

# Good essay on the changes of women rights

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



## **CRN #**

Introduction: Definition

For the better understanding of the topic “ The changes of women rights,” first of all it is important to mention what does the word “ right” mean. According to the Legal Dictionary, “ right” - it is a power or privilege, particular freedoms that are possessed by a particular person or law. That means that with particular rights we can make more actions in our life, we have more freedom for changing things or for creating new ones. (The Free Dictionary.) So, it means, that we all have our own freedoms and privileges concerning our personal way of life. But it wasn't like that all the time.

### **First changes.**

Till the beginning of the XX century women almost didn't have any rights that could give them more freedom in their life. All nineteenth century, women had no political and almost no social rights. (History learning Site.) But there had been some actions in such areas as social and private life to give women more rights and freedom:

- In 1839, there was a law which stated that children, who are under seven years, should stay under the care of their mother in case if the parents have got separated.
- In 1857, women were allowed to divorce husbands whose attitude towards their wives was cruel to them or those husbands left them.
- In 1870, women could keep the money they had earned.
- In 1891, women could not be forced to live with husbands, only if they wanted to. (History learning Site.) So, with every exception of a new law,

there were designed to bring small changes into women's lives. Although, they have got more freedom, all of that wasn't released.

As it usually happens, all of those laws were liberal and good only on the paper. If a woman left husband for any reason, it was quite difficult for her to keep herself and her children from the special attitude of the Victorian Britain, where woman always had to look after her husband, staying at home, even if he was drunk or so. (History learning Site.) But still, even being on the paper, we may surely consider those statements as the first step towards women's getting equal social and political rights with men.

The next braking event, which happened in 1855, gave the society food for thoughts. It was a marriage ceremony, when Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell specifically refused to give their permission to laws which included rights of married women in particular, such as:

- control over the wife as a person and her every legal existence as a person;
- tutelage of children;
- inheritance and ownership of real estate;
- equal rights to inherit a survivor's portion upon death of one of the spouses;
- choice of a place of the living, which mean a place of residence;
- ability to make contracts including wills and the ability to sue in court in her own name;
- Control over choosing wife's own name. (Jone Johnson Lewis. " Women's History.")

Fighting for the right to vote

Nevertheless, the main reason, why women stood up for themselves, was the right to vote. So, there is no doubt that the most important changes have occurred precisely in this regard. The right to vote was known as the right of suffrage and the group that fought for this right was the Suffragettes. The first actual movement for women's political rights was a non-violent movement that was led by Millicent Fawcett. This movement for women's right to vote had actually started in 1897 when Millicent Fawcett founded the National Union of Women's Suffrage. (History learning Site. " The Suffragettes")

She wanted it to be a peaceful act of protest because she believed that any violence can persuade a man in the fact that women need the right to vote as well. She was trying to use logically composed arguments and patience. Though it all started peacefully, after some time in 1905 there was an accident when two policemen were shouted by the two women who got the banners " Vote for Women." They were arrested. After that, the Suffrages denied waiving the violence. After they were taken to prison, there they were refusing to eat, and there they went on a hunger strike. Their violent actions soon were stopped by the World War I. All of their actions were dedicated to the giving the women right to vote. (History learning Site. " The Suffragettes") Later, the campaign of The Suffrages took its participants into the twentieth century. The women have got their right to vote in over 30 years of age in 1918. They were also allowed to stand for Parliament as MP's in the same year. Finally, in 1928, women have got the same political rights as men. (History learning Site. " The Suffragettes") So, with the huge courage of women, they have brought new changes in their lives. Even if it

took so much time and strengths for that, finally some important, significant and meaningful changes were occurred.

XX century changes

But still, women were keeping on fighting for themselves. In 1968, the movement for the women's liberation was in full action. Everything has started with an election to Congress of the first black female. Protestors went outside of the annual Miss America Pageant. Activists were demanding for the Equal Rights Amendment. A newspaper "The Saturday Evening Post" published a long-form story headlined "Women at Work: Is there room at the top?" The story's plot is concentrated on successful female executives "in a man's world." The article gives as an example several women not satisfied that they earn less money than men for the same job. (Rob Smith. Women's rights, 1968 to 2013: Have things really changed? April, 17, 2013) In the 1981 there was a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was signed by many United Nations member states, which defines the discrimination against women's rights in "political, economic, social, cultural, civil" and other spheres. (Jone Johnson Lewis. "Women's History")

## **Modern time**

Even after 45 years women in Oregon are earning 78 cents per every dollar men make, exceeds the national average number. (Rob Smith. Women's rights, 1968 to 2013: Have things really changed? April, 17, 2013). It means that nowadays, there are also some problems, concerning this issue of women's rights. For example, the statistics say that there is still no equity between men and women. (Michelle Bachelet. Advance Women's Rights,

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Change the World. November, 18, 2011). For example, from the 1.3 billion poor in the world there are more than sixty per cent of women; there are only 1 in 4 senior officials or managers who are women. Also, there are less than 10 percent of the elected head of states or government is woman. And this is just a piece of all that exists today.

- Usually, women are holding only 16 percent of ministerial posts and only 19 percent of seats in the Parliament. (Michelle Bachelet. Advance Women's Rights, Change the World. November, 18, 2011). All of those changes are showing the inequality between men's and women's rights, not only in the political but also in the social sphere as well. The state of affairs is continuing to change. For example, in 2011 there was a challenging event for women. In North Africa and the Middle East there were held few protests and of course, in 2011 was the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to three women who stood up for peace and democracy. (Michelle Bachelet. Advance Women's Rights, Change the World. November, 18, 2011)

So, in conclusion it is important to mention that women were fighting for their rights through many years and even centuries, and in some ways it is continuing even now. It was a long way, women made from being almost trapped at home with their husbands and children to become more independent. There are laws that were changed, for the liberation of women's rights. This movement goes on and nowadays.

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