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**Female Anti-Suffragism: The Opposition to Women's
Parliamentary Franchise in England (1837-1928)**

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my beloved parents and my whole family for providing me with their assistance, guidance and love.

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ABSTRACT

Within the nineteenth century, Britain seen the rise of the female Suffrage Development. In 1866, these ladies suffragists' point was the parliamentary emancipation of women. In 1899, the appearance of the Female Anti-Suffrage Movement was organized to contradict the give of the parliamentary establishment for women. This research work pursues to highlight the reasons that pushed women to restrict the parliamentary franchise for women. The antis had a surfeit of contentions which defended their cause which was the resentment of the political equality between men and women. In 1918, the Female against Suffrage Campaign was defeated. The partial enfranchisement was given to women over the age of thirty. A decade after and with the Equal Enfranchisement Act (1928), all women at last accomplished the same voting rights as men.

Keywords: Female Suffrage, Suffragists, Women, Anti-Suffrage, Parliamentary Franchise, Political Equality

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

M.P.s Members of Parliament

N.L.O.W.S.: National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage

N.U.W.S.S: National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies

W.N.A.S.L: Women's National Anti-Suffrage League

W.S.P.U: Women's Social and Political Union

General Introduction

During the Victorian era (1837-1901), Britain experienced a period of progressive improvements, exceptional strength and riches. At that time, the Industrial Revolution (1760-1840) has been started and brought a social and scientific progression to the British society. Nevertheless, this advancement was full of inconsistencies that resulted misery and wars to the British people in general and women in particular.

The Victorian time was known by gender imbalance filled with an abundance of standards and traditions that coordinated both men and women to fulfill their roles. Women were set within home and prohibited from open life. They lived under the total and exhaustive supervision of their male watchers (father, brother or husbands). They were denied of the excess rights enjoyed by men. The woman was assumed to be the "Angels within the house", to be perfect wives and moms.

In fact, women have been marginalized and denied from numerous rights such as higher education, control of their individual property after marriage, and the proper to vote. With the approach of the Industrial Revolution, the women's traditional role began to alter. They started to take paid occupations which empowered them to reply.

Within the nineteenth century Britain seen the rise of the women's suffrage development (1860-1928) which was a turning point within the destiny of women. There were two notable suffrage movements, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUW.S) shaped in 1897 under the authority of Millicent Jarrett Fawcett (1847-1929); its members were suffragists. They utilized peaceful strategies to claim their right to vote. The second development was the Women's Social and Political Union (W.S.P.U). It was established in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928); its members were suffragettes. They utilized a parcel of combat and violent methods such as crushing windows and throwing firebombs on open buildings to reach their objective of full voting rights for all women.

During the journey of women's suffrage, both of suffragettes and suffragists faced a significant restriction. Parliament's Representatives refused the female suffrage. The rise of a gather of women who fervently opposed the suffrage campaign was the reason that complicated matters. Mary Humphrey Ward (1851-1920) was the pioneer of the anti-suffrage campaign. They applied several methods to persuade the government not to allow women the right to vote.

this research title is "Female Anti-Suffragism: The Opposition to of Women's Parliamentary Franchise in England (1837-1928)". This work tries to shed light on the anti-suffrage development and the reasons why women contradict the female franchise.

The work attempts to reply the following questions:

- What were the reasons that led women to contradict voting?
- What are the strategies of the women's anti-suffrage mouvement?
- Did suffragists gain their goal and granted the right to vote?

To reply the previous questions, this research is a mixture of three chapters:

The first chapter entitled: "The Status of Women in the 19th Century - Victorian England-". It deals with the position of women throughout the Victorian period and their socio-economic treatment and employments before the beginning of the suffrage campaign. Also, it gives insight into the way the women's classes lived, the society they came from and the sort of education that was given to women amid the Victorian period. In addition, it sheds light on the social position of women and how they were denied from their rights under the patriarchal society, and after that the disparity between men and women.

The second chapter entitled: Women's Suffrage Movement in England up to 1908. It talks about the woman's ask to alter her political status. In addition, it handles the starting of the suffrage movement (1866) in England. The movement pushed women to claim the right to vote, get the in Parliament polling and take part in parliamentary elections on the same terms as men. The chapter closes with the emergence of the anti-suffrage campaign in 1889.

Chapter Three entitled: Female Anti-Suufragism in Britain (1908-1928). It talked about the acceleration of the anti-suffrage campaign in 1889 and the creation of the first national women's anti-suffrage organization. Also, the reasons for this resistance to vote. The chapter, in turn, discussed the responses of female activists to the right to vote and the claims of women's right to vote against the female opposition. Then, it highlights the impact of women's suffrage and women's suffrage claims on the destiny of women's suffrage and the anti-suffrage campaign.

Chapter One

Introduction

The Victorian age was characterized as an era of economic and social development. With the Industrial Revolution; England witnessed a great change from a rural agricultural to an urban and industrialized one.

Despite these total changes and advances in all aspects of society, women were marginalized and deprived of their rights. In the 19th century, women lived in a patriarchal society where men enjoyed all rights. However, women were placed at home and to be “Angel at Home” by cleaning the home and taking care of their husbands and their children.

Therefore, the first chapter is devoted to highlight the status of Victorian women in the British society focusing on its economy, political, and social aspects.

1. Position and Role of Victorian Women prior to the Suffrage Campaign

During the nineteenth century in England, Victorian women faced many hurdles and barriers¹. Their journey towards equal citizenship was complex and fraught with failure. The right place for a woman was home. Victorian society retained the power and privilege of men. However, the law and norms imposed dependency on females. Women were also denied from many rights. They were placed in the house and considered "household angels".

¹KathrynHughes, *Gender role in the 19th century*,(The University of East Anglia),6

1.1. Social Position and Identity of Women

In Victorian England, women were seen as inferior and men were seen as superior, and have the authority over their wives. The ideology of the Victorian era was the "great men" who were considered competitors in many fields and professors in the fields of economics, politics and ethics.

In the nineteenth century, Queen Victoria (1819-1901)² ruled England for nearly a hundred years, marginalizing and exploiting all women under brutal living conditions. Therefore, they were placed in the last row of the Victorian era.

The Victorian period was thought to be the period of male supremacy. The position of the woman was the same as that of the children. Their fathers, husbands, or other male relatives were their legitimate representatives and were capable for women's property for about the whole nineteenth century. Women were anticipated to be "Angels in their Homes" and seem turn a home into a heaven for their husbands and children.

Women, as household beings, are expected to be friendly companions. Therefore, higher education was unnecessary and not recommended for women. Women were supposed to cook, prepare the house for their husbands and take care of their children, and far from education. However, Victorian ideology always dictated the notion that women must have knowledge of art, music, and language, to become ideal wives and mothers.

²Queen Victoria was the queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from 1837 to 1901—the second—longest reign of any British monarch. Queen Victoria Biography(1819-1901)UPDATED:AUG 29,2019.ORIGINAL:FEB 27,2018accessed on June,12,2019

Within the nineteenth century, marriage was a fundamental and anticipated obligation of all Victorian women and particularly center and upper class women. A married woman had a sacred and honorable part in society as "the perfection of the completion of a woman's life."³ In any case, single women were seen as descendant as a clear danger to the stability of society in England.

Single or widowed women were permitted to claim and have their property. In any case, once married, the lady misplaced her property and money .Since Victorian law gave men all rights to possess his wife's property after the wedding day. Additionally, in case a woman had employments, the sole recipients of their passage would be their husbands. The woman was totally subordinate on her husband, but in case the last mentioned died, the woman seem control her property and money. Besides, Victorian women may have access to the sort of education managed by the dominant culture.

1.3. Girls' Education and Work in the Victorian Era

The Victorian period was accepted to be the period of male supremacy in all spaces. The division of genders was clear. Men and women knew that their parts were distinctive and acknowledged their unequal lives. Women were situated as embellishing trophies and otherworldly gatekeepers of men's undying soul; they were seen as male's hirelings. For this reason that higher instruction was considered pointless for ladies. In Victorian times, young ladies either wealthy or destitute might not go to school; most of them were instructed by a tutor at domestic.

³VL MC Beath, "Victorian Era women's rights". <http://Valmcbeath.com/Victorian-era-women-rights>. Accessed on June 11th, 2019.

It was until 1870, that a girl's instruction was taken into consideration by the British authorities. By the Education Act (1870)⁴, basic instruction for both genders got to be obligatory. Thanks to this act, young ladies began to learn reading, writing and math. A few English families indeed wealthy parents did not permit their girls to have secondary instruction till the 1880 and 1890's. This patriarchal society bolstered higher instruction for children to protect the prevalence to men. It was as it were in 1848 that the state acknowledged constructing a college for the girls who were over the age of twelve.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)⁵ declared that: "lack of instruction made women frivolous and socially irresponsible, unfit to be companions to their husbands, good moms to their children or self supporting within the absence of a male provider". Despite the attitude of the patriarchal at that time, numerous women in Victorian Britain began to work in arrange to assist their families nearby their heavy residential duties.

Within the Victorian society, women of the middle and upper-classes did not work; their appropriate put was at home close their children and husbands. In expansion, middle-class ladies seem not having the opportunity to induce married and work at the same time, they had to choose either work or marriage.

During the Victorian period, Britain seen social and economic advancements. However, in this period, Victorian women were enduring and living with the disparity and exceptionally bigoted conditions. The nineteenth century Britain was also marked by the Industrial Revolution which had an incredibly affect on women.

⁴The Education Act (1870) stands as the very first of legislation to deal specifically with the provision of education in Britain. Most importantly, it demonstrated a commitment to provision on a national scale .The 1870 Education Act-UK [parliament. http://www.parliament.UK/about/livingheritage/transformation/society/living_learning/school/overview/1870education/](http://www.parliament.UK/about/livingheritage/transformation/society/living_learning/school/overview/1870education/). Accessed on June 12th, 2019.

⁵Mary Wollstonecraft was an English writer who advocated for women's equality. Her book A Vindication of the rights of women pressed for educational reforms. Mary Wollstonecraft-beliefs, Life & Ideas-Biography. <http://www.biography.com/scholar/mary-wollstonecraft>.

2. Impact of the Industrial Revolution on Victorian Women

The nineteenth century witnessed technological, financial and social changes in Britain. This last mentioned the Industrial Revolution⁶, which considered as a turning point for the advancement of the country. With the greater machines that could control manufacturing plants, the generation in materials, production lines or plants expanded bringing riches and power to Great Britain. The term “Industrial Revolution” in truth implies exceptional mechanical and financial improvement that started amid 1830 within the U.K. It supplanted the animal and human control by mechanical control and changed agriculture-based economies to manufacturing based ones.

The period preceded the Industrial Revolution; women had conventional employments such as making and repairing dress or child- sitters for raising kids. By the Industrial Revolution, ladies begun steadily to be freer, and after that the conventional part for ladies started to alter. The Industrial Revolution resulted a vital number of women who begun to work in material plants and coal mines e to move forward their lives. Although the Industrial Revolution had significant impacts on society and women, women did not get the same rights as men. Thus, they had often gotten few salaries and worked much more than men.

However, the Victorian working-women began to contemplate their marginalized and discriminatory situation. By industrializing English society, women gain their economic independence and join men in their public sphere. This achievement enabled women and increased their awareness of their political participation regardless of their class.

⁶Elva Card, “Women and the Industrial Revolution”(Seminar, Social Studies department,woodson High School Fairfax,2004)accessed on July18,2019.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter centered on the way of life of the Victorian woman who suffered from social and financial inequality. According to Victorian laws and conventions, women were considered "angels in the home," and had to see after their husbands and children. Until the late nineteenth century, women were considered the belonging and servants of men who had control and benefits.

Otherwise, they were marginalized and denied from fundamental rights such as higher education, control of their individual property after marriage, and even the right to work. Women misplaced their personality in an supreme patriarchal society, but this picture changed with the approach of the Industrial Revolution, and started to perform paid jobs that enabled them to reply. Within the following chapter, the highlight will be on the development of the "women's suffrage development" through which women will seek to extend their presence in politics.

Chapter Two

Introduction

In the nineteenth century, there was inequality between men and women. The later suffered from being the weak part of the family as well as the society. They wanted to change their status, to get more rights as citizens; they started to think seriously about their position and situation in society and wanted to react against the intolerant and unjust society even if this latter at that time was ruled by a woman; Queen Victoria.

In 1866, the suffrage movement or the suffrage campaign was organized for the sake of collecting signatures for a suffrage petition to be presented to the House of Commons. The campaign was led by women to ask for the right to vote and to gain the parliamentary franchise and take part in parliamentary elections on the same terms as men. This chapter thus highlights the emergence of the Women's Suffrage Movement (1860-1928) that was a turning point for the women's destiny at that time.

1. The Request for Changing Women's Political Status in the 19th Century

The right to vote was not granted for Victorian women. They were anticipated to be at domestic absent from political issues with respect to men, and so women's support in politics was not agreeable. Women were avoided from political cooperation, particularly middle and lower-class women, who were prevented from their political rights. Upper-class ladies only are entitled to take part in political matters.

Since the majority of women could not vote and or reach the gate of politics; this situation awakened women's awareness and started to think

seriously about the necessity of their political participation as they began to ask for equal rights and for change. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) the first feminist who advocated the rights for women said:

I do not wish them[women] to have power over men, but over themselves
... it is the time to effect a revolution in female manners-time restore to them their lost dignity and make them, as a part of the human species, labor by reforming themselves to reform the world⁷

The “new woman” started to ask questions about womanhood, and the woman as a “concept”. They started to react. This group of women asked for change, to be equal with men and to get their rights as full citizens.

Politics in the early nineteenth century in the U.K was only for men. Men saw women as sensitive, fragile not able to carry the stress and tension of politics. Even men and nearly the whole of society thought that women could not participate in politics. The group of women who believed strongly in the “new woman” decided to change the womanhood concept by fighting for equal rights between men and women; they did whatever they could to attract people's attention, but no one cared and they were called “Silly Women”.

As a consequence, and as a reaction to this, women became stronger and they were sticking to their beliefs and convictions. They took the challenge to create a movement to make their voice heard and their demand clear. Their aim was to improve their life and to change society, to call for equal rights and more precisely the political right. This is why women from the three classes were united and organized “Woman's Suffrage Movement” to ask mainly about “the right to vote” They would endeavor to surge their presence in politics.

⁷ Mary wollstonecraftquotes.MaryWollstonecraft, a *vindication of the rights of woman*. Accessed on June 13, 2019. <http://www.goodreads.com/another/quotes/1853305/>

2. The Female Suffrage in England

Throughout 64 years, women upon marriage, their legal rights were under the covert of their husbands. However, single and widows had the right to have property even business. All these conditions and circumstances pushed women to ask questions about their status in Victorian society and about their conventional roles imposed by it. Middle-class women started to organize movements in order to change their lives; it was like a challenge for these women to make their voice heard. These women believed in change and they looked for new women with new aims and ambitions.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the right to vote had been given to more and more men-now was the time to include women. Since women wanted equality and full citizenship; they organized several movements and campaigns to ask for their social, economic and political rights.

2.1. Definition of Suffrage

Within the early nineteenth century, the majority of people could not vote; in contrast with few people who had the right to vote. Women were prohibited from this right; the issue of women's suffrage got to be a problematic. Subsequently, numerous British women's rights activists assembled and shaped the Women's Suffrage Campaign to fight for women's right to vote. The term "suffrage" must be defined to know more about it. The suffrage or franchise is that individuals could vote common elections, to be elected or to select their representatives. The Encyclopedia Britannica characterizes the word "suffrage" as: "The right to vote in electing public authorities is adopting or rejecting the proposed legislation ...".⁸ As another definition of the term "Suffrage", it is characterized within the Merriam-Webster Lexicon as: "the right to vote in elections"⁹.

⁸<https://www.britannica.com/topic/woman-suffrage>. Accessed on June 26th, 2019.

⁹https://www.merriam-webster-com./dictionary/suffrage_ Accessed on July 23th, 2019.

2.2. The Use of Petitions and Parliamentary Response

Women started a long and hard journey to achieve the parliamentary franchise. The women's suffrage movement as a political campaign had a sole and unique issue that was the right to vote for women; the reason that pushed suffragists to use petitions as a strategy to ask the parliament for their right to vote. Before women gained the right to vote, the House of Commons had received more than 17.000 petitions for women's suffrage, containing over 3.3 million signatures.

In the nineteenth century, the British government passed three reforms Bills (1832, 1867 and 1884) which banned women from voting and widened the right to vote only to men though women presented their own petitions, but in vain.

- The Reform Bill of 1867

The Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) presented the Reform Bill of 1867 to allow a huge extent of men the right to vote. On May 20, 1867, the liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) proposed 10 amendments to the Reform Bill of 1867. Mill attempted to correct the Second Reform Bill to replace the word "man" with "person" and to request for the balance between men and women. John Stuart Mill gave a discourse on women's suffrage. This discourse was effective and intelligent. He gained support from a few other MPs including Henry Fawcett, husband of Millicent Jarrett Fawcett, but the Mill Amendment was rejected by 196 votes to 73. Mill kept on support women. In 1868, another request to vote collected more than 21,000 signatures¹¹.

The petitions opened the door for a women's organized campaign to vote in 1866. At that time, a few surveying groups were shaped focusing only on

¹⁰Women and the vote, John Stuart mill and the1866petition.<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage>. Accessed on March 12th, 2019.

¹¹F.Cini.Carol "From British Women's WWI Suffrage Battle to the League of Nations Covenant: Conflicting Uses of Gender in the Politics of Millicent Garrett Fawcett" *UCLA Historical Journal* (1994):83. Vol5,n03,p21

the possibility of women taking part within the parliamentary elections. In 1887, due to the repeated parliamentary rejection of women's suffrage petitions, seventeen vote groups met and shaped the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUW.SS).

- The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS)

During the nineteenth century, women wanted to change their position in society. They were denied social and political rights, such as lack of higher education and exclusion from voting. The reason that pushed women to establish several organizations to demand their rights, especially the right to vote. They were known as the Suffragists ¹². Women's rights groups were active across the country and demanded equal rights for women to vote at the local level and then at the national level.

In 1891, suffrage groups united to form the largest and most important organization that would lead the suffrage movement which was the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) to consolidate its standing and campaign, Lydia Baker ¹³ was the first female leader of NUWSS, but three years later Baker is dead. Millicent Jarrett Fawcett ¹⁴ (1847-1929) became the wife of Henry Fawcett the new head of the organization. (NUWSS) was the largest organization that promoted 17 suffrage societies and supported the cause of suffrage.

The only goal of female suffrage activists was to obtain the right to vote, but it was not easy for them to reach their goal. They faced several barriers such as opposition from Parliament, and even the opposition of their own gender.

¹²F.Cini.Carol “.op.cit.83

¹³Lydia Becker was the new secretary of the Manchester Committee for the enfranchisement of women (from 1867 until 1890) Lydia Becker (1827-1890): “the fight for votes for Women”<http://radicalmanchester.wordpress.com/2010/03/05/LydiaBecker-1827-1890-the-fight-for-votes-for-women/>Accessed on September 22th, 2019.

¹⁴Millicent Fawcett was a leading suffragists and campaigner for equal rights for women. She led the biggest suffrage organization, the non-violent (N.U.W.S.S) from 1890-1919, and played a key role in gaining women the vote. Millicent Fawcett/Biography Online.<http://www.Biographyonline.net/politicians/UK/Millicent-fawcett.html>.Accessed on September 22th, 2019.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter discussed the appeal to change the political status of women in the 19th century and the emergence of the women's suffrage movements. Moreover, they were considered as inferior and fragile, the reason that pushed many women to think about their status, they started by organizing several campaigns to ask for their rights in general and for the right to vote particular. NUWSS was the largest organization that supported the female suffragists who wanted to get the right to vote. This organization got support and respect of the MPs, however they also encountered opposition from men and from women as well. The nineteenth century witnessed the appearance of a group of Female anti-suffragism. They strongly believed that the vote was not for women.

Chapter Three

Introduction

The Victorian Era witnessed several women's movements and organizations which asked and looked for women's rights and especially the right to vote. There was another category of British women from upper-class and middle-class who were connected to define the real women's role in the society. They had a different view which opposed totally the suffrage movement's view and aim.

In the twentieth century (1908 - 1914), women oppositionists were organized to establish the first anti-suffrage organization the W.N.A.S.L (1908), then this group of female oppositionists took the name of forward policy (1908 - 1914). Women antis had a surfeit of political and social reasons and arguments. All of these reasons were against the women political participation. Whereas, the women antis used tactics and methods to achieve their aim, but the suffragettes resisted and protested violently .However, these violent acts strengthened the women antis cause.

Therefore, this chapter explores the reasons and the tactics of the women antis and how they respond to the suffragettes' violent methods; then the defeat and its reasons behind the female Anti-suffrage.

1. Reasons behind Female Oppositions to the Vote under the Forward Policy (1908 – 1914)

The women antis' believes were strongly against the parliamentary vote for women. They had several social and political reasons in order to convince women in the English society and the politicians in parliament that the vote was not for women. In 1908 was the first establishment of the first anti-suffrage organization

which was labeled the “Forward Policy”¹⁵ under the leadership of Mary Humphrey Ward (1851-1920)¹⁶.

1.1 Definitions of the Forward Policy (1908 – 1914)

The distribution of the Request against the right of Women to Vote in June 1889 pointed at denying women the vote. The request was distributed to confirm that the majority of women don't wish to vote. Within the twentieth century, anti-suffrage women utilized more successful strategies, and their restriction to the anti-suffrage campaign fortified their disappointment with the vote. Politics, and even women opposed to voting, were known as "Women Leaders"¹⁷. Mary Humphrey Ward was the leader of the Female anti-suffrage campaign. She was against moves to permit women to vote within the early 20th century.

The opposition to women's suffrage gained more advantages from suffrage participation in World War I, as they given all their time and efforts to this war. However, opponents took advantage of their absence. So the Forward Policy dissolved in 1914. The last mentioned had numerous reasons that pushed these resistance figures to deny their right to vote. They strongly accepted that women are different from men. Thus, they complement each other.

There were several reasons for the opposition to the parliamentary vote of women. Social reasons are the first type of those causes, according to the position of women in particular and society in general.

¹⁵.Julia Bush, “British Women’s Anti-Suffragism and the Forward Policy,1908-14”, *Women’s History Review*, Vol.11,No.3 (2002) :438.

¹⁶Mrs. Humphrey ward, born Mary Augusta Arnold. She opposed the Women’s Suffrage Movement, however, fearing in emancipation a loss of women’s moral influence. In 1908 she founded the Anti-suffrage League. Humphrey Ward/ British [writer/ Britannica.com. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mrs-Humphrey-ward](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mrs-Humphrey-ward). Accessed on November 22, 2019.

¹⁷Julia Bush, “British Women’s Anti-Suffragism and the Forward Policy,1908-14”, *Women’s History Review*,*op.cit.*438.

1.2. Social Reasons

Despite the fact that the Victorian traditions put women in their domestic sphere and deprived them from their rights; women were considered as “Angel at home”, these Victorian’s concepts still alive even many feminists struggled and fought to change their status in society and to gain their rights, especially the right to vote.

There was a wave of Victorian women opponents of the female parliamentary franchise who they still thought that women should be in their sphere because politics was for men only (a males’ sphere). According to these female antis, if women entered and involved the male’s sphere, the society in general and the family in particular was be in danger; then, women political participations could affect the stability and the family order as well. The principle reason that pushed female antis to reject the vote, was that they believed that women would share their time and energy then would be busy outside their home and consequently they would neglect their major roles as house-keepers and house-managers. In addition, it would make dissension between husband and wife, consequently; conflicts and hostilities even divorce, because women would emerge as political competitors to men.

Therefore the antis believed that this situation could threaten the unity and the stability of the family. “Jennifer Sommerville, in her book, *Feminism and The Family: Politics and Society in the U.K and U.S.A (2000)*, described the suffrage movement as “anti-familial ideology” since the suffrage movement would acquaint women with a means (the vote) to destroy their families, the role and structure of the family would be brought upside down¹⁸”.

Women antis encouraged and supported girls and women to get a high education and to seize the employment opportunities, but they remained in their domestic sphere in which, women had to perform their social duties and responsibilities. Beside the social reasons, the women antis put forward a surfeit of political reasons.

¹⁸Julia.Bush,” British Women’s Anti-Suffragism and the Forward policy,1908-14”,op.cit.433.

1.3. Political Reasons

Among the women anti's arguments and beside the social one, there were numerous political reasons to convince the politicians and the English women that the political participation for women did not benefit either for men or for women, and consequently for society and the whole country. The first political reason was the 'separate sphere ideology'.

As a Victorian rule women would be good wives, good mothers then good house keepers. They could be educated and got jobs but still in their sphere which was the private sphere and they could not enter the men's sphere which was the public one and shared with them political and parliamentary decisions. According to women antis, if women were involved into the men's sphere, marriage and having children would not be their priorities, then human race would be in danger.

The historicist Kathy Atherton considered women as delicate, powerless have control, fragile and inferior. Consequently, they were unfit to create political decisions. Therefore, they were not created for politics. Atherton said: "there would have been a common belief that women were intellectually inferior and passionate and women would have accepted that as well as men so they didn't have the ability to make political judgements"¹⁹. Another reason for the exclusion of women from political participation through the possession of the parliamentary franchise was the fears of female domination in politics, the fear of "the feminization of the British governments".

2. The Female Anti-Suffrage Tactics

In the twentieth century, the female anti-suffrage movement started to launch appeals and to write anti-suffrage petitions, leaflets, and pamphlets, as female anti-suffrage written tactics to protest against the women enfranchisement. They used another prominent tactic which was the establishment of the Anti-Suffrage League that was among the focal tactics that women antis used to defeat the suffrage movement.

¹⁹ibid.

The anti-suffrage used several tactics to eliminate and erase the female suffrage movement and its demands; but these tactics empowered women suffragettes to form their militant campaign under Emmeline Pankhurst and her organization.

In August 1914, war was declared in Europe. Both women suffragists and women suffragettes stopped their political campaigning for the vote and concentrated their efforts to support their country during the war and chaos. In addition to the suffrage movements, the anti-suffrage movement ceased its political campaign and contributed to war efforts.

2.1. The Formation of Anti-Suffrage League (1908-1918)

The one of the focal tactics of the female anti-suffrage was the women's national anti-suffrage league (W.N.A.S.L). In July 1908, the women's national Anti-Suffrage League was launched with the aims of opposing pro-suffrage women's goal, and to grant the right to vote in parliamentary elections.

Among the prominent members of the league, a significant anti-suffrage campaigner Mary Humphrey Ward, a writer who was in charge of creating and editing the league's magazine; the (W.N.A.S.L) was developed on the basis of anti-suffrage views and goals. The core aim of the (W.N.A.L.S) was the defeat of the female suffrage movement and the prevention of women from gaining the parliamentary vote and to support the women's role in local government.

In 1910, the combination between the Women's National anti-Suffrage League and the men's league formed the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage and lasted until 1918 when women's suffrage had been granted.

The suffrage oppositions used several strategies and tactics whether written or oral against the parliamentary vote, to weaken the suffrage campaign. The reason that led to the appearance of the women suffragettes, who believed in deeds. They used violent and militant actions to fight for the right to vote.

2.2. The Suffragettes Militant Campaign and the Struggle to Get the Vote

Antis utilized different strategies to stamp out the women's suffrage development and eradicate its requests. But these strategies empowered women to make their militant campaign under the administration of Emmeline Pankhurst and her organization. The Women's Social and Political Union (W.S.P.U) was a activist wing of the British women's suffrage development driven by Emmeline Pankhurst with the objective of allowing suffrage to women. WSPU's members behaved like soldiers.

The organization got to be aggressively activist in 1905, they performed a civil insubordination. In 1908, the female activists turn to more rough activities to oblige the members of parliament and the common public to alter their points of view on the women's suffrage and to allow them the right to vote. Hundreds of militant suffragettes were imprisoned. Thus, the activist suffragettes received hunger strikes as other militant strategies to challenge against the heartless jail authorities and to ask them to free the female activist prisoners. These strikes strategies served to discharge the militant suffragettes.

Violent reactions on the part of women with the right to vote were an opportunity to pick up parliamentary support for the opposition to women's right to vote. Supporters of suffrage resorted to violence, which increased the number of supporters against voting rights. The anti-suffrage campaign contradicted the violent challenge of a woman's right to vote and condemned her since the opponents regarded these hard-line strategies were wrong and might destabilize the country's political administration. The campaign against women's suffrage depicted suffragettes as "Wild Women."

With the outbreak of the World War in 1914, women suffrage advocates decided to calm and halt their political campaign in order to vote to contribute to the war effort.

²⁰Riddell,Fem,"Suffrage,Violence and militancy, votes for women", *British library Journal* vol3,n03,6Feb2018 .

2.3. Women Anti-Suffragists during the First World War

Defenders of the right to vote dedicated themselves to help their country during the World War I. They suspended all peaceful and military activities in support of the war effort. The reason why women protesters stopped their political campaign against the suffrage. Antis supported and defended their country like suffragettes and suffragists. Then, they contributed to the war with the volunteer waves and charitable activities.

The majority of opposed women belonged to the upper class; they were wealthy. They helped men, women and children, and distributed buffets to the traveling soldiers at various stations. Another charitable activity was that the Anti-Suffrage Review was dedicated to supporting the war, rather than opposing the parliamentary privilege of women. The prominent role and the important activities carried out by women defenders of women's right to vote during the First World War achieved fruitful results by granting women partial suffrage.

2. Parliamentary Path to Equal Franchise and the Defeat of the Female Anti-Suffrage (1918)

Women gradually began to gain government support as British politicians changed their view of the ballot campaign in 1917. From pacifists to suffrage activists, a long road to granting women the right to vote that finally ended with the representation of the People Act (1918). On June 19, 1917, the representation of the People's Bill was passed by the House of Commons that voted 385 to 55 to grant women the right to vote. This bill was called the "Limited Suffrage Bill" because it granted the right to vote to all men of 21 years old and provided the right to vote only for women 30 years old or more. However, women below this age cannot be granted the right to vote.

In addition to age, there is another requirement for a woman to be a homeowner, who are wives of homeowners, and occupants of real estate with an annual rent of £ 5 for British university graduates. On February 6, 1918, the People's Representation Bill became law and received royal assent.

The Parliament passed the Law of Qualification of Women in Parliament in 1918; to enhance the role of women as political participants alongside men. This law allowed women at the age of 21 to enter the political gate and for the first time to become members of parliament in the House of Commons. The law stipulated the following: “A woman may not be deprived of eligibility on the basis of gender or marriage in order to be elected or participate in voting as a member of parliament”²¹.

Both of the Representation of the People Act and the Parliament Qualification of Women Act enabled women to enjoy their limited enfranchisement, political participation, and to be a part in the process of decision-making. This success weakened the female opposition. The anti-suffrage campaign lived a defeat since the limited franchise was granted to women.

In 1918, the collapse of the N.L.O.W.S and the suspension of the leaflets against the women enfranchisement was a symptom of the anti-suffrage defeat²², after a hard path dating back to the mid-19th century women started to enjoy their success, the representation of people act (1918) women reached the partial enfranchisement which was the first step towards female political participation. Then, the Parliament Qualification of Women Acts (1918) which opened to women the gate of parliament and allowed them to be Parliament Members in the House of Commons.

Though women shifted from voters to candidates to be elected in parliamentary elections, and with the increasing number of women who could vote from 0 to 8.4millions, the actual equality of men and women remained an open issue.

²¹ Mari Catherine Takayanagi, “Qualification of Women Act (1918) in Parliament and Women, c.1900-1945”, (PhD Thesis., King’s College London2012).

²² J.Bush, *Women Against the Vote: Female Anti-Suffragism in Britain*, op.cit. 198

4. The Equal Franchise Act (1928)

The global privilege was finally granted with the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 after more than half a century because of the endless efforts of the suffrage campaigns and their massive continuation in spite of all the difficulties and oppositions. The law gave all women aged 21 years the right to vote in elections on the same terms as men.

In March 1928, a bill was set forth to grant all women the right to vote. Despite of some quibble in Parliament, the bill finally became a law on July 2, 1928. The decision gave 15 million women the right to vote.

Several eminent women succeeded in attracting the government's attention, convincing it to grant them the privilege and the right of voting. Unluckily, many of the notable women who fought with courage and perseverance to win that right were dead. These suffrage campaign pioneers include: Barbar Bodishon, Emily Davis, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Constance Leighton, Elizabeth Woltenholme, Amy and Emmiline Pankhurst.

Millicent Fawcett, the leader of NUWSS was the only one who could survive and relish the taste of victory. She said, "... I had very good luck to see the struggle from its beginning till it finished" ²³. She was so fortunate to have the opportunity to see their hard journey ended by taking the vote with the whole equality.

²³"Infinite fire," Millicent Fawcett – Suffragist & Equal Rights Champion, <http://infinitefire.org/info/millicent-fawcett-suffragist-and-champion-for-equal-rights/>, accessed on September, 2, 2019.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was so difficult for women to reach their objective, which was mainly to grant the right to vote in Parliament. The campaign included numerous oppositions that hindered their movement from the start. Among these obstacles was the women's anti-suffrage campaign, which unleashed an abundance of strategies and methods to protest against women voting based on many arguments among them, the right to vote was not a female interest.

Female Suffragists and then suffragettes have responded forcefully against this women restriction. In order to fight their cause, those women used peaceful and violent strategies. With the beginning of the World War I, the suffrage advocates decided to suspend all actions to help of the war effort.

This chapter also concludes that the introduction of the People Act was considered the first step towards equality in 1918. It permitted women over the age of thirty to vote, and enabled them over the age of 21 to run for public prosecution. The success of this ballot weakened the anti-suffrage campaign's stance, and then caused their case to fail. In 1918, the organized women's campaign against suffrage disappeared.

Finally, the Equal Franchise Act 1928 took place to realize the female suffrage's goal after many struggles waged by suffragettes and suffragists. However, the act gave them the grant to vote with the full equality.

General Conclusion

The purpose of this research is highlight the lifestyle of women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was believed that women were "angels at home". They were placed in the house and were controlled by men. Victorian women were denied from many rights such as higher education, property ownership, or working as well as they was not given the right to vote.

During Victorian and Edwardian Age in England, politics was considered as men's concern. Thus, men were the most powerful and the ones who had the right to make decision. Therefore, women were totally left out for the reason that the jobs of the ideal woman should only be on housekeeping and maternity activities. However, women began to respond to the conditions imposed on them by British society. Their objective was reaching equality in rights, especially the right to vote.

Women began to create different organizations in which they demanded the right to vote. As a result, they had the opportunity to participate in politics by the emergence of the Women suffrage Movement.

Basically, there were two suffrage movements, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (N.U.W.S.S) and the Women' Social and Political Union (W.S.P.U) which was formed in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst. The female suffrage candidates strongly resisted and worked hard to achieve the vote despite the opposition of the Parliament and the female opposition as well.

Moreover, this work's purpose is discussing the opposition of women's suffrage movement in Britain and the reasons behind this opposition. Women artis had numerous arguments against the women voting. They considered that politics as a public case was neither a feminine affair nor suited to their nature. The female anti-suffrage campaign denied the participation of women in politics and they strongly agreed that this intervention would affect women and the political administration of the country. Indeed, they encouraged women's employment and education in the sake of their emancipation. Although all its efforts to

prevent women from the enfranchisement, the women anti-suffrage movement was defeated by the outbreak of World War I.

The First World War was a turning point in the history of women's suffrage in Britain. The peaceful and militant polling campaigns have been stopped even though they have not yet achieved their objective. The female suffrage' members focused their efforts on supporting the government to change their perceptions of their role in British society. Women were given opportunities the WWI new in the world of work where they proved themselves to reach equality with men in the workplace. They finally succeeded in changing the public view and the right to vote was given into women aged over 30 years.

In 1918, the people act which granted a partial and not full enfranchisement to all women in Britain. This decision determined the crash and the end of the anti-suffrage case. The Parliamentary Qualification Act of Women in 1918 permitted women to run for election in Parliament.

In conclusion, women were equal with men in terms of the right to vote by the representation of the Equal Franchise Act in 1928. Then, we can say that women all over the world are grateful to these heroic women for having the right to vote. Through the experience of a long and arduous road full of struggle and battles, more political rights were gained and millions of women's dreams have been fulfilled.

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