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Women Franchise during the Victorian Era 1837-1901 and their Representation

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master in British Civilization

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Dedication

*I dedicated this work from deep heart to my dearest parent, who gave me the inspiration to fulfill
this dream with their support, patience and encouragement.*

To all my cheerful and dearest friends

To all who supported and encourage me

To all whom love and respect

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance and the help of several individuals who in way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study.

We are heartily thankful to our supervisor Mrs.: Benmaati for her encouragement, guidance and support during our preparation of this work.

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Abstract

Throughout the Victorian Era 1839-1901 women were considered as secondary citizens to men in society. They were enjoyed few of their social, political rights. They were seen as only supposed to be housewives and good mothers. The main occupation for them during this period was to get married and to take care of their families, and raising their children, also they were expected to have an attractive and successful household, These were the only acceptable roles for them. During this period the society made it impossible for women to have any achievements, because when they work outside their home they were viewed negatively by the society. Therefore, the enfranchisement of British women did not come easily, they were fought for many years in order to improve their opportunities in society, to have a voice and a seat in the political level, wherefore, the women's suffrage movement was considered as the successful story with the principal of suffrage conceded in 1918 and equal franchise rights which followed in 1928.

List of Acronyms

LNSO: Local and National Suffrage Organizations

MPs: Members of Parliament

NSWS: National Society for Women's Suffrage

NUWSS: National Union Women's Suffrage Society

UK: United Kingdom

US: United State

WEU: Women's Education Union

WFL: Women's Freedom League

WSC: Women's Suffrage Campaign

WSPU: Women's Social Political Union

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General Introduction

Each era in English history is remarkable for its circumstances that produced different powers in different fields. one of these eras the Victorian era which served as a transitional period and the most important one, it dealt with the contemporary issues including social, economic, religious and intellectual ones, in addition to this, changes in the role of women who were not expected to have any interest in any fields as men, they had limited freedom, they could not vote, could not work, and also they had limited status in the Victorian society. Even men did not accept the ability of women get integrated in several matters of life, they were just confined to be beautiful and successful housewives. So in both the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, men had the authority and power to control women's lives.

However, the Eighteenth century was also remarkable of the female writers who took their pens to criticize the Victorian society at that time; they tried to reflect several social problems in their writing shedding light on the subject of women and the real world where they lived. Now the novel became important and the most popular form in this period.

Besides, in the Nineteenth century, women were treated as secondary citizens to men in society, they were living in era characterized by gender inequality, they enjoyed few of their legal, social, and political rights, they were expected to remain subservient to their fathers or their husband, and they were under the domination of men in many ways. For instance, they were just confined to be good mothers and housewives to their entire by taking care of their families and children, and also to be decorative ones in order to have an attractive and a successful house because this latter was considered as the only place for them to be free and to express their talents.

Furthermore, throughout this era, women were very limited within their classes, and they were restricted in the work place, like working class women, they had many positions but they were not paid the same salary as the male, while middle and upper class women's lives were different from that of working class.

Curiously that Victorian progress didn't bring any women empowerment or advancement. On the contrary, women struggle in order to achieve their opportunities and to have the same equal rights like men especially the right to vote, although both men and women were created equal.

This particular point constitutes the core of this research which brings to light the struggle of women undertook to change their position in society, and how they attempt to discover their identity both in conflict and accordance. The focus will be mainly on the problems which faced women, and how they conflicted to obtain the same position like men in society and in politics.

To tackle in a very focused and specific way this issue, the following question were raised:

- 1- What to be women during the Victorian era?
- 2- How women fought to have the same equal franchise like men in Britain?
- 3- To what extent was the extension of the franchise to women in 1918 due to the suffrage movements?

It is assumed that women during the Victorian era were seen as a domestic ones, they were under the ideology of separate sphere in society, they were treated as a secondary citizens in society to men, so men were expected to live in the public sphere, while women were confined to be at home doing their duties as a good wives. They were allowed to get married and have children, and to become

an ideal wife. Because of the limited rights women had to soldieries in order to enlarge their odds and to have equal rights like men especially the right to vote because due to this latter the status of women changed in politics and they were being represented in government.

To unfold the previously mentioned points came to be the present dissertation divided into three chapters. The first chapter focuses on the historical background of Britain over the two eras the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. It is divided into two parts; the first part is connected with the history of Britain during the Victorian era, while the second one deals with the history of women in politics and their representation.

The second chapter is devoted to shed light on gender roles in the nineteenth century. So as a starting point I focus on the position of women and their rights in this period, then I examine the differences between men and women through several classes, finally the point of married women and their rights.

In the third chapter resides the core of this research, it deals with women franchise, and how they fought to realize their opportunities and improve their position in society, and also how they did to obtain the same political right as men after long time of struggle.

Chapter One

**An Overview about Women over
the Two Eras the Eras the
Eighteenth and the Nineteenth
Centuries**

This section of the research aims to shed light on the history of Women over the
Two eras, the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth Centuries. So as a starting point it will be
on focus of the impact of the ideas of enlightenment on women and then I discuss the
conception of the Victorian society on women, finally it deals with the concept of
women in politics and their representation.

A. The Implication of Enlightenment's Ideas on the Rights of Women

The Eighteenth century was marked by an intellectual movement which is
Enlightenment is also known as "the age of reason", in which most fields of science
were developed as a result a great technical progress. It included a large of ideas that
characterized by the rise of some concepts such as reason as the first source of
authority, after it came to advance the concept of liberty, and constitutional
government.

Besides; one of the most important ideas was in the social development, as well as
many philosophers of the age believed that if science could emerge during this era,
why not humans and women could included them too, they had a vast regard for
knowledge, so the idea of equality between men and women especially in greeting to
education and the right to vote which became the crucial problem for women.

1. Philosophical concepts

During the age of reason, there was more focuses on scientific method, religious
tolerance, universal education, individual liberty. Some of these concepts are:

a. Reason: Enlightenment philosophers believed that rational thought lead to human
which was the most legitimate mode of thinking, they also saw the ability for reason
is the most important thing for human capacity, and help them to be free from

ignorance, that is why it considered as having positive effect on humanity because the thought and behavior of everyone should be guided by reason.

b. Religious Tolerance: many thinkers of this movement believed that people should be h to worship as they hope without obligation because all people are born free, and they want.

c. Progress: through the discoveries of the scientific revolution and the rising in art technique, centuries were characterized by rapid changes and also many thinkers of Enlightenment linked the ideals of this movement to politics and economic policies.

d. Liberty: this concepts show that God create humans and give them basic rights such as; liberty, equality, they were free to live as they want and the government had no authority to oblige them.

2. Major Figures of Enlightenment

a. John Lock: he maintained that we are all born without innate ideas, and all knowledge is acquired. He imitated perfect equitable concerning education for both males and females. And the idea that men were superior to women was an idea that contrived by men. Unfortunately, he thought that women should be equal with men a marriage; he argued” the biblical Adam did not have a Private Dominion over the World but shared it with Eve”.

b. Claude Adrian Helvetius (1715- 1771) he was a French philosopher, he argued against the common belief of the “innate and behavior” of women. He said that nothing in humans is innate; all knowledge is acquired, regardless of sexual or creating differences. He said that all men and women have the same dimension brain and the same intellectual pressure.

c. Thomas Hobbes: he advocated for equal rights for women. He attacked the theory of the natural male superiority over women, he argued to have full equality between genders including the right to vote and to participate in government.

d. Cornelius Von: he was a physician, he wrote that “the only differences between men and women is physical, in everything else they are the same. Women do not have a soul of a different sex. Both men and women are equally endowed with the gifts of spirit, reason to them, and the use of words”.

e. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a German philosopher; he emphasized that freedom of thought, he said that “Every human beings is a free, autonomous being and therefore cannot be subjugated that to the will of another”. Therefore, he a

In Literature; there are famous writers as Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) w ho uses black humor and irony in his satirical pamphlets, Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) with his famous book Robinson Crusoe. Therefore; most men preferred to let women ignorant without because they considered them as stupid and emotional creatures, they had to stay at home to serve men. In contrast to men who were considered as the intelligent creatures in the world and they were perceived as more important than women for example most gentry’ families preferred to have a son to continue the name and the power of the family (Howard16).

B. Victorian Solciety

Queen Victoria reigned over Britain from 1837 to 1901. During her reign the era was characterized by a rapid change and developments in every branch in science, medicine as well as in this era British Empire marked a demographic boom that was considered as the key explanatory factor behind a lot of social issues.

Although Britain became the richest manufactory country in the world, but women still have a limited rights. They were treated as secondary citizens to men in society; they were expected to be a successful housewives and good mothers for their children, those were the only acceptable roles for them. Some Victorian believed that a women should stay at home this later was served as the only place for them, and they did not had any place in the workforce, they were also believed that to be inferior to men and their position was similar to their children. Another important part which the Victorian society exposes was denied women education because it was considered unnecessary for them, and blaming them for their lack of knowledge, so these Victorian women find problems to construct their identities as women having a good career (Jenner 15).

Besides; due to the uncomfortable life for women and so harsh, they were forced to work outside their households but the Victorian society did not understand them, and it saw them negatively and in bad way. Most of them need to work in order to have a salary for their needs and to help their families. Unfortunately women works were not accepted in the workforce, although they were not paid as men, the society at that time made it impossible for women to make any advance because they were always considered less than men in many aspects of life.

1. The Impression of the Victorian Society on Women

During the period that ruled by Queen Victoria who was served as the typical type of feminist centered on the family, motherhood and respectability. Victoria attached by her husband Albert and her many children in the extreme, but at home they were lived with the environments of the constellation, she became a symbol of the late- 19th

century middle class feminist. Her era was considered as a typical model of an age of domesticity.

Moreover; during this period era there were few employment opportunities for middle class women. By the beginning of the Nineteenth century the symbol had been “the perfect wife”, this latter was considered to be an active and the principal part of the family and her main occupation was childbearing. In contrast to women who belong to the Lower Classes, they were confined to participate to the family proceeds, but for women in the Middle Class, their main participation was childbearing, cooking, and clothes making. While in the Upper Classes, they would have to support with these activities and they would also have the role as a regulation of the household.

Therefore; the most victorious ideal was that before marriage the unmarried girls would be brought up to be blameless and without sexual emotions at all, so the disposition for being a motherhood was considered innate and girls were kept under their families watchful eyes in order to be really for marriage. In addition when they get married, they did not work because they will have servants and their social and intellectual achievement was expected to their closed friends and their families, Even though they were totally adherent on the fugal positions of their fathers and then their husbands (vicinus, 1973).

Besides; the assignment of women in society was also commutated women’s fashion, for example, hoop shirts and corsets created a lot of sexual female body and this affirmed the separation of women from the workplace, as well as the constricting clothing confirmed and symbolized women in accordance with their primary function as wife, mother, and domestic conductor (Abrams, 2001). In addition women who

didn't get to marry, they were enjoy few opportunities in Victorian England, so the only respectable work for women from the Middle Class families was largely restricted to work like school teacher or governess. While for women who belong to the bourgeois held an uncharacteristic status in Victorian England. Middle Class was served as a wage- earning in a society in which feminist was defined by domesticity and non participation in the public labor market.

However, both married and single women kept themselves engaged with traditional pastimes, for instance, reading, music, and traditional handcrafts. In other hand, women outside the domestic sphere, they contributed in charity work, so this kind of activity was seen as suitable to the female role of self- sacrifice and service (Abrams, 2001).

2. Women in Literature

The Nineteenth century was an era that marked the progress in Britain in a lot of fields especially Literature. Many novelists try to reflect different social problems in their writings, most of them were women such as Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot. They were more interested in reading and writing then men, as well as novels became more important and the most popular literary form, and the only entertainment of them to express and reflect all what happen in the Victorian society at that time (Matthews 58-59).

Moreover; this period was marked by the progress of female writing from which they contributed in the development of novel and the position of women, for instance in the case of Charlotte Bronte who was one of the figures of literature, in her novel Jane Eyre (1847) which was an autobiography of Charlotte Bronte, that examines a lot of aspects of the difficulties of women and seeks for their conditions like herself live.

Besides; women problems are the most important thing for female writings in order to express such aspects that related to women, so most of them were treated to them and were reflected the to the Victorian society, it provides a pieces of information about women role in the Industrial Revolution, and their image in this era including their life, their suffering, and how they were neglected from the social life.

C. Gender and Politics in the Nineteenth Century

There is an international presumption that gender equality in political contribution is an essential aspect of newfangled democratic governance. In the early of the 19th century Victorian Women were not allowed to own property or to have their own salary, they were not concerned to involve in politics. It is forecasted that both men and women should have equal rights and opportunities to participate completely in all fields and at all levels of political process, but in practice, women face a lot of circumstances and the number of women in leadership and decision making positions is awkwardly depressed. Meanwhile, it has been exemplified countries with women's contribution in politics and leadership status tends to be much extensive, evenhanded and democratic.

Moreover, many scholars have manifested that the relations between men and women have made it difficult for one half of the women to make significant participation to the emergence wherefore the necessity to understand gender relation, As well as the connotation of gender is better understood when analyzed with the concept of sex, gender relations and patriarchy. Organically all human beings are normally born male or female, so all women around the world are denied in all areas including social, economic and political sphere. For instance, the proportion of women representation in parliament in both the United Kingdom and the United State

was 9, 1 and 9, 0 percent respectively as at 1994. In addition although women formalized over 50% of the population of the world, they are disowned to the background in every guise of life.

Besides, it is important to observe that there are varieties between sex and gender, so sex refers to the biological differences between male and female, and its roles are naturally fixed, while gender is the culturally and socially constructed roles for both male and female. For example, gender roles of men was to be as maker and heads of the household, in contrast to women their role was to be a mother and good house maker.

Whenever, it was until the late 1860s, when Victorian women began to play an important role in the fight for Women's Suffrage and improved wages and working conditions. In addition the political interest consist more than just parliamentary suffrage; it also outspread to regions of local government. By 1870 women were started to play an important role in this ones. However; by the mid 1870s, the struggle for Women's Suffrage experienced serious setbacks, thus Elizabeth Elwy wrote to a friend at the end of the century that "unless a great effort be made now, I do not believe you or I, or persons twenty years our junior, will live to see Women's established in England"

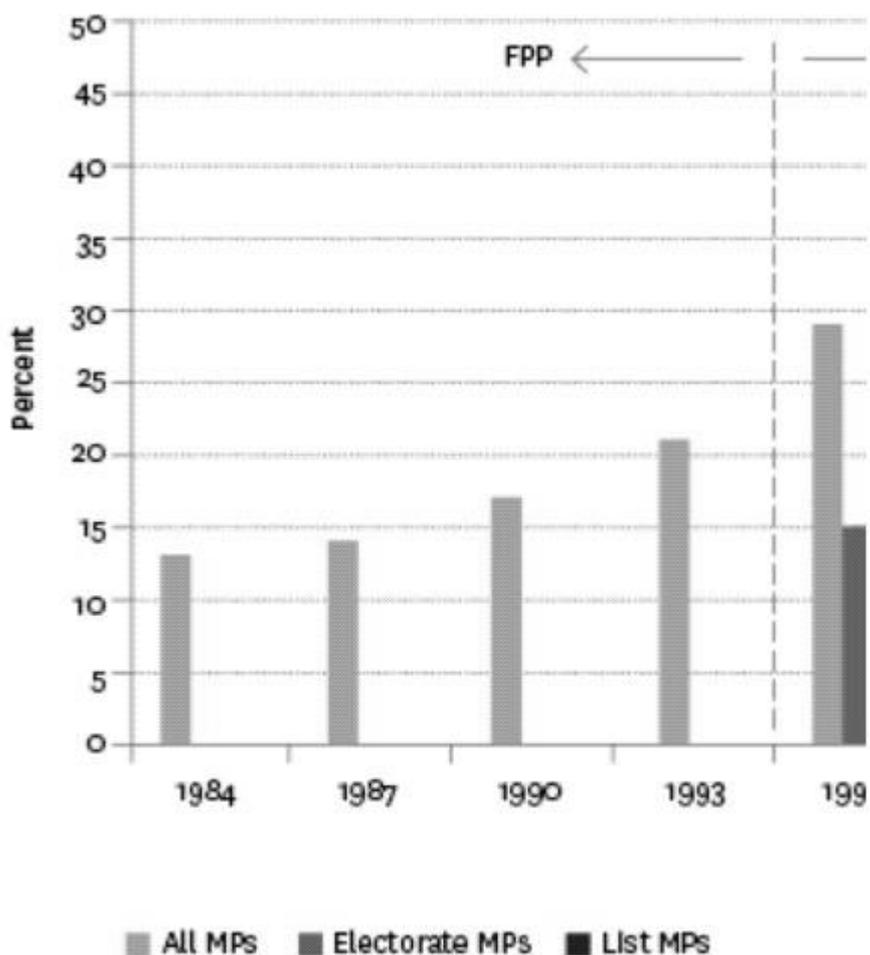
In addition the first organized commission for women's suffrage was in 1866; likewise it would take almost 42 years for the movement to have much real success, So women who paid taxes were granted the right to vote in 1869, as well as the participation of women in politics was viewed as the opportunity for the passing of more just legislation.

D. The Representation of Women in the Political Process

The number of women became growingly related in the formal political process through the 1960_s and 1970_s. This was due to both the ambitious and the rising in educational opportunities; a lot of Women's Libration Movement was occasionally reinforced by men in parliament, strenuously campaigned for the same political representation.

Besides, feminists have made an extent of evidences for the interference of women in the political process; few believe that women were superior rather than men in morality and they have the ability to bring various scares to the table than men. Others adhere that women have a several perspective from men and that their contribution is inhered to manage counterpoise.

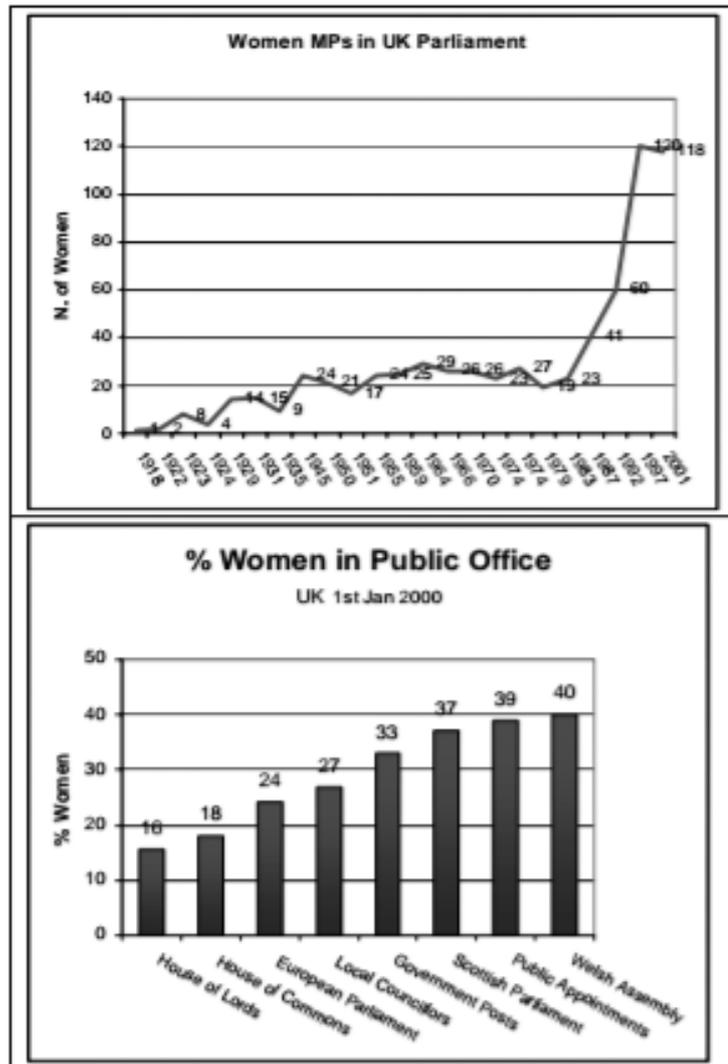
In addition the government has adopted a number of various strategies to represent women exactly and rightly. For instance in 1993, the Labor Party presented all women shortlists at its annual consultation. These were made in order to select parliamentary members in the 1997 general election when Tony Blair was the leader of the Labor Party, as a result 101 Labor Party candidates were elected to parliament and women members were elected to parliament. At the same time 13 female candidates of the Conservatives Party were elected to parliament and the total number of women in the House of Commons multiplied from 60 to 120. Afterwards elections different parties have set fortunes for the percentage of women that should be elected. Actually there are 146 women MP_s out of a total of 650. The Conservative Party has 47 women MP_s out of a total of 257; the Labor Party has 86 women MP_s out of a total of 169; and the Liberal Democrats have 7 women out of a total of 50.



Sources: Electoral Commission; Parliamentary Library

Moreover, the extension of women in elected office has increased anticipation about their role as political leaders. This emergence has eventuated in many democracies and it is fixated by dramatic evolutions at Westminster in which the election of June 1997 viewed the entry of 120 women members into the UK House of Commons 18%. During the late 1990s, the number of women raised and they were entered other legislative bodies, they becoming 37% of the Scottish Parliament and 40% of the Welsh Assembly, 24% of British MPs, in the European Parliament, 16% of the House of Lords and 27% of Local councilors.

Figure 1: Women in Public Office, UK



Sources: electoral commission; Parliamentary Library

E. Political Reform

The Nineteenth century was an era that marked significant development and changes in political and social unrest in Britain.

However, before 1832 Britain was governed by the Landowners but after 1832 the Urban Middle Class had an increasing say. Furthermore, from 1838 the Working

Class disagree, and they formed a movement called "The Chartists" because they were excluded from the reforms. This movement had different demands, they wanted all men have the right to vote, and they wanted the property qualification abolished, and also they wanted all the constituencies to be equal and voting to be by Secret Ballot. In 1839, the Chartists delivered a petition to parliament which was rejected, another petition delivered in 1842 was also rejected, and in 1848 another great petition was sent to parliament but it turned into farce.

Besides, in 1867 the Second Reform Act passed which gave the right to vote to men but women were unable to have this right. In the beginning of 1872 the Ballot Act introduced voting by Secret Ballot, while the Third Reform Act gave the vote to most agricultural Laborers, as well as women were not granted the right to vote until the Act of 1918 which enfranchised all men over 21 and women over 30.

During the reign of Queen Victoria 1837 to 1901, Britain marked several changes in different fields, also it changed from a weak country to a strong one, as well as it became the leader in the world due to the rapid development in the increasing of Industrialization that make it better.

Although Britain it was a powerful country in the world but its people lived in different circumstances, and still living in the old Victorian values. They were interested only on their usual life and their problems especially women who were lived a bed life with a severe conditions. Furthermore, many female writers appeared and they started to write and criticized the position of women and their suffering at that time, that's why most of the novels reflected the Victorian society at that time.

Chapter Two

Gender Roles in the Nineteenth Century

This chapter aims to analyze the points of the roles and the status of Victoria women and their lives according to the social classes which came from, so as a starting point I examine the effects of middle class philosophy on the working class and the reasons why the society considered working women as threat to the social order, then I discuss the distinction of both men and women and their roles under the Queen Victoria. Finally I focus on the right of women after marriage.

A. The Status of Women in the Nineteenth Century

In the Nineteenth century both men and women were lived in era that characterized by gender inequality. During this era that symbolized by Queen Victoria, women were saw as domestic ones, and they were faced many difficulties in their life, also they were enjoyed few of the social, political rights for instance they were not allowed vote, and they were excluded from the public sphere, and they were also forbidden to involve in politics because it was only the place of men, as well as both men and women were obliged to led separate and unequal lives until they died.

Furthermore; in this era both men and women were expected to live in separate sphere in society, so this ideology dictated that the only place for a respectable women in this era was in the home, proving care for their husbands and raising their children, and also home was considered as the suitable place for them to free and to express their talent. “It was the wife who made the home, who created for their children within it, who brought her husband back to it when work was done, who provided the hot dinner and created the atmosphere of comfort and protection” (Calder 27). It was also shed to explain the reasons that this separation between both genders was necessary by defining the inherent characteristic of female, as well as, these characteristics made women incapable of functioning in the public sphere. They

were classified weaker yet morally superior to men, this concept was reinforced by religion, that's why most Victorians believed that women were superiority best suited in the domestic sphere, while men were expected to live a public life for example working in a factory or in public places.

Besides; they were enjoyed few of their legal and social rights, and they were expected to remain subservient to their fathers or husbands, they were still dominated in many ways. "They were subjected to their men's authority in many ways" (Fletcher, 108). The main occupation for every woman was being a wife and good mother to stay at home and do their duties such as cleaning, cooking, take care of their families, and raising their children because they need warmth, affection, education, so those were the only acceptable role for them. Their fathers, husbands or other male relatives were their legal representatives, for almost the 19th century it was men who were in charge of the property of women, "A Victorian woman would be stoical, motherly, submissive and chaste" (Paxman, 228). This means that a Victorian woman should be patient for all the circumstances that happen in their life.

Moreover; the impact of the Industrial Revolution which caused differences between gender roles, so women were looked as weak, domestic, dependent, timid, while men were looked as powerful, worthy, independent, brave, thus women were viewed differently in society to men. In addition; they were subjected to the authority of men in many cases, and their position were similar to children. According to Alfred Lord

Tendon's: Men for the field, women for the hearth

Men for the head, and women for the heart

Men to command and women to obey

Moreover; women were excluded from the public sphere, and they did not have the right to work as men, they were just allowed to be at home doing their activities by keeping the household organized and smooth, also they had to obey their husband (Gornick, 32).

B. Social Classes

The most common way to characterize the Victorian society is to divide it into social classes, and shows the differences between each group.

The status of women and their rights cannot be generalized since they differed according to the social class that come from which means that the social class determines the traditional life of women in which they lived and work depending on, as well as the Victorian society was divided into four classes; the Nobility class or the Gentry, the Middle class, the Upper Working class and finally the Lower class. People of these several categories were expected to respect and remain within their class. In all these classes the role of women remained unchanged and they were supposed to live a highly restrictive life with their husband and subsequently their children.

1. The Nobility Class

Women who belonged to the nobility class lived and enjoyed a comfortable life, they were expected to be highly educated and they spent most of their time attending Parties, their main job was to give orders to the servants on what is to be done and to instruct the younger girls of the same class to become women.

Besides; women who belong to this class were quite busy and could see themselves useful, so the situation was different since women there were devoid of these responsibilities and their activities were restricted to homemaking. However,

their homemaking responsibilities were limited too because these kind of women could not do any hard work, they had a range of servants at hand and if they employed a housekeeper they did not have to attend to everyday household affairs at all.

Moreover; an everyday task of these women was accepting visitors and paying visits, they were given hours of the day admitted visitors and returned the visits. Furthermore; visiting was not an informal occasion for seeing friends but it was a social occasion which had its rules and which had to be performed in the right way. Besides to visiting, another female activity was organizing dinner parties for the visitors and their family members, this was the task in which women represent their husbands and be together with all the equipment of the household. But being a decorative object was the characteristics applied to the middle class women as well as not the domain of the women who belong to the upper class. (Tudor, np).

2. The Middle Class Women

After the noble class came the middle class. In contrast to the noble class, so the people who belong to the middle class were not rich, many of them tried to be mixed and to be in relation with the noble class. Moreover; women who belong to this class were expected to take education, help their families business, and they tried to married with people who belong to the Nobility. In addition, although the 19th century was considered the century of the middle class but few women of this class were self-employed by being a nurse, writer and” it still was an indefinable class that was trying hard, even desperately, to characterize and identify itself” (calder, 31). As well as this class was considered as the huge mass of the working class as a threat to its fragile position and its assumed that it could only fight this danger with acquiring the habits of the Upper classes.

Moreover; a middle class women were not expected to perform all the household chores on their own but it was sufficient to employ a servant of all trades to claim the middle class status and have at least a certain amount of leisure time that had been the symbol of the privileged classes, and one of the principal aims of the middle class.

It was the middle class who had the lion's share on the creation of the cult of domesticity and it is generally the middle class women who are pictured in literature as a woman without any active participation in running their family. "The wife and mothers, no longer intimately involved in the business undertaking, was confined to the domestic life, and with domestic servants, because more and more of a 'functionless' members of the household. One ornament amongst others, totally subjected to the authority of her husband" (fletcher, 93).middle class women were not allowed to go out to work because a working women were a sign of immorality and deprived conditions as well as a middle class men had to be able to have a sufficient income to support his family.

Moreover; the only duty of the middle class women was to stay at home and create an attractive home and a refuge for their husbands, so they were though that "if they did not undertake the responsibility of making a successful home, they could not blame their husbands for spending his evenings at the club, or seeking more dubious forms of entertainment" (calder, 70). They did not have the duties of upper class women in the country and they could not go out to seek amusement there.

Besides, home was considered as the only place where women were protected from the dangerous outside world, while for men was served as a place where they came to relax after a day of work." Home and the female were inevitable intimately associated" (calder, 9)

Therefore, the idea of women not having any type of job was unacceptable, but when they did work through several categories, they were seen negatively by society and also as unsuitable for marriage.

Middle- class working women, once relegated to the field of governance were

Still restricted to certain occupations, the traditionally feminine professions

Of teaching and nursing and a few new fields, such as shop and clerical work and

The lower reaches of the civil service, where their cheapness compared with

Men encouraged their increasing employment (holcombe, 198).

The main activity that Victorian women were confined with was to be a proper household and also the role of governing because this latter allowed women to be familiar to educate their children and their family that's why when women had access in politics was seen being appropriate for them to partake in . They would be placed in these working positions in order to be more knowledgeable and to gain experience for marriage to run the home.

3. Working Class Women

In the mid - century “around 75 % of the population was working class and millions of the families all over the country lived on a borderline between poverty and squalor” (calder, 65)”. As a result, the working class was served as a threat to the social order and values which advanced by the middle class philosophy. According to the middle class it was the women who made “all the differences between a rioting striker and a hard working laboring man” (calder, 67). It means that women who

stayed at home and devoted her entire time looking to her family and taking care of their children, and making her home clean and comfortable place.

Moreover; the man whose wife made his home a successful house and a tidy place was not likely to go out into streets and look for diversions there. On the other hand; if women had to go out to work and spending long hours a day working how they could create an attractive home for her husband's. so when they return home, their homes were usually untidy, their children neglected and their husbands seeking for amusement in the streets, as well as working women could not create a real home for her family which remained the main argument in debates over female employment."The employment women were thus widely condemned. It was seen as an offence to feminine decency, as a threat to the family and as leading directly to immorally" (calder, 67).

In addition; according to the middle class could not lass ideal, it was the working class woman who was to blame, she could not prevent her husband from running out of home in the evenings, she could not teach her daughters the basic of domestic economy and the hard work of the household, as the result, it was the working women who prevent the working class from improving its status and living conditions in general.

4. The Lower Class

Finally; came the Lower class which did not recognized by the Victorian society and their people were invisible. So women who belong to this class were poorer, and they took jobs such as laborers, prostitution, or any other activity which involves physical effort .these women mostly remained single all their lives as they were more in number compared to their male counterparts, they were considered to be a sign of

purity, and their bodies were treated as temples as a result of which they could not be engaged in any hard activity.

Moreover; people who belong to the lower class gain their laws after the Victorian period ended that the lower class was able through education, technology, and reform to raise itself in some cases literary out of the gutter. (Tudor, np)

C. Gender Roles under Victoria

During the reign of Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1901 both men and women were thought to be in separate sphere in society, so they lived in era that characterized by gender inequality.

According to Judith Butler, who is an American gender theorist, and professor of comparative literature, and rhetoric at the University of California, by 1988; Butler has written many books and articles on feminism, gender theory, philosophy, and culture. In her most well known book **Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of identity**, she challenged about the existing of feminist and gender identity.

Moreover; Butler defined Feminism as a set of ideologies and movements that focuses on defining and achieving social, economic, and political equality for women.

There have been a lot of challenges about which historical movement and events would descend under the umbrella of Feminism, throughout history, it has been generally agreed that feminism occurred in three waves. The first wave occurred during the 19th and early 20th centuries and it was prominent in the US and the UK activists focused on Women's Suffrage, it focused on more basic property and voting rights. The second one it began in the US in the 1960s and it spread throughout the

world. It gave attention to the cultural and social arenas, including reproducing rights, family issues, domestic violence, and workplace equality, while the third one is the most incoming movement that starts in the 1990s in the US. It addresses the limitations of the second movement by giving more attention to non-white ethnic groups, and also challenges for the definitions of gender and promotes sexuality as female empowerment.

Furthermore; she argued that feminism had made a mistake by trying to accept that women were a group with common characteristics and interests. She said that performed an inadvertent regulation and objectification of gender relations, reinforcing a dual view of gender relations in which human beings are divided into two groups; man and women. She also notes that feminist rejected the idea that biology is destiny then it developed a record of patriarchal culture which assumed that masculine and feminine genders would inevitably be built by culture upon male and female bodies, making the same destiny just as predestined, that argument allows no range for choice, differences or resistance.

Besides; she says: “there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; identity is per formatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results” (p.25). she calls for destructive action in the present; gender trouble, the mobilization, proliferation of genders and identity, she also argued that we all put on a gender performance whether traditional or not, so it is not a question of whether to do a gender performance, but what form that performance will take by choosing to be several about it, we might work to change gender criterions, and the dual understanding of male and female.

D. The Distinction between Men and Women

Both Man and Women are created equal but women have always taken a back seat to men, as well as they were treated as secondary citizens in society, so men had all the authority to enter into the workforce while women were confined to the home by taking care of the domestic housekeeping duties. Furthermore; the traditional role of men was to work and having money which would be used in the entire household. On the other hand; the traditional role of women was the role of being a good mother and a home- maker which were roles believed to be served to women. They were expected to become ideal wives and mothers, and they were brought to be charming angels who were ideally, both decorative and useful. For instance; in the quote that tells by Margaret Fuller:

Yet, then and only then will mankind be ripe for this, when
When Inward and outward freedom for Women as much as
For man shall be acknowledge as a right, so yielded as a
Concession as the Friend of the Negro assumes that one man
Can't by right hold another in bondage so should the friend
Of women assume that man can't by right lie even well
Meant restriction on women, if the Negro be a soul if the
If the women be a soul appared in flesh to one master and
Only are they accountable there is but one law for souls
If there is to be an interpreter of it he must come not as man
Man or son of Man, but as Son of God (p, 3).

In this passage Margaret Fuller who was an outspoken women right, she criticized of gender roles, and also she tells that females in the early centuries could not vote, they could not own property in the way that men could, they were just confined to be good housewives for their entire lives, so they were lived a bad life with harsh conditions which compared like slaves and equal to children not as men, she claimed that each person was born equal, and they must be an individual and self-dependent.

Moreover; women are more considerate and more intelligent than man, they have a special need and ability to care about the others, as well as they are more responsible than men. So when women work in politics can make decision that beneficial for others, help children and old people, also they do things to improve the country. They have the desire to build and to win, also they are more willing to explore compromise and seek other people's opinions. In addition; they have the ability to listen to the others and create a better world without war, women have responsibilities but they think with their heart not with their brain, they are also good but not to men because they cannot talks as fluently and powerfully as men do. They have the ability to be better than men in politics.

In contrast, man on the other hand, they have the ability to rule as we also know that most of the best politicians are men. However; most men have potential in speaking and controlling, and they are better leaders than women, this latter have emotion and they don't have much potential in them, as well as women are not better than men, and men are not better than women in politics. They are equal and they have their own strengths and weakness.

E. Married Women and their Rights

After a woman married her rights, her property, and even her identity stopped to exist, and by law they were under the authority and total supervision of her husband, thus through marriage both husband and wife became one person, so being a wife and mother was supposed to be a Devine mission, caring about the husband and childbearing was the highest achievement of every women.” The woman who was neither wife nor mother, through choice or through misfortune was seen as less feminine than her domesticated counterpart” (calder, 128).

Moreover; Victorian society viewed marriage as the best position for women life, also men saw it as an expected duty of them, in reality women held an important position as wives, as well as they took care of the household, helped with her husband’s work. Unfortunately, mother was viewed as “an angel in the house”, and motherhood was “the crowning achievement” of a women’s life” (kent, 33).

Furthermore; with a husband a woman gained her own household, she could run and where she could utilize her taste and wishes. “for a women marriage meant the acquisition of an establishment, her own place financed by her husband, a place where she had at least some freedom, choice, and activity, which she might not have had at all in the parental home” (calder, 9). On one hand, after marriage woman became masters of their houses and respected members of the community. On the other hand, marriage did not secure women the same rights with men.

Although throughout the 19th century a series of laws improving the legal status of women was passed, women were not equal with men, they were not legal representatives of their children, and it was only after the Custody of Infants Act 1839

that” it was possible for wives estranged from their husband to gain Custody of Children less than seven years old” (Nelson, 51).

During the Victorian era, all kind of women wives, mothers, divorced women were marked a series of changes their rights, and their social status were in the centre of attention of a not insignificant number of people. It can be surprising that the representation of women and all the social changes concerning them appeared in all genre of popular fiction.

However, women did not stay silent, but they tried to fight for their rights in order to have an opinion in the society, to have acquired their rights as individuals, and to obtain the same rights as men, for instance one of these rights was the right to vote.

Chapter Three

Women Franchise

Due to the limited rights that women enjoyed during the nineteenth century, this era saw the emergence of organized women's movements; women had to be in relationship in order to enlarge their opportunities and to have the same equal rights like men.

This chapter is devoted to shed light on the British women suffragist and how they fought for their rights. So as a starting point I shall examine the women's question and women suffrage, then I will discuss the most key element of the conflict of women's movement.

A. Women Question

Most of the historical changes that happened during the Victorian period motivated discussion about the nature and the role of women. This Queen Victoria was called "the women question". This question created many debates about the physiological nature, the political capacity and also the place of women in society. Likewise the women question was also discussed at the level of everyday life of women because female conflicted for their restrictions positioned on their education, their property rights, and their status in marriage and in family, and also for their position in the community in order to have the same rights as men.

Moreover, the ideas of the suffrage movement in Britain descended directly from Enlightenment political philosophy, and nineteenth century liberal theory, so through Mary Wollstonecraft's "The Vindication of the Rights of Women" and John Stuart Mill "The Subjection of Women". Both of them they started a substantial theoretical premise. "The human attributes of men and women and the consequent social injustice involved in their unequal treatment" (sandra, 9).

During the epoch of renaissance “the right of men “was under discussion in England and France. On one hand Mary Wollstonecraft who has been called the mother of Feminism and the first feminist. She proposed to apply Enlightenment ideas to women; according to her women were intelligent creatures that were no less than capable of intellectual achievement than men. Her “vindication of the Rights of Women” was published in 1792 and was addressed to Talleyrand, protesting against the exclusion of women from citizen rights. It considered as an important work because it advocated for the equality of both genders.

Furthermore, her text is a representation against women defeating, so for women education held the key of achieving self- respect to be able to achieve a better and comfortable life, this not only for themselves but also for their children and their family, also the question of women role and their rights was discussed by the public in the 1860. The first pamphlets in favor of the enfranchisement of women began to appear in the Middle of the 19th century. On the other hand John Stuart Mill published his book “the Subjection of Women” in 1869. He used the image of slavery and bondage, he argued in favor social, economic, and political emancipation of women, and he assumed that each individual had interests, he also asked for the votes for women. In addition to this he represented a petition in parliament calling for the inclusion of women suffrage in the Reform Act of 186

B. Chartism Movement

It was a movement for political and social reform in the UK during the mid-19th century. It was a popular movement campaign for universal male suffrage. It attracted a large number of women; so many wives took an active role in this movement and helped their husbands. “There were about 150 female chartist associations, one for

every 9 male associations” (mathew, 177).the movement towards granting women franchise really started favored petitions and obtained one clear victory in 1869 with the Municipal Franchise Act.

Furthermore, in this Act unmarried and widowed women taxpayers could vote in borough elections. This key Act enabled women to take part in local government. In 1880 about 1 million women in England and Wales had a local franchise. In 1889 Pankhurst founded the women’s Franchise League, she campaign in favor of the franchise and granted a victory. When a local government Act passed in 1894 married women were allowed the equal right to both vote and seat on municipal councils. In addition the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Society was formed by Mrs. Millicent Fawcett in 1897 which served as the largest suffrage organization in the UK; this was the successor of the National Society for Women’s Suffrage. These suffragists were in favor of the women’s suffrage.

Besides, in 1903 Pankhurst and her daughters, Cristobel and Sylvia formed the women’s Social and Political Union, it concentrated its activities on promoting support for votes for women within socialist and trade union fields in the Manchester area. In 1912 Pankhurst declared and urged her followers. “Those of you, who can break windows, break them. Those who can still further attack property, so as make the government realize that property is as greatly endangered by women suffrage as it was by Chartists of old do so. And my last words to the government: I incite this meeting to rebellion” (martin, 217).

Moreover, on 1917, the House of Commons accepted the female suffrage provision in the representation of the people Bill by 385 votes to 55. In the House of Lords, it was passed by vote of 134 to 71 with a successful passage of the representation of the

people Act all women on the legal government register and were over the age of thirty were enfranchised. In the general election of 1918, 8, 5 million of women joined 12, 9 million of men voting, as well as female suffrage remained restricted to women over the age of 30 years who were local government electors.

C. Women Movement for Suffrage

The first women's suffrage Bill came before parliament in 1870, and after a long defeat in 1897 several Local and National Suffrage Organizations came together under the standard of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, both of these organizations tried to campaign for the vote for women, as well as the NUWSS was organic in its approach, preferring to depress parliament with petitions and hold public meetings. In contrast, the Women's Social and Political Union formed in 1903, it took more fighter view and it characterized its campaign with violent and disruptive actions and events. In addition these two organizations dominated the campaign for women's suffrage and were run by key figures such as Pankhurst and Fawcett.

1. The Activities of these Organizations

Before the first of the series of reforms in 1832, only 3% of the adult male population had the right to vote, thus for most part, the right to vote depended on how much you earned and the value of your property, due to this reason the majority of the people who were able to vote were both wealthy and male. Furthermore, throughout the 1800s, many campaigners fought to extend the franchise and some concessions were made in 1867 and 1884. They initially wanted the vote for female on the same terms as it was granted to men because many of them their original was female middle class homeowners.

In addition their priority was that the franchise should be extended to women of their own status rather than to all women, this reform did not include either working class men or women but eventually universal suffrage, the right to vote became the goal of the campaign.

2. The Reasons behind this Campaign

Many Victorian women at that time have very few rights; their disfranchised status became a symbol of civil inequality. Most of the campaigners wanted the vote to be granted to women as they felt that too often the law was against women and reinforced the idea of women as subordinate to men. For instance until 1882 the property of women was controlled by her husband on their marriage. Even after the married women's property Act of 1882 the position was not much improved, in addition women now had to pay taxes on the businesses. The new law permitted them to own but they did not have any say in how those taxes were spent. Campaigners felt that the best way to achieve equal status with men in society and in the home would be to get the vote and participate in the parliamentary process. (Aileen, N p).

Furthermore, the campaign for women's suffrage took several forms and contains numerous groups and individuals. The NUWSS which formed in 1897, it campaigned peacefully and used recognized political methods such as propitiating parliament and collecting signatures for petitions, also the group held public meetings and published different pamphlets, newspaper, and journals outlining the reasons and justifications for granting women the vote, members of this organizations were known as "Suffragists". In addition in order to gain more publicity and raise awareness, the WSPU was formed in 1903 and it engaged in a series of more violent actions. They chained themselves to set fire both in public and in private property, and disrupted

speeches both in public meetings and in the House of Commons, members of the WSPU and other militant groups such as the Women's Freedom League were known as "Suffragettes". Many of these latter went to prison as a result of their actions. One of the most infamous Suffragettes was named Emily Davison in 1913; she threw herself in front of the Kings Horse at the Epsom Derby. She later died of her injuries and became a victim to the cause.

D. The main Principles of the Struggle in Women's Movement

1. Education for Women

From 1850s, female literacy rates began to improve, schools enrollment went up, the number of high schools grew rapidly as a result the middle class were benefited from this explosion of education. The number of female high school graduates increased between 1870 and 1900 from 9.000 to 57.000, so during 1920s, the number of female college students developed rapidly by 50%. Moreover, in Britain, Maria Grey created the first National Union for improving the education of all women classes, this union was known as the Women's Education Union, it was a pressure group for women rights to professional recognition. In addition to this the Educational Acts of 1870 and 1872 gave women the right both to vote and to stand as candidates in school board elections. By 1894 Local Government Act allowed married women the right to vote and to sit on municipal councils.

2. Equal Rights to both men and women after marriage

In 1765, Sir William Blackstone who was a famous legal commentators, he wrote that after marriage," the very being or legal existence of the women is incorporated and consolidated into that of her husband", it means that a married

women did not legally speaking, also they exist separately from her husband, so when women get married all their property rights automatically placed under the domination of her husband, thus married women should be equal persons as their husbands.

However, in 1879 an Act of parliament allowed married women to keep money they earned and to inherit certain property. By 1882, so in this year wives were allowed the right to own, buy and sell property, and by 1893 married women were granted control of any property they acquired during marriage.

3. Divorced Women and how they fight to access their Children

Before 1839, mothers had no rights at all in relation to their children, if the wife and the husband were separated. For example Caroline Norton left her husband George, who was insolent towards her, so after the separation, he refused to give Caroline access to their sons. In addition after a lot of campaigning, an Act of Parliament was passed in 1839 which gave mothers the right to ask for the Custody of their children.

E. The Emergence of Feminism Movement

This movement was one expression of women's discontent with the restrictions that had been imposed on them by the earlier generation. By the second decade of the 20th century a lot of spokeswomen had emerged such as Charlotte Perkins, Margaret Sanger, Alice Paul in order to make the case for full freedom and equality, they called for the release of women from domestic chores, birth control, as well as these women were among the first to use the term "Feminism" in order to describe their desire for complete equality with men. According to Crystal Eastman, who was a leader of

feminist, he defined the feminist challenge as “how to arrange the world so that women can be human beings with a chance to exercise their infinity varied ways, instead of being destined by the accident of their sex to one field of activity”.

Besides, the feminist movement shed light to fight for equality for women within education, access to the work force, the same political rights as men, female sexuality and also the position of women within the household. Although Mary Wollstonecraft defended the self- value, intelligence, and basic human strength of women in her time. In the other side the term feminism did not become a distinctive movement until the late of the nineteenth century, by the time this movement has been called several waves of feminism.

However, the first wave of feminism which took place in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century's, it emerged out of a society of civil industrialism and liberal, socialist politics. The intention of this wave was to open the opportunities for women with a particular convention ballot, in addition this movement led to an emergence in female abilities within education and to have a place in the workforce, and by the year of 1918 women over the age of 30 were given the right to vote. The most famous women who are directly attached to this wave are Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir.

On one hand, Woolf has been referred to as the promoter of the contemporary struggle as she pointed problems that latter feminists returned to, her special central participation to feminism was her evaluation that gender identity is socially structured and something that can be challenged and reduced. On the other hand, Simone de Beauvoir who is the French feminist, her most provocative study “The Second Sex (1949)” is viewed as the principal effort to defy human history from a feminist

perspective. As well as the “Second Sex” marked the transformation from the first wave feminism to the second one, it gave focus to a wider range of disincentives for women, for instance sexuality.

Therefore; the second wave has been provoked by Betty Friedan’s” the feminine mystique (1963)”, she professed an oppression among contemporary women which she named “The Problem That has No Name” (5), she countered against the mainstream media which their image debased women to the occupation of being a wife and good mother. Moreover, the first wave of feminism was driven by middle class white women, in contrast, the second wave try to include women of color and rising nations in snooping of solidarity and sisterhood, so the feminists wanted to demonstrate the relationship between race, class, and gender oppression.

Moreover, the third wave of feminism began in the mid- 1990s and is continuing in the present. More specifically, women who belong to this phase tried to avoid the role of victim through their own definition of feminine beauty in order to become subjects, as opposed to objects. So according to the analysis of Friedan on the feminine mystique, he views the differences between the levels of powers or dominance in female and how this defied. So the inflation of ascendancy of women attained high on self-confidence, self-consideration, and self-bravery against to the dominance of law to women. Therefore, he found that

High- dominance women were not “feminine” in

The conventional sense, partly because they felt free to choose

Rather than be bound by convention, and partly because

They were stronger as individuals than most women (friedan, 256)

As well as this theory indicated that if women felt stronger and had self- assurance in themselves, they were able to impulse from agreement and to be enteric instead of inactive, for Friedan women can't find their identity through their entire lives but they had to fight by themselves, if they perpetrate themselves to a real goal outside the home, they can began to listen to their own voice, they could find what they wants inflict and they can maker integral of their abilities. He says that" woman today must think of herself as a human beings first and not only as a wife or mother, and make a life plan in terms of her own abilities, a commitment of her own to society " (friedan, 278).

F. Modern Women

The transformation in the world of consumerism helped women to leave; they had to go outside their homes in order to shop in cities department stores. New household inventions and changes in living patterns gave them more time for outside activities. The new women became a dominant figure in popular culture in the 1890s.

Moreover, work gave women a new sense of social independent, their work were distant from their homes, they received salaries from which law raised their signification of economic freedom. In addition the participation degree of married women who have 18-24 years developed between 1911 and 1921, and the equipment that increased from war time experience was the conviction that it was possible for women to combine work, marriage and motherhood without their home responsibilities being seriously undermined, so in England," middle-class feminists had dominated women's suffrage organizations in the late nineteenth century, working- class women, and especially those organized within the Labor movement

were becoming an increasingly significant presence among rank- and file suffragists by the early years of the 20th century” (sandra, 2).

G. Women’s Participation in the Process of Development

Women’s participation in the development process has been recognized not only as an problem of human rights and social justice, but also as a contribution to solve the pressing needs of many excluded segments of our society.

As far as women’s participation in the economic level is concerned our country has benefited from a lot of fruitful achievements that have improved our economy. For instance, they have created their own projects and contribute to the reduction of unemployment thank to civic associations, so women can increase the standard of living of their society by investing in many fields.

Besides to the aforementioned ideas, women’s participation in the progress of development has great positive effects at the social level as an illustration, the rate of illiteracy has been decreasing remarkably thanks to the literacy programs, and it is known that educated women can provide better nutrition and education to their children in comparison to the illiterate ones.

Therefore, women are capable of many proving the culture of our society. On the whole, it may be said that our society can really draw many benefits from women’s participation in the process of development that is why women should be given a certain importance in society.

Consequentially, women today are becoming active participants and full protagonists of the emergence process thanks to the leadership of his majesty who has made many fundamental democratic changes since the last decade. As a result many

competent women have been appointed to be responsible in many leadership positions and are able to express their opinions that can be exploited for the benefit of our society.

H. Women Voters

The 1918 General Election was the first from which women could stand as MPs, while the suffragettes stopped to exist, after 1918 Suffragists continued to fight for universal female suffrage, as a result of campaigns which dating back to mid-nineteenth century, some women were finally granted the right to vote in 1918. However; many women were still excluded from the franchise. The representation of the People Act enfranchised all males and women over the age of 30 who already had the right to vote in local elections, about 8.400.000 women were enfranchised.

Furthermore, the Universal Franchise was finally granted with the Equal Franchise Act 1928, so in this year the Conservative Party with the support of both opposition parties equalized the Franchise laws, with this legislation women over 21 year were able to vote and they finally achieved the same political rights as men in Britain, also this Act increased the number of women to vote about 15 million.

The early harbingers for women's were truckled to humiliation and occasional violence, a lot of women consecrated their lives to the cause, that's why the enfranchisement of women did not come easily, they fought for their rights and universal female suffrage for long years in order to have the same equal rights as men. However, after a wider range of struggle, women enlarge their opportunities and they entered the intellectual world, so they became educated, they have a voice in society, and also they obtain the right to vote which allowed them to be represented in the government and to have a status in politics as men.

Therefore, the Women's Suffrage Campaign was served as a successful story with the principal of suffrage confessed in 1918 and equal franchise rights which ensured in 1928, but around the world the struggle still uninterrupted for many women in order to actualize complete equality with men in all domains.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

During the Nineteenth Century women have always treated as secondary citizens to men in society. They were enjoyed few of their social and political rights. For instance; they have limited freedom in the society, they were not allowed to vote and they could not work. They were just supposed to be wives and good house makers.

Moreover, this century saw the emergence of women's movement, so women have to be incorporated in order to raise their abilities and to have a position like men in the public sphere, as well as by the arousal of the Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain which played an important role in inspiring women throughout the world, so Women who belong to this movement had to fight hardly and to stand up against the chairmen by doing more actions in order to have the right to vote and to have seats and for their voices to be heard in the parliament.

Besides, the Women's Suffrage Movement made some graceful changes in the society as well. For instance, at the social level; the movement helped women to improve their circumstances which faced them and also to be respected in their society and to highlight their capacities. As well as by the 20th century, women were able to go to college and earn degree, and to obtain the same professions like men such as; doctors, teachers and lawyers. Therefore due to this movement women today were allowed to vote and their roles and status in society increased.

On the other hand, at the political level; the Women's Suffrage Movement permitted women more political rights for instance, the right to vote and to have a voice and a position in the parliament.

In the light of what is said above we can say that the enfranchisement of women did not come easily. Women fought for long years in order to obtain the same rights as men and to improve their opportunities in society, that's why the Women's Suffrage Movement was considered as the successful story with the principal of suffrage conceded in 1918 and equal franchise rights which followed in 1928. But throughout the world the struggle still continues for many women in order to achieve complete equality with men in all domains.

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