white men.

Our research is an attempt to describe and analyse how the American women exactly got to the point of gender equality. Their struggle for gender equality was carried out through years of hardships. Onto this path of righteousness and equality, women discovered that they were not the only subject of discrimination. They found out that children, slaves and prisoners were also victims. Ergo, they have set their path towards demanding their rights as well as improving social conditions for others. The main demand was the right to vote, because achieving it would open new horizons for them and provide the power for a change to a better situation in the society.

The purpose of this study is to analyse and investigate the causes and consequences of American women's struggle. The questions that will be answered in an attempt to achieve our primary objectives are various. There are two main questions that formulate our research how were women seen before and after

discovering the New World? And what were the circumstances that pushed the American women towards an uprising? The other two questions are sub-questions which direct our path of inquiry onto a specific one. What were the aims behind American women's activism? To what extent did the right to vote help American women?

We start our research by a simple question, why didn't women stand up for themselves or at least attempt at doing so till the early 19th century? Well, we hypothesize that women didn't have the opportunity to doing so until coming to New World and the formation of the independent country. Probably, this had been of great help to them as the "young" new form country was fed up of all kinds of oppression applied by the British government. So, they strove to make it a better country. Ergo, women possibly took advantage of the new ambition and the country's massive hatred towards oppression and started to convey their early steps towards gender equality.

History is the basis and the proof of what has men gone through before our time. It is the light and the darkness, on which we base the course of modern men. For us, it has been so interesting to deal and discover the deeds of men how they lived, prospered, died, and eternalized as an important part of the human civilization. It is in our nature to be curious and enthusiastic in regards to what happened in the previous ages especially the not so long ago events that have a deep impact on modern life. Despite the numerous events that shaped the history of the world, one has caught our deepest attention and curiosity was the difficult struggle of women towards gender equality. Their struggle has pushed the United States in a different direction, a better direction, which caused it to be one of the greatest nations if not the greatest nation in the world.

Since our research is about historical events, our study is based on the descriptive analytical approach. We will use the collected data to describe the events and then analyse the course on which how these events happened. The process of collecting data is based on; first, the preliminary reading that led us to choose our topic. Next, reading books, magazines, articles and newspapers. Then, surfing the net to find the needed documents and information to state the correct facts and describe them as they were. Time as a factor was very restrictive to tackle all aspects of this research. Plus, the access to many resources including libraries and official documents, to some extent, limited the research area.

This research will integrate the already existing knowledge with some various aspects and academic prospective. It will help bring multiple pieces of information to clarify and analyse the vague points of the American women's struggle towards gender equality. It is expected that the analysis and the description of how women were subjugated and oppressed in addition to the path and the course taken to ratify the discrimination will be complementary and subordinate as far as research goes.

Regarding that this dissertation's main point of discussion is American Women's Struggle for Gender Equality up to 1970s, it is clear that our research has been preceded by too many similar works. The following paragraphs are devoted for mentioning ideas from some of the most famous researches.

Sandy (2007) "Women's Roles in the Middle Ages", in overall Europe during the Middle Ages, women were inferior to that of a man in legal status. Throughout medieval Europe, women were pressured to not attend courts and leave all legal business affairs to their husbands. In the legal system, women were regarded

as the properties of men so any threat or injury to them was in the duty of their male guardians.

According to NAWSA (1940), the period from 1840 to 1940 can be called the century of women. Women made a first step in 1848 when they agreed to incorporate, organize and fight against the oppression. These objectives were almost achieved and accomplished in 1940 except some issues. This century was an exceptional period in the history of mankind. However, it witnessed so much success for women in terms of freedom and rights. The final victory that has been won did not come down the drain, but it came out of patience, self-confidence, determination, organisation, will, unity, and motivation. Women's campaign can be considered as a model for those who want to fight for their rights in the future.

Although the works mentioned above do not tackle the exact point that this dissertation is about to discuss, but they can give hints, instructions, backgrounds, information, and points of view about the main topic. These writers were not chosen randomly but chosen accordingly to their attitudes and efforts.

# **Chapter One**

A Historical Background

From the dawn of men, women were a subject of humiliation and subjugation. They were poorly treated, fed, and educated. This was in almost every nation, tribe, and community throughout the world. The starting point of this research will be from the 16<sup>th</sup> century ending in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century; as we , in this chapter, thoroughly examine the situation of women in both the old European and American civilizations.

### **1.1- The Status of Women in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century in Europe:**

Women throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century were fairly powerless. The position of women was very limited during this time period. Women with higher status roles have little or no saying in decision making. They had specific roles they had to follow. It enrolls conceiving children, preferably male ones. Women took pride in being mothers and the duties that came along with being a mother. Women lost voice powers during the Renaissance<sup>1</sup>. Amid the Renaissance, ladies lost considerably a greater amount of what minimal monetary control they had since men progressively left home to work on the whole male callings .Thus, isolating home and work deserting ladies working in the unpaid home. Women were considered the weaker sex both physically and emotionally. Many powerful men thought that women were not capable of thinking rationally about politics because they were too emotional. So, they had no right to vote. They were constantly being told how to live their lives and they had no choice but to conform. They had to uphold the role of a lady, meaning always being hygienic, having a smile on her face, and catering to their husbands. Wives of the pastors were instructed to play a big role in the church. They were drilled to organize bake sales, take care of fundraising and be cheerful and obedient. Catholic men were allowed to divorce their wives, if they could get a hold of

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<sup>1</sup> Renaissance is a period in European history, from the 14th to the 17th century, regarded as the cultural bridge between the Middle Ages and modern history.

indolence. Indolence would erase the marriage as if never married by law. Women had no say in this, if the man had indolence the woman would simply have to agree on the divorce leaving the woman to have to fend for herself and her children. (Tim Lambert)

Women were even held back from illustrating paintings. Women were generally excluded from practising the most prestigious and artistic techniques, such as fresco painting. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, women weren't allowed to have a passion for painting; instead they were to choose from working as a shoemaker, spinning cloth, or becoming a tailor. This was only if she had time to do anything else aside from being a housewife. Housewives were kept very busy and men could not usually run a business or farm without the help of their wives. Poor and middle-class wives were kept very busy, for rich women were not idle either. In a big house they had to organize and supervise servants. During this era, women were treated very unfairly. The position and views of women were unjust and degrading. They were seen more as objects than an actual contribution to the family. As a result, the rights of women were stripped away only bearing the suffering a woman writes for centuries to come. (Tim Lambert)

## **1.2- Women's Life in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century in Europe:**

The human being must have rights, and one of the many is the ability to choose his way of supporting himself or family which is a job. But women in the 17<sup>th</sup> century weren't allowed to choose the job they desire like a lawyer or a doctor; they were pardoned for some jobs like spinning cloth, milliners, dyers and embroiderers. Some women prepared food such as brewers, bakers or confectioners. However, the majority of women were only housewives kept busy doing whatever men want

because men couldn't run the farm or the business without the wife's help. ( Helena Wojtczak)

Households in The 17<sup>th</sup> century were actually self-sufficient. This meant that the housewife had to bake bread for the family, brew their beer, curing bacon, salting meat, and making pickles and all sort of preserved food. All of these were extremely essential as there were neither fridges nor freezers at that time and even water wasn't safe for them to drink; hence brewing their own beer. In the countryside, a housewife's duties exceeded the above regular chores onto making candles, spinning wool and linen, grew herbs and vegetables, sometimes kept bees, milked cows, and fed the animals; adding on top of that, the housewife had to cook, wash clothes, clean the house, and finally taking the goods to the market. (Helena Wojtczak)

Having in mind that only the wealthy families could afford a doctor, a housewife in the 17<sup>th</sup> century had to possess some knowledge regarding medicine. She was supposed to treat her family from wounds and sicknesses. If she was unable to cure some illnesses they would go to a wise woman. Although, the 17<sup>th</sup> century's rich women were not idle as most think. They had big responsibilities towards their houses and husbands' business. They were supposed to supervise and organize the servants, and manage the estate if the husband was away. A merchant's wife did his accounts and took over and ran the business if he wasn't around. Merchants often leave their businesses to their wives because they know they could run them. Historically, every civilization saw women differently. For instance, In Ancient Egypt women could own a property and sign contracts. Some women were also able to read and write. There was also a woman Pharaoh called Hatshepsut who once ruled over ancient Egypt. (Helena Wojtczak)

### **1.3- Colonial Women:**

The New world was seen as a new future in the horizon for the European citizens. After the establishment of the colonies in the New World, many people rushed to settle there. Taking the minority of the top colonial society, there was a growing number of poor people. Poverty is always a terrible way to live ;yet to sense and live in poverty in the colonies has a far greater difference than it was in England, which is why most of the citizens gave everything they had to get there. America has lots of food, and there was the possibility of getting some land, provided that you didn't die of dysentery or that you weren't a woman.

Married women in the 18<sup>th</sup> century colonial America generally couldn't own property, and husbands usually willed their land to their sons and their personal items to their daughters, meaning that almost all landowners were male. In the earliest days of the colonization, when everyone was needed to ensure their survival of the colonies, women had a greater role in the economy, although they were still expected to be wives and mothers above all else. Male dominance was written into law and solidified in practice. Women's work was mostly confined to the home, and especially for lower-class women, it involved a lot of drudgery. As one woman, Mary Cooper, wrote, in 1769, in her diary “I am dirty and distressed, almost wearied to death... This day is forty years since I left my father's house and come here, and here have I seen little else but hard labor[sic] and sorrow”. This actually can be of great help to remind us that history is about much more than the lives of kings like James II and rebels like Nathaniel Bacon. The real story of history is about regular people trying to take care of their families and not to die, because life at that time was severely difficult for the ordinary people more than anyone can imagine so. (The Life of a Colonial Wife)

As the colonial life was so much different from today's, the roles of women also differ in various ways. Women were primarily expected to get married and start a family, have children, work in the home and obey their husbands. This limitation put onto women didn't have many consequences in preventing them from having a great role in the growth and survival of the colonies. It was the heart chattering and backbreaking work of women at that time that the United States was built upon. Yet, this was with few rights for them, almost no education and had to work both inside the house, taking care of the family plus cooking and cleaning, and outside the house, working in the garden or farms. (The Life of a Colonial Wife)

The colonial life for women was full of hardships and based primarily on male dominance. They received very little formal education that allowed some to be able to read and write but most of them were illiterate. They only learned the skills that allowed them to be useful in regards of household duties. It was their main and primary reason for existing to be able to maintain the household properly, to be able to raise children, cook meals, sew clothes, and weave cloth. They worked every day from sun up to sun down. With very few legal rights, they were also expected to obey the man in their life whether it was the father, brother, or husband. Their legal status was next to nothing as they were not allowed to vote, hold public office or own a piece of land or attend in courts. (Sandy Bardsley 2007) The women's legal identity was attached and represented by her husband. They could be beaten and forcibly returned to their husbands if they tried to escape. So, the status of women was based on her husband; if a woman was married to a wealthy business owner or a wealthy tobacco farmer, she would be considered as a woman of high status. But that is always accompanied with her being the legal property of the man, whether she was poor, rich, married or unmarried. That being said, during the colonial period man had

the unlimited power in the household. So, that means the man decided how the money was used. (The Life of a Colonial Wife)

Most colonial women were Christian and the majority of them were either Puritans or Quakers. Puritans practiced strictness and austerity in their religion, lifestyle and conduct and women were expected to abide by these rules, so women were pure, quiet and basically submissive. They were expected to be modest and decorous. Divorce was uncommon but there was a law within the puritan community, because they preferred law and order, which allowed divorce because they would rather have divorced couple than unrest within their marriage. Women also were given a lower ranking in society than men by the colonial hierarchy, even if a woman was smarter than a man or capable of doing things than him, they were always ranked below. (Glenda Riley)<sup>2</sup>

Politically and according to English laws, women were under control of their husbands or fathers. This gave men the absolute and unlimited power in the household. It was even legal and normal for a man to beat his wife and not face legal consequences because they weren't any. Although divorce was legal, yet it was very uncommon. Ergo, most families would stay together even if there were abusive relationships.

#### **1.4- Life of the African American Women in the Colonial Times:**

Slavery was highly popular in the colonies as it reached one third of the population in some colonies. It was seen as a necessary act to ensure the greater good and the welfare of colonies. Some might say that the life for the slaves wasn't that

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<sup>2</sup> qtd in, *The Puritan Divorce Allows Escape From the Chain of Matrimony*, <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/the-puritan-divorce-allows-escape-from-the-chain-of-matrimony/> Web. 21 March 2017

bad, yet it was actually much worse. This didn't mean that the citizens were oblivious to the filthy and inhuman status of the slaves, but they supported slavery partly for aspirational reasons and partly because the racism inherent to the system gave the poorest whites legal and social status. Also, southern intellectuals worked hard to encourage these ideas of white solidarity and to make the case for slavery. Many of the founders saw slavery as a necessary evil. Jefferson once wrote "As it is, we have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other."(Thomas Jefferson 1820) They argued that black people were inherently inferior to whites and that not to keep those in the slavery would upset the natural order of things. But the truth is that slavery was a coerced labour that relied upon intimidation, brutality and dehumanization. (Thomas Jefferson 1820)

That being said, the life of the slaves was a true torture. Their legal status was disregarded and put to nothing. They were treated like machines. The colonial life for the slaves was based on work and nothing else. Women and men slaves worked at similar levels for up to 18 hours a day. Women slaves, however, had it so much worse. Women are genetically weaker than men, because man is built for hard work. Yet, women slaves had the same amount of hours and the same amount of work the man has. The hardships that women slaves endured at that time were unimaginable. Taking under consideration the filthy wooden cabins, the beds of hay, and one piece of cloth they were given for summer or winter, the one blanket and one extra for the new born child; women, ergo, had it much worse than men. As they had to work for a low pay and no matter what the circumstances had been. (Gettysburg College)

In addition to women working in the field, they had also to work in household chores. Enslaved women's work was brutal taking in consideration the sexual abuse,

the change in family structure, and the intensity of their work. Enslaved women, when in pregnancy, had to continue her work and take care of her family. The new born child is also considered as a slave and therefore a property of the slave-owner. Even the identity of the family isn't acknowledged, as they were erased and given new names according to the names of their masters.

The same slave master, who owned us, put his last name on us to denote that we were his property. So, that when you see a negro today who's named Johnson, if you go back in his history you will find that he was once, his grandfather or one of his four fathers was owned by a white man who was named Johnson...My father didn't know his last name. My father got his last name from his grandfather and his grandfather got it from his grandfather who got it from the slave master. The real names of our people were destroyed in the slavery. (Malcolm X)<sup>3</sup>

In this quote we can notice that Malcolm X explained in details how they have lost their original identity. He stated that their names were taken away due to the enslavement and gotten a name according to the slave master, because they were considered as property. Thus, the name of the slave master signifies a “label” of possession to said master.

### **1.5- Roles of Women in the Revolutionary War:**

The American Revolution is also known as the American Revolutionary War and the US war of the independence. This conflict was a result of growing tension between the colonists living in the 13 colonies and the British crown. The British

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<sup>3</sup> Watched in a Youtube video on 23 Apr 2017

created these tensions by passing many Bills and laws that the colonists felt that they were violating their natural rights as better citizens. The British citizens had the right to tax themselves; therefore the colonists thought that only their own colony or colonial assembly should be able to pass their taxes. When parliament continued to pass more and more laws such as the Towns and Duty act, Stamp Act and Sugar Act, the colonists grow more and more upset. (Wikipedia Contributors, American Revolutionary War)

### **A- In the Society:**

It is important to understand that the colonists were not angry that they had to pay the actual tax as they were lower than the taxes in Britain. The colonists were angry at their denied access to self-government. At first, Independence was not a widespread bad idea; however after the publication of several documents as Thomas Paine Common Sense, the colonists become more infuriated. Many people who were undecided or thought that there is a chance for reconciliation with Britain, were convinced that the independence was just the only option. This was especially shown after King George rejected the Olive Branch petition. Once it became apparent that it was absolutely necessary to break the bonds with Britain, many events succeeded. (Wikipedia Contributors, American Revolutionary War)

After the meeting of the second continental Congress, the colonial militia became an officially funded army, the continental army. The army had early success at battles such as Bunker Hill and Concorde. (Wikipedia Contributors, American Revolutionary War)<sup>4</sup> They later had harder times that eventually pulled through. They beat the largest and most powerful military force in the world, leading them to gain

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<sup>4</sup> Web. 25 March 2017.

their independence. However independence never would have been possible if it wasn't for the women of this time. Women took on many roles to achieve independence which were extremely critical in the success of the war. Some of these parts were conventional while others were very outrageous for the time, from going to homes to get other women to consent to a blacklist of the British merchandise, to supporting parts, for example, medical attendants, cooks, and servants, to more straightforward parts, for example, secret fighters and spies. Women were with the behind -the -scenes work that made this war a success. These women sometimes known as the Daughters of Liberty did more than anyone has suspected and helped gain America its independence. (E Pluribus Unum 2009)

Established in 1765, the Daughters of Liberty were successful colonial American group, consisting of women who showed their loyalty participating in events such as boycotts of British goods. They refused to drink British tea and use their skills to weave their own cloth making America less dependent on British textiles .The Daughters of Liberty proved that women could successfully be involved in politics. They help to popularize ideas of rebellion and resistance, they signed agreements and pledges swearing their allegiance to the patriots and gaining support for the movement. (E Pluribus Unum 2009)

### **B- Healthcare:**

One of the most important abilities in the war is medical care. Women, at that time, took on even the roles of nurses as it became necessary in 1777. After the men went to the war, their families had no other way to take care of themselves but to enlist as nurses. While specialists did the greater part of the talented therapeutic obligations, the work of the lady performed was similarly as vital as it normally

included patient care. Their occupation was for the most part about custodial work, bolstering and washing patients, discharging chamber pots, cleaning healing facility wards, and cooking. None of this was pleasant work but it was these essential actions that most of people take for granted. According to Charles P. Neimeyer in his book *the Revolutionary War 2007*, women had a great role in the military too as they often came up with new inventions to help treat and care for the patients.

Becoming a nurse was a risky job; this was for the obvious reason that hospitals had a very high mortality rate in. However, the job offered food and pay and many were brave enough to give their service despite the risks. Mary Waters was an important nurse in the war. She was originally from Dublin and immigrated to Philadelphia. She was on the verge of abandoning her professional medicine when she was convinced to become a revolutionary nurse by Ferdinand Farmer. Amid the war, she worked energetically in healing facilities for the American armed force winning the acclaim of one of the perpetual nationalists Dr Benjamin Rush. (Wikipedia Contributors, Mary Waters) Another well-known nurse named Mery Crasmy who served on-board the colonial war ships like *The Defence* in 1777. She was one of the four nurses who were responsible for taking care of 100 wounded soldiers. Employment as a revolutionary nurse was demanding harsh and risky job but it is one the war could not have been a success without.

### **C- In the Military:**

More well-known occupations for women amid the war were needle workers and housekeepers. There were also positions in the military normally held by men such as laundresses and water bearers formed the first positions for women. Much the same as with the medical caretakers, a considerable lot of these ladies were poor

spouses, little girls, and moms who took after the troopers. Since a large portion of these ladies was acclimated to do housework, at any rate, they were appropriate for these positions. A case of one of them was Margaret Corbin of Philadelphia; she took after her better half John Corbin to the armed force where he enrolled in the principal organization of the Pennsylvania ordnance as a matrice. Amid the skirmish of Fort Washington in November of 1776, Margret was with her significant other in the war zone when he was abruptly killed. The canon was then unmanned, Margret took the ordinance and kept shooting until she was harmed herself. The colonists lost the battle but continued to make progress. Corbin became the first woman to earn a pension for her service in the revolutionary war. She inspired many other women to take part in the struggle for independence. Women like Margret who stood up to the challenge and stepped in when they were needed for critical points in the war. (Charles Patrick Niemeyer 2007)

According to Major Problems in the era of the American Revolution 1760-1791, Edited by Richard Brown on page 297, patriots were sceptical about giving women official status in the army. Washington objected to a fixed quote of women but the women followed nevertheless. Numerous women filled in for the army in a specialized group of secret soldiers. These female troopers camouflaged themselves by taking on different and short hairstyles, restricting their bosoms with wraps and receiving manly names. The purposes behind doing this changes from woman to woman, however, most of them identified with youthful, poor, and unmarried who joined to help their families financially or just to have the chance to battle for American's freedom. Some well-known female fighters incorporate Deborah Sampson from Massachusetts who named herself Robert Shirtless in 1781 and served for over a year prior to being found, and Ann Bailey of Boston who enrolled in 1777

under the pseudonym Sam Gay and got to be corporal before her real name was leaked to the public weeks after that, then she was captured and detained. After her discharge, she joined and filled in once more.

Many women were amazing leaders in the army leading men to victories. Some women took on even riskier roles during the war and became spies. It is not known exactly how many women participated. Most female spies filled in for the British military camps as cooks or servants, where they spied on discussions about convoy developments, military arrangements, and supply deficiencies. Since the war was fought on ranches, city roads and at the door step of numerous American homes, women spies were effortlessly ready to convey the data back without being identified. Very little is thought about women spies at Massachusetts since they didn't have a focal spy framework amid the attack of Boston as they did later on in New York. This lack of organisation help to make it harder for women spies to be caught. The Culper Spy Ring was created by the US army exactly when the war broke out in New York. It included a specific and special for women as spies. (History.com Staff, The Culper Spy Ring) One celebrated female spy was Hannah Blair a Quaker from North Carolina, she had a ranch where she covered up and ensured nationalists, supply sustenance, and medicinal help to officers concealed in the forested areas, fixed their clothes and conveyed messages. At the point when the followers found what she was doing, they torched her ranch. In any case, after the war congress remunerated her for her misfortune by giving her an annuity for her great works. (Paula 1979)

It was not only men who risked their lives for independence. Women assumed a huge part amid the war; garments and different materials were expected to dress loyalist warriors. In this way, they got together to turn and sew uniforms. At the point when civilian armies spoke to general society for regalia and sustenance, handcrafted

ranchers and homestead crops originated from women. They ventured forward to fill openings left by injured or murdered fighters and performed undertakings once in the past left just for men, for example, cultivating and maintaining a business. Numerous men would have come back to liquidation after the war had it not been for the endeavours of their spouses. Without women, male soldiers would not have the necessary amount of clothes, food, reinforcements, and secret information during the fighting. Not only would they have lost the war, they would have left the economy in a crippling state. Some of these women were recognized for their staggering service with pensions and pay; a few such as Deborah Sampson even wrote memoirs about their service, still many were never rewarded for the sacrifices they have made towards American Independence including their lives. These women took on many selfless roles to achieve independence risking everything and were the central reason that the war was a success and Americans have freedom today. (Jubilee Kline 2014)

### **1.6- Native American Women's life:**

The history of indigenous people of the New World isn't separate from American history; it's an essential part of it. Native Americans have been so successfully marginalized, both geographically and metaphorically, that it's easy to either forget about them or else view them merely as people to be pitied or reviled. This is extremely unfair to their marvellous heritage and their great contributions mainly to how women should be seen.

The Native American women's lives were pretty much different in regards to their roles towards their communities. The Native American men were concerned with hunting, warfare, and interacting with foreigners. Ergo, they had more visible public roles. Yet the women were more concerned with the welfare of the community.

They were responsible for all the chores inside the community like farming. As their status was concerned with the welfare of the community, they possessed some serious political, economic and social power. They owned their own houses and in most societies clan memberships and material goods had to be run pass women. Even though Native women had great responsibilities and hard chores, they weren't subjugated nor pushed over by other men. They were seen as a sacred human being who brought life to earth by having children and some even believed they used their own bodies to create earth from which plants and animals emerged. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)

The assimilation of the European culture and Natives one brought several setbacks in regards to women's status. Although Native women fought and strongly opposed such ideas, yet the leniency of others pushed the white men towards moving things even further. The Europeans demanded that they only should deal with the men of the tribe disregarding the habits and traditions of the Natives. They stated that the Native men should follow the Christian modes of patriarchy and gendered division of labour; that lead man to be a farmer and woman to become a housewife nothing more. Yet, other scholars, such as Suny Fredonia anthropologist Joy Bilharz and University of North Carolina historian Theda Perdue, have argued that many women held their political power and position and defended it strongly against the Western beliefs. One of the many cultural identities that stood over the Western policies is the matrilineal inheritance of clan identity; which remained a very important section. Women on that basis have had a strong influence on several political and economic decisions using their maternal authority. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)

The United States of America have always tried to take more lands from the indigenous tribes and expand their territory. Some of the tribes have surrendered their

lands with conditions and many have fought with wars or using some political ways to escape the blood bath. Although, when the US increased pressure on the Cherokee tribe to give up their Eastern lands to the states women have played a marvellous role in defending their lands. They have petitioned the council to oppose such acts and stand their grounds. They have strongly reminded that they have raised the council on those sacred lands which God have blessed them with, and pressed their children not give up more lands. One woman has chosen a different path to oppose the pressure by writing directly to Benjamin Franklin in 1787. In that letter she advocated peace between the US and the Cherokee tribe. She stated that the political leaders

Ought to mind what a woman says, and look upon her as a mother – and I have Taken the prevelage[sic] to Speak to you as my own Children . . . and I am in hopes that you have a beloved woman amongst you who will help to put her children right if they do wrong, as I shall do the same. (Cherokee Indian Woman)<sup>5</sup>

### **1.7- The Situation of Women prior to the WRM:**

The US constitution is the shortest and oldest written constitution of any major nation, where Washington and Madison were the only presidents who signed the constitution. Plus, the word "Democracy" does not exist in the written form of the constitution. This would suggest that democracy was paid with very low if not any importance to the newly formed government. That's why we can find evidence that it was a nation built on white male dominance with absolute neglect to the role women could play with equality and eradication of gender and racial profiling. This neglect

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<sup>5</sup> qtd in. Paul Lauter et al., eds, "The Heath Anthology of American Literature", Volume A: Beginnings to 1800, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: 2009

lead for women to be seen as properties and were legally dead in regards to law. Adding to the suffered and oppressed women, there were also many victims of the system such as pilgrims who travelled and spent months on board of The Mayflower where disease killed half of them. Also, in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, (History.com Staff, The Mayflower) the Wampanoag people, who greeted the pilgrims, had a vast territory that included Massachusetts and Rhode Island but shrunk to almost nothing as they perished from disease brought accidentally by the Europeans. The pilgrims took most of the native's lands, terrorized, killed, and tortured its people. (Wikipedia Contributors, Wampanoag) Next, Prisoners were also victims; they were constantly tortured and beaten sometimes resulting in serious and crippling injuries or even death. They were also "living" in Filth where hygiene was next to nothing as they were deprived of suitable health care, clean food or accommodation which resulted in diseases and naturally high number of fatality. Not to forget the middle and lower class children who were terrorized and beaten by their drunken fathers which caused serious psychological problems and created a new stereotype of low self-esteemed and damaged generation who will grow up to be even worse than the old one. (Wikipedia Contributors, Wampanoag)

Backpedalling to the ladies, most American women who decent from Europe, lead lives like their European partner .They were socially and legitimately subservient to men and caught inside a patriarchal structure. Lower and common labourers were shockingly equivalent to men of their own class since they were similarly poor and oppressed. Regularly, it returns to financial aspects; the higher the social class the more noteworthy limitations are on ladies; disregarding the truth that higher class ladies have the most minimal death rate; this is for the conspicuous reasons of having a clean and an average living game plan or condition which will constrain the quantity

of ailments that the lower class ladies need to manage all the time. (Wikipedia Contributors, Wampanoag).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century will be the launch of our investigation on which we analyse the women's status at that time, which they possessed a similar legal and civil status do that of preceding centuries. Affected by the more liberated organizations of the Western Hemisphere, an augmentation of ladies' personal freedom was found. Except Russia, every nation in the world did not allow women to own a property nor to conduct a will. The Common Law in operation in Great Britain and the United States states that the couple is "one, and that one is the husband." The legitimate presence of the wife was so intertwined to her significant other that she was thought to be "dead in law" The husband had the supreme control of her in all parts of life through ruling property, gathering and utilizing her wages, choosing the sustenance and attire for her and kids, settling on the training and religion of their youngsters, including an expansive degree of controlling her flexibility of thought, discourse and activity. The spouse had the privilege to give the kids and embryos to other gatekeepers. He additionally had the lawful ideal to rebuff her in the event of undesirable or wrong conduct; the courts will meddle just on the off chance that the reprimand surpassed the well-known thought of suitable seriousness. (Wikipedia Contributors, Wampanoag).

Legally, single women were as independent as men; but they weren't able to manage their business affairs due to unaccepted forms. They had no trust in themselves nor open support to attempt endeavours of freedom, since ladies were pushed into occupations that they weren't acclimated to; so the world trusted them as absolutely unequipped for doing as such other than the "traditional" or customary jobs that they were made to do i.e. maids, housekeepers, and mothers. Just constrained

occupations were open to ladies and those were at that point hoarded and taken by poor people. (Tim Lambert)

While in the congregation, the as far as anyone knows put for equity, pardoning, and comfort, they weren't permitted to even perform their churchly duties. Men and women had also separate seating during church services in order that "men might commend themselves to God without interruption."

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Dr Gregory's *"Legacy to My Daughters"* expressed the correct attitude for women to behave at that time according to the situation.

If you happen to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from men, who look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts and a cultivated understanding.... not to dance with spirit when gaiety of heart would make them feel eloquent, lest men who beheld them might either suppose that they were not entirely dependent on their protection for their safety or entertain dark suspicions as to their modesty.<sup>6</sup>

Jean Jacques Rousseau's philosophy has had some very strong influence in France during the closing years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Rousseau had said

The education of women should always be relative to that of man. To please Us, to be useful to Us, to make Us love and esteem them, to educate Us when

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<sup>6</sup> Pages 36, 37

young, to take care of Us when grown up, to advise, to console Us, to render Our lives easy and agreeable; these are the duties of women at all times and what they should be taught from their infancy. (Emilius and Sophia)

His philosophy was the representative of thought and feeling at that time. It was built upon to become a way of life. This has rendered women a being lesser than man, a sort of machine that its only job is caretaker of an utmost and a supreme being called "Men".

Cult of Domesticity appeared when the situation moved away from women doing the producing as a result of the shift of production being moved from homes to factories. The Cult dictates that a woman's place is only in her home. So, rather than making products and improving her life style, a woman's job was to enable her husband to make and produce goods. This was by providing food and a clean living space but also by providing what Erick Foner labelled as "non-Market Values like love, friendship, and mutual obligation". (Wikipedia Contributors, Cult of Domesticity)

Woman is to win everything by peace and love; by making herself so much respected, esteemed, and loved, that to yield to her opinions and gratify her wishes, will be the free-will offering of the heart ... But the moment woman begins to feel promptings of ambition, or thirst for power, her aegis of defense[sic] is gone. All the sacred protection of religion, all the generous promptings of religion, all the generous promptings of chivalry, all the poetry of romantic gallantry depend upon woman's retaining her place as dependent and defenseless[sic], and making no claims, and maintaining no right but what are the gifts of honor[sic], rectitude and love. (Catherine E. Beecher)

This is a solid confirmation that it wasn't just men who had faith in the Cult of Domesticity; equality amongst men and ladies was so radical around then that practically nobody grasped it. In spite of the financial development to the market, the possibility for ladies to work was exceptionally constrained for that just low paying work was accessible to them and they couldn't control their wages in the event that they were hitched; still poor women found work in processing plants or as a domestic servants. However, the Cult of Domesticity expresses that respectable white collar class ladies ought to remain at home. To be perfectly honest, most American ladies had no possibility in finding a beneficial employment outside their homes, so ladies left the customary circles and seek occupations in different movements. (Wikipedia Contributors, Cult of Domesticity)

On the off chance that ladies were viewed as an ethical focus at home, they would likewise claim to be the moral still, small voice of the country; which was generally why reform movements were interested in ladies. Along these lines, it wouldn't show up as irregular for ladies to end up plainly dynamic in developments to build havens for the rationally sick or to lead the pack in calming the men of America like Carry Nation who assaulted bars with an axe or the to some degree less radical Francis Willard who established the ladies' Christian Temperance Union in 1874 which would be a standout amongst the most capable campaigners in the US before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Wikipedia Contributors, Carry Nation) Additionally, ladies gave various speeches in the 19<sup>th</sup> century highlighting awfulness stories about men who discovered comfort in alcohol, as opposed to looking for shelter from the cruel and extreme aggressive monetary market onto the cherishing grasp of their homes. These speeches demonstrate that men are spending all what they procure on

drink leaving spouses and kids with no care or consideration, starving, and solidifying. The Temperance Movement had a gigantic effect on American life in light of the fact that toward the finish of it both male and female supporters of the development would go to the acknowledgment that ladies would be a more proficient and dependable partner against liquor just in the event that they could vote.

On the light that women could have strong footing on the nations' affairs and the on-going struggle for justice and equality; Women in the entire nation started to think with a rebellious mind and acknowledged the fact that change is a must, equality and justice is what comes next. So in March, 1776, Abigail Adams sent a letter to her husband saying

I long to hear you have declared an independency, and, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of husbands. Remember all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention are not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound to obey any laws in which we have no voice or representation. (Abigail 1776)

To conclude, the previous Western civilizations have built their strength through blood and despair; no place for the weak what so ever. This included the women, which have struggled from the dawn of men. They have lived in inhuman circumstances with no regards to their suffering or their opinions. They were seen as lesser beings than men and a means for procreation and pleasure. No matter what

they've done or said nothing has changed. Yet, a fortunate accident lead to the discovery of a New World on which, after several decades of hardships, will give women the upper hand in placing their legal status and demanding their rights in the new formed country.

# **Chapter Two**

Big Step towards Gender Equality

This chapter is devoted to discuss the process in which women have gained a real huge advantage that supported their movement. It will mention Women's Rights Movement as the key to achieve their primary issues such as women's suffrage. The latter was considered as a turning point for women to winning other necessary rights.

## **2.1- The Situation of Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century:**

When we say American women, there are different races; we mean Native American women, African American women, and white (mainly European) women, in addition to the minority of Latin and Asian women. Each group of women have lived different conditions and faced different circumstances in terms of social, religious, and political life.

### **A- Native American Women:**

A Native American or Indian woman of the 19<sup>th</sup> century would be like a woman with smooth dark hair, parted down the middle, wearing a skirt and a type of corsage both made of leather. She would normally have stockings to her knees and moccasins on her feet. This was the look of a typical Indian woman of that time. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)

A man could have as many wives as he could feed. This is called polygamy. Although divorce was allowed, it was not quite common. Divorcing a woman was a cause that makes it hard for a man to find a new wife. Punishments, real tough punishments which can even be to kill, were allowed for men if wives were unfaithful. Young Indian girls were also a source of fun and entertainment for visitors while they stay in the tribe for a period of time. Indian women were completely different than the white; the first had far more responsibilities than that of white

women of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They took care of household responsibilities, raised their children, did all the farming, and performed other jobs. Hunting was almost the only activity that Indian men did. But this did not prevent women to have respectful jobs, such as medicine women and warriors. Stressful life, having big families, and all the responsibilities overwhelmed them, even though it was not a big issue for them to despair. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)

Moving to the social and political position of Native American women in a tribe, when a man and woman are married, they married into the wife's family, because it was more important than his. Old females used to preside in a family. Politically, only Indian women could chose chiefs and only they had authority to make decisions about them if they thought it was necessary. The Indian and especially the Iroquois women were the most powerful women in the United States during this time period. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)

### **B- African American Women:**

This group of women are brought through slave trade. They were the most enslaved women of this era, where they worked in the house. They were nannies for their masters' children, and they did housework. They were also used to work in the fields. The majority of them were illiterate, they could not read nor write. They had little to no education; however, some letters from slaves to their masters have been found, showing that a few were able to read and write. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)<sup>7</sup>

Finishing a daily work for their masters was not a sign to have a rest, but women used to go back to their slave quarters and homes and do housework. There

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<sup>7</sup> Accessed on 24 March 2017

were some exceptions that had families and stayed together. Slave trade prohibited African American women from having their husbands and bearing children, but it was not the case for children whose fathers were white and were born illegitimately. Women sometimes used to spare their children from the horrors of slavery, as masters were often kinder to their illegitimate children. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)

Not all African American women were slaves, but those in North America lived free. They escaped from slavery. Thousands of them were helped by Harriet Tubman. Some of them were freed because of being born free of previous freed slaves. Freed slaves were usually able to get education, and they learned to read and write. States as Philadelphia, Boston and New York had a lot of freed slaves who had their own churches with their own way of worship. Women were worse off than white women by far, but they were four times more likely to have a job outside the house than white women would. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)

### **C- White American Women:**

White American women are divided into classes. The lower class women who were daughters of poor farmers, they often worked to finance their families, because the money made by their husbands and fathers were not enough to feed the family. This class worked for higher class families. They did household duties. They could also work as laundresses, seamstresses or nurses. Midwives or dressmakers had the highest paying positions, because they required skills and training. In addition to these jobs, these women were also responsible of taking care of their families and doing

household works too, such as cleaning, cooking, making clothes...etc. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)<sup>8</sup>

Another group of women can be classified among these classes, Irish immigrants. They consisted of half of all Irish immigrants. Irish men were treated very badly, but women were often hired as a chamber maids, cooks, and caretakers of children. It was thought that it was the worst position to have in America is Irish, but Irish people believed in solidarity and lived together even in poor conditions. Thus, they escaped poverty and famine of their homeland in the United States only to be pushed into destitution again. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)

The upper class women were viewed in those girls who were pampered and used to living in luxury. Once they get married, they had their own household and farms to run; however, things changed drastically for them. They had to take over all responsibilities. They used to be nurses for the slaves and were in charge of making their clothes, preparing food for them, and supervising the work plans. Upper class women also tended to small gardens and took care of few chickens. They were lucky to have slaves who take care of other tough responsibilities. Even though, these simple tasks overwhelmed them. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)

Generally, white women were unable to vote or have any political views; they had no or very few political rights. They were excluded from most jobs. It was believed that the main factor in this exclusion was lack of education. Before 1860, there were only three colleges that women could attend, but the situation improved after that, thanks to the civil war. After marriage, the husband could own everything that his wife used to have before marriage, such as lands, savings and anything that

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<sup>8</sup> Accessed on. 25 March 2017

she owned in her name. Women used to lose most, if not all, respect in the society if they committed adultery, but men lose a very little respect, if any. Divorce was unlike today, in most cases, the husband kept custody over the children. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)<sup>9</sup>

To conclude, although there were a few exceptions, women's places in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were generally in the house; whether it was their own or someone else's. They did not enjoy this. At that time, people knew that women were unhappy, even if they were real good housekeepers. The way people explained that, however, was by saying that a woman's natural tendency is to clean, and make life comfortable for others. If she does not do this she cannot enjoy her life. (Steele, Kathleen and Jessica Brislen)

## **2.2- Early Activism:**

Women's Rights Movement did never come out of sudden, efforts were done, ideas were expressed, and voices were unified. Women's rights were extremely limited; there was no place for equality between the two sexes. That was the main reason that women could start thinking about their rights in mainly education, work and political rights. Gradually, the necessity pushed women to start demanding for their rights, starting with wider education by the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, American women were taught very limited areas of study. They learned some domestic duties and religion. All the education for women was related to those two domains. In terms of religion, women had high positions of dignity and respect. Although the English liberals thought that wider education could make women better wives and mothers, but Americans generally emphasized only on

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<sup>9</sup> Accessed on 26 March 2017

limited education to their women. However, many women in the US read widely and were interested in studying for themselves, but this did not change the general standards. Progressively, literary influence became stronger with the help of liberal ideologies. (Cengage Learning)

The American Revolution was the key for women to have a deep interest in their education and to be conscious about its importance. It is undoubted that women have contributed to the revolution in different ways and for both sides. While formal revolutionary politics did not include women, ordinary domestic behaviours became charged with political significance as Patriot women confronted a war that permeated all aspects of political, civil and domestic life. They participated by washing, cooking and tending soldiers, delivering secret messages and, in a few cases, fighting disguised as men. Above all, they continued the agricultural work at home to feed their families and the armies. They maintained their families during their husbands' absences, and sometimes after their deaths. Economically, women activities have increased and became greater because of wartime which demanded taking men from home and leaving women with additional responsibilities. Mistresses of plantations had probably heavier duties. Women started to receive better treatment, did less outdoor work and dressed better. By 1800, the work of new liberals was well known and these writers advocated greater economic opportunities for women, even suggesting feminine participation in government. Despite the gains in the education provided for women, it was far from being equal for the two sexes. In legal and economic affairs, women's positions had improved, but fear of radicalism was restricting new developments. Regardless of occasional suggestions of the fuller life which the next century and a quarter were to open to them, American women were still in a state of dependence. (Cengage Learning)

## **2.3- First-Wave Feminism:**

### **A- What is Feminism?**

The word “Feminism” is used to describe a political, cultural, or economic movement which aims at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference are involved. Feminism also advocates gender equality for women and campaigns for women's rights and interests. Although the terms "Feminism" and "feminist" became well known only in the 1970s, they were already being used in the public parlance much earlier; Katherine Hepburn speaks of the "Feminist Movement" in the 1942 film *Woman of the Year*, as an example. (Rubri Cator)

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, eighth edition, “Feminism is the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim.” Feminism was not an official nor formal movement organized by a specific group of people, but it consisted of many and different individual or collective efforts and works.

By Feminists, we mean each and every politically and socially conscious woman or man who works for equality within or outside the movement, writes about Feminism, or calls her- or himself a feminist. In reality, there is no formal alliance of women we can call "the feminists". (Baumgartner, Jennifer and Amy Richards 2000)

According to Maggie Humm and Rebecca Walker, the history of Feminism can be divided into three waves. The first feminist wave, which will be discussed in this chapter, was in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the second was in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third extends from the 1990s to the present. Only the first two waves will be included in our work. Feminist theory emerged from these feminist movements. It is manifest in a variety of disciplines such as feminist geography, feminist history and feminist literary criticism. (Rubri Cator)

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, women became more conscious about themselves to be equal to men. Progressively, this generation of women worked on achieving what the previous generations could not achieve. This period of time can be considered as the start of Feminism in general and the First Wave specifically. Marie Jenny Howe, a feminist organizer and writer, 1912, declared: “We’re sick of being specialized to sex. We intend simply to be ourselves, not just our little female selves, but our whole big human selves”. (Keetley, Dawn and John Pettigrew 2005)

### **B- Introduction to the First-Wave Feminism:**

Practically, all the efforts of women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that led to the passage of women’s right to vote are often referred to as the First-Wave Feminism. First Wavers were primarily concerned with women’s political equality, especially the right to vote. It was primarily led by white women who supported restrictions to the right to vote on race and property ownership.

### **C- First-Wave Feminism’s Main Events:**

First-Wave Feminism has passed through many events that have contributed to women’s activism progression. First of all, Married women were allowed to execute

wills in Connecticut State by 1809. After that, in 1821, Maine State allowed women to own and manage property in their own name during the incapacity of their spouse. Meanwhile, in Ohio State, The first co-educational American university, Oberlin College, was founded. Later on, in 1835, Arkansas state allowed Married women to own ,but not control, property in their own name, and the same thing happened in Mississippi state in 1839, it was named “The Married Women's Property Act 1839”, and in Texas 1840. However, in 1838, Kentucky gave school suffrage "the right to vote at school meetings" to widows with children of school age. Simultaneously, Iowa was the first US state to allow sole custody of a child to its mother in the event of a divorce. The year after, Mississippi was the first US state that gave married women limited property rights. Maine was the first US state that passed a law to allow married women to own separate property in their own name (separate economy) in 1844, followed by Massachusetts in the same year, New York in 1848, California and Wisconsin in 1850, New Jersey in 1852, Michigan in 1855, and Kansas in 1859. Maine also passed Sole Trader Law which granted married women the ability to engage in business without the need for their husbands' consent in 1848. By 1845 in New York, married women were granted patent rights to encourage women to make efforts and contribute industry and economy. On June 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, third-party presidential candidate Gerrit Smith made women's suffrage a plank in the Liberty Party platform. Elizabeth Blackwell, in 1849 became the first female medical doctor in American history. (Wikipedia Contributors, First-Wave Feminism)

By 1848, in the State of New York A women's rights convention called the Seneca Falls Convention was held in July. It was the first American women's rights convention. One year after, unmarried women were allowed to own land in Oregon. The University of Iowa became the first coeducational public or state university in the

United States in 1855. Two year later, Married women in Maine were granted the right to control their own earnings. 1860, New York passed a revised Married Women's Property Act which gave women shared ownership of their children, allowing them to have a say in their children's wills, wages, and granting them the right to inherit property. 1861 was the year when Kansas gave school suffrage to all women. Many US states followed before the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1895, Almost all US states had passed some form of Sole Trader Laws, Property Laws, and Earnings Laws, granting married women the right to trade without their husbands' consent, own and/or control their own property, and control their own earnings. In 1915 the American Medical Association began to admit women as members. In 1916, Margaret Sanger opened America's first birth control clinic. (Wikipedia Contributors, First-Wave Feminism)

The right to vote was the most attractive and important matter that women sought. In 1869, Wyoming, was the first US state to grant women the right to vote, followed by Utah the year after, but it was revoked by Congress in 1887 as part of a national effort to rid the territory of polygamy. It was restored in 1895, when the right to vote and hold office was written into the constitution of the new state. In 1893, Colorado also granted women the right to vote. Next, Idaho did the same in 1896, Washington in 1910, California in 1911, Oregon, Kansas, and Arizona in 1912, Alaska in 1913, Montana in 1914, New York in 1917, and Michigan, South Dakota, and Oklahoma in 1918, finally to generalized to all The United States in 1920 by signing the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment which granted the right to vote to all American women. (Wikipedia Contributors, First-Wave Feminism)

As it was said before, all the efforts done by women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in order to gain the women's suffrage in 1920 can be considered among the First-Wave Feminism. It is not a formal organisation but various activities.

## **2.4- Women's Rights Movement:**

Women's Rights Movement is a movement that changed the US history, if not the world. This movement was led by women to achieve full civil rights in the US. This movement did not happen over one night; it was pushed by the decades of tyranny, subjugation, and not acknowledging the women as human with basic human rights and needs. The culmination of this monarchy has led women to stand up and fight for themselves in the utmost democratic ways through meetings, petition drives, lobbying, public speaking, and nonviolent resistance. (Wikipedia Contributors, Seneca Falls Convention)

Women's Rights Movement can be described as a long journey in which women fought throughout the years from 1848 till 1920 looking for gaining equal rights to men in the law and workplace. Women wanted a better role for themselves in society. July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1848 marked the beginning of The Women's Rights Movement by something as trivial and simple as a Tea Invitation. On upstate New York a mother and a housewife by the name of Elizabeth Cady Stanton has been invited for tea by her four women friends. Their conversation moved from the standard women chatter to a more pressing matter which is the situation of women. The discontent with the limitations put by the US new democracy was strongly expressed by Stanton. They agreed that women has been marginalized and unrecognized long enough and that the new republic would benefit from having women play more active roles throughout society. Obviously, they were not the first to discuss such subject; but they were the

first to construct a relating large scale program. Within the next couple of days, these women set a date for their convention, chose an appropriate place and announced it in the Seneca County Courier. They named it “A convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman.” The meeting took place at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls on July 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 1848. (Wikipedia Contributors, Seneca Falls Convetnion)

### **A- Seneca Falls Convention 1848:**

Before 1848, the American women never arranged any kind of official meeting for the sake of demanding for their rights. Seneca Falls Convention is a convention to discuss the situation of women, it was held by the Women of Seneca County, N.Y. at the village of Seneca Falls, in the Wesleyan Chapel, on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of July, 1848, and led by Lucretia Mott, of Philadelphia. The convention was held throughout two entire days, the first day by only women, while in the second, men have participated. (Wikipedia Contributors, Seneca Falls Convetnion)<sup>10</sup>

On the first day morning, the Convention assembled. The meeting was organized by appointing Mary M'Clintock Secretary. The object of the meeting was then stated by Elizabeth C. Stanton; after which, remarks were made by Mott, urging the women present to avoid the talk about education, and not allow their new position to prevent them from joining in the debates of the meeting. The Declaration of Sentiments, offered for the acceptance of the Convention, was then read by Stanton. A proposition was made to have it re-read by paragraph, and after much consideration, some changes were adopted. The propriety of obtaining the signatures of men to the Declaration was discussed in an animated manner: a vote in favour was

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<sup>10</sup> Accessed on 04 April 2017

given; but concluding that the final decision would be the legitimate business of the next day, it was referred. In the afternoon, the meeting was adjourned. Stanton addressed the meeting, and was followed by Mott. The attendants called for the reading of the Declaration, an addition having been inserted since the morning session. They carried a vote taken upon the amendment, and circulated papers to obtain signatures. (Wikipedia Contributors, Seneca Falls Convention)

### **B- The Declaration of Sentiments:**

Seneca Falls convention has outlined and produced a final document that women should be recognized as citizens and equal to men. It consists of a set of sentiments. It was signed by 68 women and 32 men in 1848. According to the North Star, published by Frederick Douglass, whose attendance at the convention and support of the Declaration helped pass the resolutions put forward, the document was considered as a boost and a push for women to get their civil, social, political, and religious rights. The declaration was unanimously adopted in opening paragraphs, a list of sentiments and closing remarks. (Wikipedia Contributors, Seneca Falls Convention)

## **2.5- Women Suffrage 1920:**

### **A- National Woman Suffrage Association:**

In 1869, activists established two competing national organizations focused on winning woman suffrage. The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) opposed the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, while the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) supported the new law. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the NWSA first. They believed that instead of supporting the 15<sup>th</sup>

Amendment, which granted African American men the right to vote and led to a division in the Women's Rights Movement, they should fight for women to be included as well. They started the NWSA to lead this effort. (Allison Lange 2015)

Stanton and Anthony established the NWSA's headquarters in New York City. They started a newspaper, *The Revolution*, as the mouthpiece of their women-led organization. The *Revolution's* motto was: "Justice, not Favours.—Men, their Rights and Nothing More; Women, their Rights and Nothing Less." Their paper covered topics including a woman's right to suffrage, education, and divorce. The NWSA was more radical and controversial than the competing American Woman Suffrage Association, which focused only on the vote. The NWSA wanted a constitutional amendment to secure the vote for women, but it also supported a variety of reforms that aimed to make women equal members of society. (Allison Lange 2015)

### **B- American Woman Suffrage Association:**

In November of 1869, The American Woman Suffrage Association was framed. Then, the American Equal Rights Association came apart over verbal confrontation on the section of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States constitution toward the finish of the American Civil War. In 1868, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment was endorsed, and interestingly it incorporated "male" in the constitution. (Jone Johnson Lewis)

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton used to know that the Republican Party and abolitionists had double-crossed ladies by barring them from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> changes, extending the vote just to dark men, however others favoured supporting the revisions. The American Woman Suffrage Association

concentrated on the issue of lady suffrage, to the rejection of different issues. The production *The Woman's Journal* was established in January, 1870, with editors Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell, helped by Mary Livermore in the early years, by Julia Ward Howe in the 1870s, and afterward by Stone and Blackwell's little girl, Alice Stone Blackwell. (Jone Johnson Lewis)

The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment moved towards becoming law in 1870, disallowing the foreswearing of the privilege to vote in light of a subject's race, shading, or past state of subjugation. No state had yet passed any lady suffrage laws. In 1869, Wyoming Territory and Utah Territory had given ladies the privilege to vote, and the vote was taken away by a government law in 1887. Afterward, The American Woman Suffrage Association tended to work for suffrage state by state, with infrequent support for government activity. In 1878, a lady suffrage correction was brought into the United States Constitution, and soundly vanquished in Congress. In the meantime, the NWSA additionally started to concentrate more on state by state suffrage referenda. (Jone Johnson Lewis)

In October, 1887, frustrated by the lack of progress and the weakening of the suffrage movement by its split between two factions, and noting that their strategies had become more similar, Lucy Stone proposed at an AWSA convention that the AWSA approach the NWSA about a merger. Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Alice Stone Blackwell and Rachel Foster met in December, and soon the two organizations established committees to negotiate a merger. While, In 1890, the National American Woman Suffrage Association was formed by the merger of the American Woman Suffrage Association with the National Woman Suffrage Association. Elizabeth Cady Stanton turned into the new association's leader, Susan B. Anthony turned into the

vice president, and Lucy Stone, who was weak at the season of the merger, progressed toward becoming leader of the Executive Committee. (Jone Johnson Lewis)

### **C- The National American Woman Suffrage Association:**

NAWSA was formed in 1890; it was the result of a merger between the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), led by Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe. These opposing groups were organized in the late 1860s, partly as the result of a disagreement over strategy. NWSA favoured women's enfranchisement through a federal constitutional amendment, while AWSA believed that success could be more easily achieved through state-by-state campaigns. NAWSA combined both of these techniques, securing the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920 through a series of well-organized state campaigns. With NAWSA's primary goal of women's enfranchisement now a reality, the organization was transformed into the League of Women Voters in 1920 to support the new women suffrage rights later. (The Library of Congress )

### **D- The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment 1920:**

Washington women had won the vote in 1910, after which Washington suffragists had helped with the national campaign to amend the constitution so that all American women could vote. In Washington State, various woman suffrage organizations had been working to win votes for women since the 1880s, with some successes, later repealed. Finally, on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1910, Washington State's male electorate granted women the suffrage by an overwhelming majority. (T. A. Larson 1976, p. 49)

Washington's enactment of woman suffrage opened the floodgates for other states, which quickly followed suit. The national crusade insisted on the demand for an amendment to the US Constitution. However, Washington women remained involved in the national crusade until the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the constitution in 1920. (T. A. Larson 1976, p. 62)

**Amendment XIX:**

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation. (US Constitution)<sup>11</sup>

The text above was the key and the crucial decision made by the United States on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1920, it granted women the right to vote, and it became law. The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was proposed by resolution of the US Congress on June 4, 1919, and it was ratified by more than three-fourths of the states, and declared ratified in a proclamation of the US Secretary of State on August 26, 1920, on which day it became the law of the land.

**E- The Right to Vote is Won:**

Winning the right to vote is considered as a huge victory in the history of the American women. This achievement was the fruit of all the efforts done by women throughout history. At the same time it is the key for them to look further for more rights. It was the end of a dark era as it became the beginning of a brighter era which can make those dreams come true for them. All American women wanted were to be

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<sup>11</sup> August 26, 1920

equal to men. They wanted better education in order to raise a better generation. They wanted a better healthcare to care their children. They wanted political rights to contribute in the development of the nation. They wanted to be heard so that they can give opinions and expertise. They wanted jobs to feed and be fed. They wanted the best for the people. They did not want to be slaves anymore. They wanted freedom to be humans.

American Women did not stop at this point. A new phase of struggle is in sight. They seek to be peaceful and patient. Now, they have enough experience how to get extended position in the nation without being humiliated nor ignored. They passed through a century of a peaceful fighting which can be called the "Century of Women. (NAWSA 1940) Dreams do not come fast and easily, they need hard work.

As a conclusion to this chapter, the history of the United States has changed because of women's activism. Women felt despair to their situation, because they suffered. They knew that they can be treated more respectfully. They believed that they can have better roles in life. They had the faith of being in their real position. The American women fought and strove to make all this come true. The early centuries gave women reasons to start the change. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the beginning, and it gave them circumstances. The 20<sup>th</sup> century gave them the change itself.

As we said earlier, winning the right to vote was the key for women to look for more rights. It was the most crucial and turning point. But, till this time, women still have more work to do in order to reach their primary objectives. They did not fulfil their ambition yet. The American women realized that they must first gain political power and they did. Now, the seeds now are planted and hard work is required.

# **Chapter Three**

## Further Achievements

This chapter discusses the New American Women after they won the right to vote in 1920. After women had become different than before, new issues came to the fore, now jobs for women became the most important thing, especially in the period of the great depression in which millions of American people lost their jobs. Not to forget the role of women in the Second World War was a historical landmark. Women did not stop at these points; the feminist movement continued to gain, as many as possible, rights for women for the sake of having equal rights to men.

### **3.1- Women of the Roaring Twenties:**

"In such a golden decade, in which apparently almost anything was permitted, women began to explore certain domains which had previously been vetoed to them".  
(Baughman 1996)

The period of time from 1920 to 1929 is called "The Roaring Twenties". It is magnificently named so, a period of time that witnessed a tremendous change in culture in the United States. This decade has marked great social events as the rebellion of women, the term of the new "flapper" woman, and the fighting racism, which makes it a crucial time in the history of the United States.

Flappers were a generation of young Western women in the 1920s who wore short skirts, bobbed their hair, listened to jazz, and flaunted their disdain for what was then considered acceptable behaviour....The flapper lifestyle and look disappeared in America after the Wall Street Crash and the following Great Depression. (Wikipedia Contributors, Flapper)

In 1920, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified by the Constitution. American women finally something for which they had been demanding for so long time. Therefore, the new American woman of the twenties became a different generation than the older generations. They clearly faced conventional gender roles and consequently challenged the hostility from men who refused the public presence of women in society and the alleged decline of morality. This new woman, accordingly, represented the trend of young girls expressing themselves with certain autonomy. Nevertheless, the powerful conservative forces of society did already vehemently oppose to the new role of women in society. Many of them were alarmed by what the phenomenon of the new woman meant. The concept of the new woman also had a number of sexual connotations, reflecting a change of ideas about the female sexuality. A gender battle was then settled down amongst both factions of society in which the new social trends were just beginning to flourish.

The most prominent change was her increased presence in public life. Whilst the lives of women in previous generations revolved around the family home, the new woman ventured into different professions which had traditionally been regarded as male-owned. However, they did not equal men at odds as they were still economically and politically dependent on them at the beginning of the century. Yet, unlike their Victorian contemporaries, they did not sit idly by. They struggled to find their own place in society instead. Unsurprisingly, certain pressure groups, like the Ku Klux Klan, strongly opposed the new role of women. (Conesa, García and A. Juan Rubio 2013)

### **3.2- New Issues on the Fore:**

#### **A- Women in 1930s:**

In the 1930's, the roles of the two sexes knew a real great change. From home to workplace, the expectations were different. Their behaviours and the views of both genders were completely very different.

This decade provided jobs for women more than any of previous decades; a lot of women were employed. However, they didn't have very good jobs. Most of the women who did have jobs were in low paying jobs. They also had to get a full education just to be equal with a man who only graduated from elementary school. Women could do the same job as a man and work just as hard but would still only get about half as much of a pay as a male. Even though women could be just as good at their job or sometimes even better at their job they would never be paid the same amount. Although women could gradually get the rights to work, they were not treated equally to men in the workplace.

Women were expected to come home and do everything that needed in the house, after a tiring day at work. They had to cook, clean and babysit. Women had many responsibilities. They were expected to be housewives after work. To us, as researchers, the 1930s seemed equal more than before for women to men even though the roles of what they are expected to do in their jobs and in society were not the same. But still a woman's life seemed to be more difficult than a man's life. The ways of living for men and women in the 1930s were extremely different.

## **B- Women and Work in 1930s:**

According to the 1930 census 24.3% of American women were employed "almost eleven million women." The Great Depression altered the role of women in the American workplace. However, 34% of these working women were in domestic or personal service. 75% of professional women were either schoolteachers or nurses. The census in 1940 did not post dramatic changes in the numbers of working women, thirteen million women, or 25.4%, worked, and most of them continued to work in domestic service. In 1940, one third of working women were in clerical work, 20% were in factories, while 10% were professional (teachers or nurses) and 10% were service workers. The 1930s in fact was the decade of work for women, in which they entered the workforce at a rate twice that of men. However, in unionized industries, women did better. Women constituted 7% of all workers in the automobile industry and 25% of all workers in the electrical industry. (Gale 2001)

Most women worked long hours for low wages in the 1930s. About 60% of all employed women worked for more than fifty hours a week, and more than 20% worked for more than fifty-five hours. According to the Social Security Administration, women's average annual pay in 1937 was \$525, while \$1,027 for men. The Great Depression caused women's wages to drop even lower. Certain industries such as canning, textiles, candy, and meatpacking gladly hired women at reduced wages. Added to these poor working conditions and low wages, working women faced social criticism in the 1930s, because they were believed to be taking jobs away from men. In most cases of the replacement of men by women, however, women were doing work at wages most men would not accept. (Gale 2001)

A poll in *Fortune* magazine 1936 asked, "Do you believe that married women should have a full time job outside the home?" 15% of the respondents approved, while 48% disapproved, with the remaining 37% giving it conditional approval. Married women who worked faced particular hostility. Commonly it was said that they were taking jobs away from men, that the woman's place was in the home, and that children needed a mother at home full time. Private companies and the government dismissed large numbers of married women and made it difficult for them to get professional or clerical jobs. The Federal Economy Act 1932 prohibited more than one family member from working for the government, barring many married women from federal employment. Even positions that were traditionally held by women, such as teacher and librarian, were affected. In 1930, 81% of teachers had been women; in 1940, 76% were women; the percentage of women librarians fell from 91% in 1930 to 86% in 1940. Despite these restrictions, the Depression pushed many married women into the workforce. They sought jobs out of economic necessity, when their husbands lost their jobs, or when the husbands' wages were too low to support their families. The percentage of married women who worked rose from 11.7% in 1930 to 15.2% in 1940. (Gale 2001)

For single women now, the 1930s was known as "the golden age for spinsters." Some women, especially college-educated women, chose to remain single. They expected to find spiritual and emotional fulfillment from other women. The decision to remain single was often part of a commitment to a career in an academic life or a profession. This decade provided opportunities for these young women to become self-reliant. Their experiences of economic independence inhibited their desires to hurry into the dependency of getting married. Whether they decide to live lonely, or inspired by their experience of economic independence, more than six

million single women supported themselves or contributed to their parents' households in the 1930s. (Gale 2001)<sup>12</sup>

If we try to describe the 1930s, we can say that it was a special decade for the American women in their history in terms of work. The most interesting issue at that period of time was getting jobs. Work was essential for them, most women wanted to get jobs in order to finance their families. Gradually, working women throughout the 1930s increased, even though it was the opposite for men because of the Depression. The 1930s was the decade in which women wanted to work even with low wages which mainly men would not accept. That was a reason that women took places of men at work. (Gale 2001)

### **C- Education in 1930s:**

Throughout history of American women, education has always been a controversial topic. In 1930s, it became a sensitive issue for them. Home economics and industrial education were new elements of the high school curriculum designed for unmistakably women's occupations. Women were taught practical skills such as sewing, cooking, and using the new domestic inventions of that time. Fortunately, for women, this formal training offered women little advantage in the struggle for stable work at a liveable wage.

Women's Education at the college level knew tremendous changes in this decade, (Nash 2012, p. 5-6) the number of female college students in the United States increased from 85,000 in 1900 to 601,000 in 1940, 77,000 earned bachelor's degrees. This increase was partially explained by the "contemporary discourse that reinforced the need for higher education for women in their positions as wives, mothers, citizens,

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<sup>12</sup> Accessed on 23 April 2017

and professionals” (Nash 2012, p. 8) Education showed women how to exercise their civic responsibilities and the importance of the vote. One study showed that in 1935, 62 % of Women College graduates voted compared to only 50% of women who did not attend college. (Nash 2012, p. 18)

In the 1930s, there were different assumptions about women, education and marriage, the main one was that women should marry. Also there was the perception that college educated women were less likely to marry, some said that it was because educated women waited for long, while other said that because college has taught women that they should get equal rights to men to get married. Within, others argued college made women better wives and mothers because it imparted practical skills. In 1924, 70% of nearly sixteen-hundred woman PhD recipients required grants, scholarships, and fellowships in order to cover the expense associated with earning a higher degree. Despite the financial support, the majority of these women were required to save money for years before pursuing their degrees because the aid was never enough. Despite these disadvantages, the 1930s marked the peak of woman PhD earners. These degrees varied in fields and began to legitimize fields for women that were once off-limits. These women considered that self-support is a necessity to help finance their education. They were forced to find ways of supporting their education at this period of time. In 1935, the National Youth Administration was created by the United States Government which spent nearly 93 million dollars providing financial assistance. There was always a constant need to justify the expense despite the increasing opportunities for women in education. For those who were displaced during the Great Depression, they had to compete with more-educated group of people as the number of college graduates increased. (Nash 2012, p. 25)

Winning the right to vote for women in 1920 was not enough for them to gain political positions that allow them to make political change for their gender. Even though, the number of women graduates increased but they were still denied to have political power in regard of they were qualified for these positions in favour of men. This struggle sparked new examples of political activism and increased support to the demand for equal rights.

### **3.3- American Women and WWII:**

In World War II, about half million women served in the US Armed Forces, both at home and abroad. Meanwhile, widespread male enlistment left gaping holes in the industrial labour force. Between 1940 and 1945, the female percentage of the US workforce increased from 27% to nearly 37%, and by 1945 nearly one out of every four married women worked outside the home. (History.com Staff, American Women in World War II)

Women have participated in the war in many ways. The US government permitted the enlistment of qualified women as nurses through Naval Reserve Act 1938. In 1942, the Women's Reserve of the US Coast Guard Reserve program was established. Dorothy Tuttle became the first SPAR enlistee when she enlisted in the Coast Guard Women's Reserve on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, 1942. The Marine Corps Women's Reserve was authorized by the US Congress in July 1942 to relieve male Marines for combat duty in World War II. The US President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Public Law 689 creating the Navy's women reserve program on 30<sup>th</sup> of July, 1942. Meanwhile, The US Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was founded. In September 1942, General Henry H. Arnold agreed to form two units of women who would help fly aircraft in the United States. They were The Women's Auxiliary Ferry

Squadron, and The Women's Flying Training Detachment. These two groups merged in 1943 to create Women's Army Service Pilots (WASP). They were the first women to fly American military aircraft. There were over 1,074 trained WASP pilots who flew from 126 bases in the United States and carried 50% of the combat aircraft during the war. Thirty Eight of these women died in service. The year after, 1943, The US Women's Army Corps recruited a unit of Chinese-American women to serve with the Army Air Forces as "Air WACs." Finally, Public Law 238 granted full military rank to members of the US Navy Nurse Corps, who were then all women. All these roles that women had in the WWII cannot be ignored. They helped the US Army in different positions and ranks. (Wikipedia Contributors, American Women in World War II)

We can say that women had their special role in WWII. They helped to heal the injured soldiers, they fed them, they replaced men in workplace, and they even fought with them. All these efforts of women were highly appreciated because they were extremely needed in hard times. In the other hand, women knew that this opportunity can make more and better chances for them in the future to get higher and positions in the society and have more rights. Women sought for achieving their goals, so they took advantage of the situation of that time. And of course their efforts did not go in vain.

### **3.4- Women's Roles in the 1950s:**

1950s is a decade which follows the end of WWII and precedes Women's Liberation Movement. Historians have focused more on the roles and positions of women in WWII and the Liberation Movement as well. They gave less importance to

women in 1950s. In this decade the subject of working women got much popularity as women struggled and worked hard to get better positions in society.

Decade after decade, year after year, the roles of women change. Roles of women were greatly changed in the 1950s, with the return of men from war and taking their jobs back. Women, during WWII, had taken men's jobs. However, a lot of women wanted to keep their jobs. In 1957, 70% of working women held clerical positions, assembly lines or service jobs. While, 12 % held a profession and 6% held management positions. Those that held professional jobs, as usual, worked as nurses and teachers. Many women left college early to marry after the war and other women were not planning on working toward a job. They were planning on a quiet life after college with their husbands and tending house. Interior decoration and family finance were considered as special courses for female students that got them ready for home life. Lynn White, president of Mills College said that "the curriculum for female students should prepare women to foster the intellectual and emotional life of her family and community." (Lynn White) Many women applied for jobs regardless of how they were seen. (Nina Stoneham)

Society believed women fit better to housewives and mothers and it should be the goal for women but only few women assumed this role completely. New machines that were invented at that time helped women in home businesses and provided them more free time so they could explore other interests besides home and family, such as going to college. It was said that because of women were not at home all the time, they were in fact endangering the family by not being there for their children and husbands. These changes in the home have not been considered as positive for them but women really progressed in the fifties with finding new job

opportunities and finding their place in society. Not necessarily the role of the happy and obliging housewife but a role of a woman who has helped out in the war and who has risen above society's standards. She has kept the family up in times of war and peril, such as the Great Depression. Now after the war, she has maintained her role in society to face new challenges. (Nina Stoneham)

### **3.5- Second-Wave Feminism:**

America in the 1960s was followed by the housewife oriented 1950s, where it was expected that a woman's role was to be supported by her husband, have children, and maintain the home. Women across the nation and the globe began to express opinions on their own societies that had a stark contrast of what have been expected of them in the past. This moment in history is known as Second-Wave Feminism. It marked a rejuvenation of women's rights, with the ideas expressed in feminists' books like Betty Friedan "also known as the mother of the moment" and by prominent feminists emerging at the time. Women began to have stronger demands and desires to change the standards beginning in the early 1960s and continuing into the 1970s, 80s and present time. This included the remake of standards between the genders. The primary goals of First-Wave Feminism were suffrage and gender equality. On the other hand, Second-Wave Feminism brought about the attention to a wider range of problems like family, sexuality, official legal inequalities, and reproductive rights. It led to capturing the attention of massive problems in the society which was domestic violence, marital rape, a must change in custody and divorce laws, and battered women's shelters. (Wikipedia Contributors, Second-Wave Feminism)

Around the time of the 1960s, the nation had accepted that the primary duty of women was to tend to the demands at home and care for their families. At this time

women spent an average of about 55 hours a week primarily attending to shores around the home. This left little time to hold a job and a place in the work force would simply put on the back burner for many women at the time; yet there were still working women present. The 1960s followed WWII that took place from 1939 to 1945. When many job opportunities opened, as men were shipped off to war and demand for goods increased, this gave much more women the chance to go to work. During the time following WWII, women that worked typically occupied the jobs of nurses, teachers and secretaries. Working women were automatically paid less than men, earning 58 cents compared to the man's dollar in 1963, as they were expected that they would bear children while holding the job or just quit to tend to the duties at home. Women applying to a job had to sign on quitting on the age of 30, cannot wear pants, cannot be married, cannot have children, even gaining weight would get them fired. (Wikipedia Contributors, Second-Wave Feminism)

The typical standards for the typical women would be challenged with Second-Wave Feminism. In 1963 Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*. This book stems from her past experiences from attending collage to finding work as a reporter in New York and losing her job to her pregnancy of her second child. In the *Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan wrote a crushing critique of the modern women's situation; she wrote "Women, as well as men, can only find their identity in work that uses their full capacities. A woman cannot find her identity in the dull routine of housework." This brought attention to the wide spread unhappiness of women during that time. This book questioned women's role and the distinct separation of spheres between women and men. It spread the ideas of new Feminism across the nation. The ideas expressed in Betty Friedan's book caught massively and rapidly into the society.

It was with no doubt a large contributor to this monumental movement. (Wikipedia Contributors, Second-Wave Feminism)

The women of the 1960s followed a strict set of beauty standards. They were expected to wear skirts and dresses, keep their hair in fashion, and have make up that would be elegant. However, the younger people at the time began a counterculture to these standards. Hippies began to raise challenging society's norms with their style and beliefs. They wore scandalously short miniskirts, colourful clothing, big hair, psychedelic patterns, and the liberal use of make-up came to dominate and symbolize the 1960s. Throughout the 1960s and 70s women and men across the nation united together for a string of protests regarding equal rights for women. Large groups of feminists who gave birth to the Second-Wave fever gathered together at the 1968 Atlantic City Convention centre for the annual Miss America pageant. These women, newly invigorated by feminist sentiments, set out to defy the BB standards of women said at the time through tossing items into the famously nicknamed Freedom Trash Cans. These women hoped for a change as monumental as the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment that had been passed just 50 years earlier. (Wikipedia Contributors, Second-Wave Feminism)

Many Second-Wave Feminists tossed aside the idea of having select leaders of the movement while the various forms of media at the time picked and chose who they thought the leader should be. Gloria Steinam was a feminist in the 70s that had a significant presence in the media of the time. She had worked undercover for the Playboy Bunny as a waitress. She uncovered that the waitresses were mistreated and misused in order to gain male customers. They were supposed to wear scandalous uniforms to hold the attention of the male. Steinam created Ms Magazine a feminist magazine that empowers women and still stands tall in the newsstands to this day.

The US government made several attempts to achieve equal rights for women. By 1968, she had become one of the most influential figures of the moments for her hard work and support to for legalizing abortion and to create a federal funded day-cares which had become the leading objectives of feminists. In 1970 the food and drug administration approved the use of birth control pills. Women across the nation saw this as a call for more rights for women and more notable government action followed. In 1961, president J.F. Kennedy attempted to address the equality problems regarding women of the time by creating the Presidential Commission on the SAS of women and put former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt as the first head of the operation. The Commission addressed the discrimination of the nation's women in certain fields of the US culture at the time. President Kennedy aimed to close the gender wage gap between men and women by signing the Equal Pay Act of 1963. These monumental strides and legislations marked many wins for women, yet there was still much to be done regarding inequality. On March 22nd, the United States Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment which put an end to discrimination on the basis of gender. 35 out of 50 states would ratify the amendment not reaching the required ratification of 38 states by the official cut off in 1982. Today women are able to participate in sports, advance to high-level jobs in all fields, and receive equal opportunities. The gender wage gap was narrowed by 20% in the four decades following the 1970s with women earning 79 cents to the man's dollar as of 2014. (Wikipedia Contributors, Second-Wave Feminism)

Second-Wave Feminism was massively criticised for deviating from the original course of action that strives for abolishing the discrimination against all women in the US society and to gain equal rights and treatments similar to that of men. It was described as a whitewashed movement that concentrated mainly on the

rights of white, East Coast, and predominantly middle-class women; while neglecting the huge contributions and the experiences of others such as women of colour, working-class, and lower-class women, as well as lesbian women. Chela Sandoval have labelled the movement as a “ hegemonic movement” as it restricts the feminist historiography to a particular group of women, which claims that all women share the same oppressions as white, East Coast, and middle-class women. This lead to disregarding the oppression that women had been facing according to their race, class, and sexuality. Thus, it gave a spark that lead to an emergence of women of colour Feminisms such as Black Feminism, Africana Womanism, and the Hija de Cuauhtémoc, which took a separate direction than the women’s liberation movement. (Wikipedia Contributors, Second-Wave Feminism)

### **3.6- The Equal Rights Amendment 1972:**

The ERA is something that the US still has yet to ratify. It is a simple amendment to the constitution that focuses primarily on women’s rights. Surprisingly and according to the US constitution, women still do not have the same rights as men and they merely possess the right to vote with no other rights has been extended to them within the constitution. While, it is odd to say that you can still constitutionally pass a law saying that women are not allowed to be in public gatherings, speak in rally, write for a newspaper, or own a gun. Therefore, the ERA sought to elevate women to the status of men; but it has failed many times. The amendment has three simple lines that, if has been ratified, would have succeeded to put women right where men is. It says

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

The congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification. (Alice Paul Institute)

These lines are the basic pillar of this amendment which was first introduced in 1923, and has made it to the Congressional Committee every year since then and still hasn't passed. (Alice Paul Institute)

The Equal Rights Amendment is a set Forth Amendment to the US constitution that strives for equal rights to all citizens regardless of gender. This means that women should be treated similar to men in regards to divorce, employment, and property. The amendment was very popular in Second-Wave Feminism as they fought for equality between the genders. It also gained a massive approval in both houses of the congress in 1972, yet it faced an opposition surprisingly by other women. The working-class women argued that the amendment would let women become in some state of distress as she has to work the same amount of hours as men; while she needs some sort of protection regarding the working conditions and employment hours. Because women have also to care of their homes and families, get married and have children; the amendment will deprive her of the little time she had to enjoy the small freedoms. The ERA was written by both Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman. It was proposed for the first time in 1923 to the congress which lead to a massive argument regarding the true meaning of equality between men and women. The amendment was then introduced for the second time

by Martha Griffiths in 1971 and passed both houses of the congress and then pushed for ratification. The congress had set a 7 years deadline for the amendment to be ratified, it needed 38 states approval; although by 1979 it only gained 35 out 38 states which made the Congress extend the deadline for another 2 years which actually did not help anything as the needed number of states for the ratification never came to be. (Alice Paul Institute)

After the failed ratification, The ERA was introduced many times by didn't even get passed the Committee. It forged a great deal of arguments in the society of why the Equal Rights Amendment hasn't been passed. The society broke into groups of "yay" and "nay" and both groups have had strong arguments for their position. The opposed group lead by Phyllis Schlafly understood the amendment and considered it thoroughly. Phyllis Schlafly was a constitutional lawyer who led a strong and effective campaign against passing and ratifying the ERA. She was against Feminism and abortion. Phyllis Schlafly's principal of traction to the ERA was the unfortunate consequences that would have on women which feminists didn't realize. The opposition took that the ERA won't provide for women anything new as one of their strong arguments. But, on the other hand, it would take away from women some of the important rights, benefits, and exemptions they already have. Some of these rights or exemptions that would be gone is that women would be obliged to sign up for the draft, would no longer be listed as dependents when they are stay-at-home moms, and accept equal treatments in the court system (child custody). While the other group saw it as an extension to the civil rights and that women should not be considered above or beneath men in the legal status; therefore, they should all be equals in the eyes of the law. Betty Friedan saw that the draft should be seen as women taking responsibility and honour in serving their country. This is for the reason that

accepting the Equal Rights Amendment means having the same rights and duties as men and a huge part of becoming equal. (Alice Paul Institute)

### **3.7- Modern American Women:**

The term "modern American women" was first mentioned in the 1970's. This was to describe the magnificent change that women undertook as a reaction to First and Second-Wave Feminism. They have witnessed a massive change in their roles from being considered less than human being and a mere copulation tool to the fighters, classy, and free thinkers. Women became so ambitious after the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendments that they started to tackle many aspects of the US society.

#### **A- The Evolution of Women's Roles from the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the 1970s:**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a staggeringly hard time for women. They were a subject of some of the inhuman treatments of all time. Although, it was a time of fashion yet only for wealthy women who dressed elegantly; while the lower class women often wore rags. Women were not viewed as human being; they were viewed as property. Before getting married, they were owned by their fathers and after marriage by their husbands. They had no saying in almost all aspects of their life especially politically; because they were merely a property and had no role they could have played as an economic factor. Everything they owned belonged to their fathers and husbands. Not to mention that rape and marital rape had no legal place in court and many women lived with domestic abuse and women who fled or tried to flee from an unhappy marriage would be captured and punished by law. Women at that time were stripped away of their rights including sex-life. A woman did not only have to be a virgin to

get married, she also had to remain innocent from any seductive thoughts concerning sexuality until she received a proposal of marriage. (Jane Austen)

The death of your daughter would have been a blessing in comparison of this...They agree with me in apprehending that this false step in one daughter will be injurious to the fortunes of all the others; for who, as Lady Catherine herself condescendingly says, will connect themselves with such a family? (Jane Austen Chap. VI, Vol. III, P. 281)

On the other hand, men were allowed the have freedom to engage in premarital relationships. At that time, Women were deprived of many of the simple pleasures that we today take for granted like physical activity; which was considered dangerous and inappropriate for girls. They were taught to reserve their delicate health for the purpose of giving birth healthy children. (Jane Austen)

The 20<sup>th</sup> century marked a new beginning for women in the US. There was a sign of hope in the horizon and this meant that a lot of work is to come for them to arrive at such freedom. The previous century was a depressive and a cruel century in regards to women. Yet, their perseverance led to the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, in 1920, which allowed women to vote. This right is a door way to freedom. They acquired a place and a right to be fully acknowledged as citizens which will help them change some of the unjust acts towards them. The women's roles were staggeringly changed in this century. The percentage of women working has been steadily increasing over the years and gender discrimination was dropping; although the difference between men and women's wages was yet to be present. On the upside, one of the important rights for women has been gained which was the

right for maternity leave and pay. Plus, they have not stopped at that; they also organized massive campaigns against sexual harassment at work.

### **B- Women of Early and Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Comparison:**

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was considered as the simple minded century due the status of the household. Men were considered to be the alphas that made the decisions, went to college, run businesses, and provided the food. Meanwhile, women were handed the submissive end of the stick being expected to stay home, cook, clean, and watch over the children. Their highest option for education was attending Finishing School, which is a school for young American women that focuses on teaching the social aspects of life and prepares them into the society, and even then marriage was yet pushed onto them to become their own main aspiration. Women who wanted more for themselves were claimed to be insane. Be that as it may, some women fought and aspired for more than just Finishing School or marriage. So, they strove for getting their God giving right for education and this meant challenging all aspects of life and social conventions that saw women as a simple minded being that belongs at home.

On the other hand, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is considered everything but simple minded. The women in this century are far more different than those in the previous one. Women become more independent and more equal to men than ever. The previous century conventions have rendered most women uneducated and, therefore, unaware of the most important aspects of the universe concerning their history, health, and body. Yet, the 21<sup>st</sup> century women are educated on the similar basis to men which provides for women the right perspective to reject any sort of psychological or physical abuse. Women today are more open to the world; they can have, aspire, dream, and do almost anything they want as long as they put their minds

to it. The US, in the this century, is not restricted by sex; anyone who strive to made his dream come true will certainly do so regardless of gender, race, or sexuality.

As a conclusion, women throughout their journey of getting equality have accomplished so much more than anyone could have imagined. After the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, women became so ambitious that they strove for more rights and equality for them. Women went from being oppressed and marginalized to great fighters of justice and equality. They had an unexpected role on the WWII in serving as soldiers, healing the wounded or just filling the gaps men have left. On that magnificent change, they became more civilized, educated and opened to the world; ergo, they began to realize the need to be absolutely free from all the shackles men have created. One of their attempts towards absolute equality was the ERA; they fought and worked hard on it and nearly got ratified. Yet, some other women believed that the ERA wasn't of great benefit to women as it can be of great disadvantage to them.

## **General Conclusion**

In this part and after producing the previous chapters we will try to sum up the entire work in the following paragraphs that contain the main ideas of the research. Then we will get to a final conclusion to what we have seen. The latter consists of an analytical description for arriving at the stopping point of our research.

American Women have gone through many sufferings, challenges, and then difficulties in their lives in order to achieve some sort of freedom and equality to men. They have succeeded on fulfilling their achievements that pushed the US society into a more civilized nation built on equality, independence, and freedom. Women have been of great help to the nation in all of its history, as it can be traced to even before the Revolutionary War.

Women before the independence of the US used to be seen as the weaker sex in terms of physical and emotional strength. Their status was not quite different of what they were in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe before the colonization of the New World. They had to live in all-male society and economy on which every job, opinion, or right went straight to men's favour. They have lived in inhuman circumstances which they were meant to only take care of their husbands and homes and to be used for procreation and pleasure.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the launch of women's struggle for their rights. They were fed up of the oppression and being marginalized, so they organized an uprising against the unjust society and fought hard for their rights. In this century, we find that it wasn't only white European women who were oppressed; African American and Native American women were also victims of the white men. 1848 marked the first step for women in which Seneca Falls Convention took place. It was

the first of its kind that women officially met to stand together. They decided that something ought to be done in order for a change to happen. This meeting was considered the spark that ignites Women's Rights Movement. WRM witnessed a massive progression throughout the decades to come. The road to success was filled with great and unforeseen hardships that efforts had to be made to overcome them. Their efforts and ambition was rewarded by winning the right to vote, in 1920, by ratifying the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment which gave women the upper hand to gain political power. Having a political power is a necessity to make changes. Now women realized what is important to wait for what yet to come.

Winning the right to vote was a stairway to accomplishing more rights and equality. The Roaring Twenties paved the way to a new woman. The New Woman was becoming more independent, educated, and more respected in the society. Women got higher positions which allowed them to demand a better life-style. They have gotten more equal to men than they have before by getting jobs that were once restricted for men. Yet, year after year, new issues arose. Ergo, they strove and campaigned against sexual harassment and for equal pay for instance.

After countless hours of preliminary reading and then analysing and examining the data gathered, we can conclude that the journey of women's struggle is influential for others not to stop fighting for what they believe. It was a long way full of belief, hope, will, desire, ambition, and motivation, as it was full of despair, suffering, oppression, subjugation, segregation, and discrimination. Women had to face their fears and rise up towards a better future for the next generations. What women have achieved will have a permanent impact on whoever will be courageous enough to face inhuman or unjust situations. All that is needed is to follow the strategy and perseverance which American Women have gone through. American

Women assert that women are the pillars on which we can build a strong and unified community. Plus, they have showed the emotional and physical strength of women which consists of kept patience throughout the difficult times. This experience shows how a person can change his reality no matter what; it gives bread crumbs on how to get respect among the society. As it shows that the path towards justice is a righteous path which will always hard yet rewarded with many fortunes.

As we said earlier, this research will integrate the already existing knowledge with some various aspects and academic perspective. It will help bring multiple pieces of information to clarify and analyse the vague points of the American women's struggle towards gender equality. As it shows how the American women gradually made a huge change in their position in the American society throughout centuries. This appeared clearly when we tried to compare between the status of modern American women and women in the early centuries. Then, we could apparently discover the big differences in terms of education, work, political power, and social position. Therefore, this work was an attempt to make all the changes that have happened in a consecutive series of events mentioning the main ones. It is expected that the analysis and the description of how women were subjugated and oppressed in addition to the path and the course taken to fight the discrimination were complementary and subordinate for our research.

To conclude, our research has led us to discover the process, the idea, and the coordinate strike that women took to achieve their goals. We have achieved a possible answer to our hypothesis. It is a possible interpretation of the delay that women took to rise up, stand for themselves, and achieve a high status in the society. First of all, women's oppression continued for ages without any sign of change. Yet, we can notice in history some signs of revolt in very few women in a calm literary fashion.

The oppression and gendered division was imbedded deep in the minds of the community and in the eyes of Christianity for women to make any kind of uprising. Ergo, they saw that a new government was the perfect opportunity to make their move towards achieving their rights as normal human beings. The early attempt was in 1848 at a tea gathering where some women decided that it was the perfect time to change and push the country towards a better and a free direction. They have started their uprising because the community has just freed itself from the cruel and controlling fists of Britain. So it can withstand this sort of uprising towards humane rights for women and gender equality because it was fed up of any kind of oppression and can surely welcome a shout for equality.

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## ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة الكفاح الذي خاضته النساء الأمريكيات عبر التاريخ. حيث سنستند على تحليل أحداث هذا الكفاح الذي يهدف إلى المساواة بين الجنسين بدءًا من القرن السادس عشر ووصولًا إلى القرن العشرين. أوروبا لم تكن يومًا مكانًا مناسبًا للمرأة في القرنين السادس والسابع عشر، حيث أنهم كانوا يعتبرون ممتلكات شخصية وخدمًا فقط لأجل احتياجات رجالهم. إحتلال العالم الجديد كان بمثابة الأمل في أعين الناس عامةً والنساء خاصةً. كان القرن التاسع عشر مهدًا لكفاح المرأة الأمريكية متبوعًا بقرن مليءٍ بالمشقات والنجاحات. كل المصاعب التي واجهتها كانت سببًا في تكوين واقعٍ حضري لها وكان لها مكانة أفضل في المجتمع وأصبحت تتمتع بحقوق أكثر بفضل مجهوداتها التي كُلت بالنجاح. وفي الاخير أصبحت مكانة المرأة أقرب بكثير لمكانة الرجل مما كانت عليه.

## Résumé

Cette recherche vise à étudier la lutte menée par les femmes américaines à travers l'histoire. La recherche est basée sur l'analyse des événements de cette lutte, qui vise à l'égalité des sexes à partir du XVIe siècle jusqu'au XXe siècle. L'Europe n'était pas un endroit approprié pour les femmes dans les XVIe et XVIIe siècles, elles étaient considérées comme des biens personnels et des serviteurs pour les besoins de leurs hommes. L'occupation du Nouveau Monde était un espoir aux yeux du grand public et les femmes en particulier. Le XIXe siècle a été le début de la lutte des femmes américaines, suivi d'un siècle plein de difficultés et de succès. Toutes les difficultés rencontrées étaient la cause de la formation d'une réalité moderne et ont eu une meilleure position dans la société jouissant plus de droits grâce à leurs efforts couronnés de succès. Enfin, le statut des femmes est devenu beaucoup plus proche de l'état que de l'homme.