

# Government

Government



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The role that was initially played by federal government in the lives of Americans has changed drastically from the foundation to the latter years. The government seemed resilient in interfering with the lives of people. The state and the local government were the prominent powers that exercised greater freedom (James, 2003). As time went by, the role of the federal government was becoming more pronounced. For instance, expansion of the federal authority can be evident from such events as Civil War, reconstruction era, progressive era, the Great Depression and the Civil Rights Era. The U. S. federal expansion of authority that took place between the beginning of the U. S. Civil War and the end of the Civil Rights Era was pivotal in developing the key sectors of the society, namely: the social, economic and political dimension (Catton, 1960).

During the Civil War, there took place the federal power expansion. There was the secessionist group made up of the southern states, which had not ceased from such practices as slavery. The federal government was, however, able to get rid of the secessionist group from branching it away from the union. The reconstruction era that came after the war, was the major opportunity for those with an upper hand to impose radical changes upon the defeated group of the southerners (Eidelberg, 1976). The federal government guaranteed civil rights to all the people regardless of their races.

After this another expansion followed. For instance, there was the progressive era. This expansion started as a social movement to assist to improve general conditions of the lives of Americans. The movement used such an avenue as a bargaining channel to be able to use the government to

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initiate such changes that were demanded within the American society (William, 2002). In 1901, there was implementation of new regulations that were inspired by the philosophy that was inbreathed by progressive movement.

The Hepburn Act was passed by in 1906. The act pushed the federal government to control the railroad rates, Drug Act and Pure Food and Meat Inspection Act among others. The progressive movement also culminated in the victory that was popularly referred to as the 19th amendment. This amendment gave the suffrage to women. There was also the 16th amendment, which made the federal government plan for federal income tax.

There was another great expansion of the federal government, known as the Great Depression. This event took place in 1929. At that time the stock market crashed and this caused all people to lose their jobs. In addition, many people became poor, and as a result, they were not able to provide for their own needs and for those of their families. To counter this, the federal government initiated expansion of the government authority, new government plans and taxation abilities (James, 2003). There were useful social programs that have been initiated to assist the citizens even in their future life. Such programs included the Unemployment Act and Social Security Act which are in effect up to ddate. The government also expanded a lot of public work programs and union membership.

Another major expansion that the federal government initiated is the Civil Rights Era. It was the movement that still has been dissatisfied with the

inequalities that were prevalent within the society. The movement was protesting against inequalities and segregation, which were more pronounced in the south. This took place from 1950's to 1960's. Both blacks and the whites had different rights and were not supposed to be together. In 1968, the Civil Rights Act was passed. Everyone was to be treated equally and had all rights regardless of the race or tribe. This event became a huge step in the history of the United States. The unrest experienced in the U. S. between the south and the north is the one that culminated during the Civil War in 1861 (Catton, 1960). The bloody war resulted to a compromise of the unity. At that time there was declared the Emancipation Proclamation.

In 1865, Congress was pushed to eliminate slavery, which had become a real thorn in the flesh of many people. President Abraham Lincoln presented proclamation to stop slavery (William, 2002). The political strength of the Congress was improved as it was given the mandate of taking actions against ten confederate states. The social structures, however, proved that civil rights were a way off and the law and the public opinion were not in harmony. Although the law stipulated that blacks and the whites were to be treated equally, blacks still were treated as slaves.