

# [During the french revolution, did ideas and events influenced women to break from...](https://assignbuster.com/during-the-french-revolution-did-ideas-and-events-influenced-women-to-break-from-the-conformities-of-their-society-and-fight-for-their-civil-rights-assignment/)

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During the French Revolution, did ideas and events influenced women to break from the conformities of their society and fight for their civil rights? Equality for women was a gripping concept that was fought for throughout the French Revolution. Women were active during the French Revolution, contributing great deal to change and reform whether it was by staging demonstrations and food riots, petitioning for political participation, or bringing the royal family back to the capital.

The women of 18th century France began to question the way society viewed their political and social rights, and as a result created a movement to abolish the political and ideological views of women’s role in society at the time. They fought endlessly for the political and civil rights that they deserved, and backed up their demands with well-thought-out logical arguments. Although they went fought hard, their efforts were unsuccessful as little changes on the way men viewed women occurred. Women were politically active throughout the French revolution, and were part of key events that shaped the outcome of the Revolution.

They were responsible for the safety and care of their families, which at the time of the revolution was not an easy task. There were times of hardship such as famine, when bread was very expensive and nearly impossible to get a hold of. It was not uncommon for the women of France not to be able to provide for their children and families, which made them desperate for solutions, as seen in document one, where a mother is describing the hardship of not being able to provide for her children. “….

With children who are hungry and who ask repeatedly and tearfully for food– it seems as if each sound issuing from their chests parched by poverty is the point of a dagger striking their mother’s heart”. On many occasions, women led protests, marches and debates. One of these occasions was the March on Versailles, on Oct. 5 1789. The working-class women of Paris marched to Versailles armed with cannon and other weapons, to protest on the lack of food. They also ordered the royal family to leave Versailles and return to Paris.

The main reason most women participated was to secure a safe future for their families. Women’s involvement was not limited to just rioting and demonstrating. Women also began to attend meetings and join political clubs. They acted in groups, as well as individually. The women’s defiance of societal views was a turning point in the revolution. It showed that they were a force to be reckoned with, and that they could be a major force in society. There was a time where women started questioning the way society viewed them.

The events causing the change in women’s views were caused by a domino effect; one event led to another which lead to more women being politically aware, informed and conscious of changes being fought for. Many women were part of street politics, taking on the same issues and concerns as their husbands. Soon these street meetings were evolved into women’s political clubs. Slowly more and more people began pushing for full women’s rights. As more people became aware, more women supported the movement.

In Document 3 it is stated that women want to rise up and be equal with men, share the same glory, fight for liberty alongside with their husbands. This was a controversial idea many women shared, which started due to their increased political involvement. In 1790 a leading intellectual and aristocrat, Marquis de Condorcet, published a newspaper article in support of full rights for women. It caused a sensation. In the article he stated that the women of France should be granted full civil and political rights and even equal rights with men. It also stated that women should be granted the same education opportunities as men.

The importance of education was stressed in document 2. “…Contending for the rights of women, my main argument is built on this simple principle, that if she be not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge and virtue…… If children are top be educated to understand the true principle of patriotism, their mother must be a patriot; and the love of mankind, from which an orderly train of virtues spring, can only be produced be considering the moral and civil interest of mankind; but the education and situation of women at present shuts her out from such investigations… Soon, supporters of this movement joined together and created a group to spread information and awareness through newspaper articles and pamphlets. The boldest statement for women’s political rights came from Marie Gouze, who published the Declaration of the Rights of Woman, a re written version Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen showing how women had been excluded from its promises. An example of this declaration is in Document 6. Although her declaration did not gain her widespread support, it did make her notorious.

As the women of France became more aware of equality issues, they began to work hard to gain equality during the French revolution. Despite the hard work of the activists and groups, their efforts were unrewarded. Many opposed the idea of equality between men and women, and even felt threatened by the idea of increased involvement of women in society. An example of this is the statements made in Document 4, by the chairperson of the council in Paris. “…. It is horrible, it is contrary to all the laws of nature for a woman to want to make herself a man…

Since when is it decent to see women abandoning the pious cares of their households, the cribs of their children, to come to public places to harangue in the galleries?… Impudent women, who want to become men, aren’t you well enough provided for? What else do you need? “ These statements were a belief that most of society held at the time, that women were created for the sole purpose for being married, producing children and taking care of the household and their families. As most nobility and clergy of France at the time were men, it was nearly impossible to make a lasting impact on the women’s rights situation.

When members of society started steering away from the traditional views on men and women’s roles, they were punished. Like many of the other activists, Marie Gouze eventually suffered persecution at the hands of the government; and went to the guillotine in 1793. Many activists were, arrested, persecuted and even executed by the opposition for their revolutionary work, as shown in document 5. Although activist fought hard to change society for women, equality slipped their grasp and they were silenced once again.

As France underwent many physical changes during the Revolution, the way people perceived themselves and society around them underwent a huge change as well. The Revolution sparked a chain reaction in events, which brought people together and strengthened unity. People, including women became more politically involved, which caused them to be more informed and pass on more crucial information. More and more women became aware of the equality movement, and joined clubs, participated in demonstrations and rallies, or personally wrote to the government.

Regardless of their efforts, they were silenced and ignored. The French Revolution made a promise of just that, a revolution, but the events that took place did little to change the way men viewed women during the late 1700’s. It wouldn’t be until much later that the passion for women’s rights would be fully understood and all demands met. The women, however motivated by the Revolution did change history as they broke through social conformities and injustices, and fought bravely for their rights.