

Women will never
enjoy the same rights
as men analysis
essay



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Under the Taliban regime, Pakistani women accused of adultery were stoned to death and those who expose their bare ankles under their long veil would be whipped. Women are seen as less human than men, who have the right to abuse them. On the other hand, in the developed world, many women are taking on positions of power, and looked upon with the same amount of respect as is usually conferred by men. We can even see a trend of women surpassing men in certain arenas. As more and more people believe in gender equality and start to advocate it, it is not impossible that women can enjoy the same rights as men on any ground.

Nevertheless, the abuse of women's rights in many developing countries is still an intractable problem and achieving equal rights may take a long time to see light. Women are starting to have equal opportunities in politics in many countries, and this is a big step towards achieving gender equality. Leaders are increasingly chosen based on meritocracy and not gender. Hence, both men and women have the same opportunity to display their ability and gain support from the public. People are getting more educated and hence have the open-mindedness to not let gender preferences sway their rational decisions.

America's Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, Germany's Angela Merkel and China's Wu Yi are just few of the women who are starting to take part in politics, holding the right to make policies and decisions just like other male politicians. In the landmark move for the infamously restrictive United Arab Emirates (UAE), a total of nine women were voted into its national Federal Council in 2007. In 2005, Kuwait's government finally gave women full voting rights and the chance to run for public office.

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This is a big contrast to the 1990s, where women do not have any political rights, and also a political headway that signals a shift towards equal rights between the two genders. Compared to the past, where many traditions forbid women to even step out of the house, let alone get educated and work, many women today seem to be making more headway than men in the economic perspective. Women not just enter the workforce, but are as ambitious to climb the ranks as men. Women such as Ho Ching and the late Dame Anita Roddick head some of the world's most successful corporations.

In 2007, 42% of Singapore's workforce was women. With international efforts already underway to increase the employment of women especially in Middle Eastern countries, such as the UN's Millennium Development Goals for Saudi Arabia, women are now given more opportunities to be financially independent. This also implies more education for women, which is the most fundamental requirement for women to enjoy the same rights as men.

However, we must recognize that women in many countries are still under serious oppression and it may take a long time and great efforts before we can see a progress in gender equality.

Even after Pakistan is out of the hands of the brutal Taliban, women still find much difficulty in safeguarding their rights. The parliament is still mostly made up of men who are discriminatory of women. Recently, a bill that allows husbands to starve their wives if they refuse to provide sex is passed. The minority female politicians are just not powerful enough to reject the bill. Even though there are a few women from these countries who stood out trying to fight for gender equality, the problem of gender inequality is just too complex to be completely solved in the near future.

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Nevertheless, as the powerful media is constantly used as a tool to advocate women's rights, we should not be pessimistic and persist that women would never enjoy the same rights as men. More and more celebrities are using their fame to support causes for women's rights and female empowerment. The ever-popular Oprah Winfrey and her much debated Leadership Academy for girls, Nicole Kidman and her participation in UNIFEM as a goodwill ambassador, and Mavis Leno's campaign to stop gender apartheid in Afghanistan are examples of how the media can increase the effectiveness of promoting women's rights.

The initiatives taken by these people are noble and not to be diminished. It provides us a perspective of a future that celebrates women and their value in society. Gender equality is an important sign of progress in every society. As the world develops, more people will start to see a better future if gender equality is achieved. We are already beginning to see the small steps that are taken in that direction. There is definitely a possibility that the world decides to come into consensus and grant women rights that they deserve as a human.