

Why did a campaign for women's suffrage develop after 1870?

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



**ASSIGN
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Women wanted to vote so that they could gain more respect from men, they desired the right to be able to make a difference to the way the country was run. Their views were that they lived in the country therefore they had the rights to vote for the laws they have to obey. Women wanted to have to opportunity to vote for MP's that support equal rights, giving women a better life. Women wanted to be able to change the divorce law as after marriage the man gained everything and the female was left with nothing.

Women craved an education equal to men, so that they can undertake more responsible, independent well paid jobs, that they could not for fill without an education. There were many areas of inequality against women. The divorce law is a string example of this. The men even had legal rights to the children if they had any, even though the woman's job was to look after the children, while the male was at work. So when the divorce takes place the Man still goes to work, and has to leave the children at home without a mother. Women strongly felt that equality was a basic and natural human right.

During the 1800's many more men had gained the vote, men with possible less resulting influence than some women had. Women weren't just thinking of themselves, they felt that their education they could bring about better childcare and housing. This would benefit everyone. There were many reasons why women campaigned for the vote, one of them being that women had to obey the laws as did the men but they had no say through political representatives on what they abided by. Women knew that as long as they had no vote, they had no respect, and as long as they had no respect, they were being paid less.

The political inequalities greatly effected women's social strength, and their economical situation. Women felt that politics had entered the home, though law, therefor women should enter politics. Women found it disgusting that they were being taxed without being represented. They had to pay for the government to go against what they women believe in. All top jobs are not available to females, as they are seen as inferior. This means that opportunities in public life are denied. Generally women have a closer relationship with the children than the males do, as they look after them while the men work.

Therefore women know what is better for the children, and their point of view was not considered as they had know social status. The campaign for women's suffrage started from 1870 onwards was because of a number of reasons. In 1853 Florence Nightingale boughtnursingto the public eye as a respectable occupation that women could embark on without being criticised. Women showed much enthusiasm to improve and become more experienced in the profession of nursing and medicine. Florence showed initiative andresponsibilitythat had not been shown in women before.

This was an example of some progress that occurred in the 1800's, but there were still many areas of inequality. In 1870 the married women's property act was enforced, allowing women to keep i?? 200 of their own earnings. This may not sound much butmoneywas worth much more in these times. This was the start of many changes that age women a more equal role in society. In 1873 a law was imposed allowing women to see their children if they got

divorced. This gave them closer relationships with their children, and they would have been looked after better as the men go out to work.

In 1884 married women were no longer considered possession of their husbands, this meant more respect in society as they were seen as people rather than belongings. Women's role gradually become more influential as new jobs became open to women such as; teaching, civil service work and secretarial work had just taken off due to the invention of the typewriter and telephone. I feel the first real rights given to women were that they were allowed to keep 200 of their own earning. This gave women inspiration, as they knew then, that they could use that money to possibly get an education or to start a business.

This also let them know that they do have some rights and they are improving. I also believe that a key change in favour of women's rights is "The Match Girls" strike. They demanded better pay and conditions, and the publicity forced the company to improve them. I feel that women decided to begin campaigning in 1900 was because of the changes that occurred, women were being given better opportunities so they felt that they had an opportunity to use this beginning to carry on the development to equal rights. Q2 Describe the Ways in Which the Methods of the Suffragists and the Suffragettes Were Different

The Suffragettes and the Suffragists were two female dominated groups, who were very alike in principle but used very different methods of persuasion. The Suffragists (NUWSS) were a peaceful, law-abiding group.

They did not demand the vote for all women but wanted to be on equal footing with men. The first women to join the NUWSS were well-educated, middle-class women, but in the 1890's many factory girls wanted to gain the vote, raise their wages and their living and working conditions joined the movement. By 1900 the female cotton workers were the highest paid factory workers in Britain.

The Suffragists used their resources and qualifications within the movement's members to produce banners, postcards and posters. The Suffragettes (WSPU) used totally different forms of propaganda. The suffragettes had one aim; to gain political equality with men. The WSPU was formed on the 13th October 1905 when two women in Manchester were thrown out of a Liberal meeting for shouting for women's votes. They were arrested outside the meeting for hitting and spitting at policemen. This was quite typical for the Suffragettes as they tried to get publicity through dangerous stunts.

The plans of the Suffragettes were very different to those of the Suffragists, as they would get publicity at any cost. They deliberately got arrested for crimes such as arson, window smashing and bombing. When they were in jail for their crimes they often went on hunger strike so they had to be force-fed. The Suffragettes made it clear that they would not stop the havoc they were causing unless their demands were met. Types of leadership were key to the actions of the movements. Millicent Fawcett saw her role as a co-ordinator; she didn't consider herself to be in charge but to give the effort of the other Suffragists some guidance.

She made it clear that the Suffragists used non-violent methods of persuasion to gain the same voting rights as men. The Suffragettes were led in a very different manner, Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters led the movement forcefully. They were said to have ruled like "dictators" not listening to others, and not thinking of the consequences of their actions, purely concentrating on their battle for suffrage. The Suffragettes were based in London where all the parliament buildings are based, therefore when they wanted to protest they could do so, and MPs would see and realise how serious they were.

I feel that the Suffragists were a group for women who supported women's rights to vote enough to want to make a difference and get involved but not enough to get arrested or even killed like some of the Suffragettes. The suffragettes were the most effective organisation and used their image to gain popularity and respects with men. They achieved this by calling off all their extreme petitions whilst the war was on. This gained them respect and also gave them a chance to prove themselves that they cared for the country. They proved they could do the same jobs, to the same standard if not better than the men could.

An achievement by both organisations is that by 1900 over half the MP's said they wanted women to have the vote. Though much hard campaigning women's suffrage took many more years to achieve their original aims but they both did. Suffragists using a much more conventional form of propaganda such as posters etc, but the Suffragettes use much more extreme and extravagant forms. They not only showed that they wanted

equal rights but they showed how much they wanted them. They went to many extremes just to gain what they very strongly believed in.

Q3 Why Did Many People Oppose Giving Women the Right To Vote Many people opposed giving the women the right to vote because they feared what the women might do, if they had as much power as men did. Many people believed that if women had gained equal rights they would not stop and they would want to take complete control. Some contemporaries strongly believed that women would not vote responsibly but would be influenced by how someone looks rather than the serious political issues of the day. This relates to the lack of women's education, many people believed that a woman's place was at home.

Most girls did not go to school, the only education women had was to set them up for marriage, to be able to run a household. Many people could not take women seriously because of this and women were looked upon as inferior to men. People also thought that women were too irrational and emotional to make sound judgements. Men and women were thought of to be very different. They should fulfil different roles in life. Men should live in the world of politics and work, and women in the world of the home. Women were the weaker sex, they could not be asked to fight for their country.

Therefore, because they are not asked to risk losing their lives during the war, they were not citizens in the fullest sense. The campaign for women's suffrage had been, hijacked by a small, articulate but unrepresentative minority of feminists. At bottom, most women did not really care whether

they had the right to vote or not. Middle-class women would use political rights to develop their careers and neglect their domestic duties. Also, if the educated delayed having families or did not have them at all, a larger proportion of babies would be born to 'socially undesirable' elements. The nation would suffer.

To give the vote to women would almost certainly lead to a certain extension for men and thus enfranchise unskilled, rootless and generally undesirable people. Basically women were inferior to men, but men feared that women would have their revenge if they gained enough power to do so, men feared for their futures. Women were inexperienced and if they had the right to vote, they would not use their ability correctly, as they cannot research anything into the subject because of their lack of education. However, men had more experience so they could make intelligent and rational decisions.

The suffragettes did not make life easier for women. They just made women look crazy, stupid and incapable of making intelligent decisions. Queen Victoria did not think women should have had the right to vote. This was because she thought that there was no point in changing society, because she was happy with the way it was working, and she thought that men's decisions were intelligent enough. Women had no key role in society, they were childlike, inferior and incapable of making decisions, which could change the future for the whole country, was it worth the risk?

Women had no education to prove themselves, and those who did had very little. If women could not prove themselves to their country, how were they

supposed to make an impact on society? It was very hard for women to change the way in which people were thinking, women had to look and act intelligent so that people could see that they were just as clever as men. The only reason women had such a bad reputation was because many women worked at home cleaning and looking after the family. This is still an important role, if women were given the same education as men, they would be just as intelligent, they just never had the same opportunities.

I believe that the lack of women's education was the most important factor of why many people did not want to let women have the right to vote. Women were set a bad status, and it would be hard to overcome this and try to act as if they were as intelligent as men were. It would be very hard for women to prove themselves. Question 4 I agree that women over 30 gained the vote in 1918 mainly because of women's contribution to the war effort. Within the women's suffrage movement response to the war varied enormously. Mrs Fawcett told members of the NUWSS, "Women your country needs you".

Many members became involved in war relief work. However not all members wanted to do war work. Some were pacifists who totally disagreed with fighting and war. Mrs Pankhurst, her daughter Christabel and members of the WSPU stopped campaigning and threw themselves into the war effort. Helping the government with recruiting and propaganda. Many middle-class and upper class women became nurses and worked directly with the army. Some of these women had the chance to work abroad; others worked in military hospitals in Britain. Some of these women found life hard, they were not used to working and the shifts night and day were long.

VAD was the Voluntary Aid Detachment, these women worked unpaid until 1915. After this they received i?? 20 a year, but had to pay for their uniforms. Some men opposed to women in men's jobs. They were worried that women doing the same job for fewer wages meant that when the war was over women would be kept on. To avoid this trade, unions made agreements with the government and employers to protect men's jobs and wages. Despite the hostility women entered all kinds of work, which before the war was thought to be unsuitable for women.

Before the war the only jobs for women in transport were as cleaners, attendants and clerks. However, during the war they became bus and train conductors, railway ticket collectors, signal women and porters. 900, 000 women were involved in making shells, guns and aircraft. This was dangerous work, using poisonous substances and explosives. At least 300 women died in the munitions factories from the explosions. This shows how devoted women were to their country. Munitions workers were one of the best-paid jobs during the war with wages up to i?? 5 a week.

Women were encouraged to help out on farms, to keep the country supplied with food. They worked 10-12 hours a day and did not earn as much as factory women. They could join one of three sections of the land army- agriculture, timber cutting and forage. Women in agriculture would tend sheep, pick potatoes, hoeing, ploughing, help with harvest work and work on the harvest gardens. Women on the land would live on the farm and usually had to pay for their food and lodging. They had to sign up for either 6 months or a year and were not allowed to leave without special permission.

After the war the old voting system had to be changed to allow men returning from the war to be able to vote. The law said that all voters must have lived in the country for over 12 months before voting, so women argued that whilst making changes to allow the "returning heroes" to vote. It would be a good time to add women to the list of voters. The war had shaken the whole structure of society- the working classes lost some respect for the rich, many people had died or lost relatives, the whole of Europe was insecure. 1918 was therefore a time for change or starting afresh.

I believe that the work, which women did during the war earned them a lot of respect and this definitely helped them win the right to vote. Women proved to society that they could be intelligent and reliable if they were given the chance. They proved that if they had more power they could help the country and they would make a big difference in the way in which the society was run. The women's movements before the war helped to raise awareness of the situation of women, this helped their cause, also politicians realised that the violent campaigning would have been renewed if they did not recognise women's rights.