

Differentiate between declaration a vindication of the rights of woman

[History](#)



Task Differentiate between declaration and Vindication of the Rights of

Woman Introduction The world, in recent history, has been viewed as a stage for humankind to pursue his self-interests in asserting dominance over the rest of the species in the universe. To achieve these goals, man had to formulate laws to govern and control the activities of fellow man and instill values that governed his relation with fellow men. It is the content of these laws that has been the subject of widespread critic, especially by feminists, in that the term ' man' has been used selectively to exalt the rights of men folk above those of the women folk.

The law as, an instrument of social ordering, was thus seen a tool for exalting the self-interests of the male sex over the interests of the female sex. This led to the rise of feminist ideas that sought to bring out the inequalities between the two sexes, with the feminists arguing that the male gender was using the law to oppress and maintain dominance over the female sex. The feminists argued that the laws were tools of social ordering, which sought to oppress the rights of women.

This essay seeks to evaluate the nature of the rights contained in the French Declaration on the rights of man in light of the feminist ideals that existed at that time. The essay will seek thus seek to answer question; were these Rights of man a vindication of the rights of women? If so, how were these rights a vindication of the rights of women?

The first Right in the Declaration was to the effect that all men were born free and in equality of rights, with social distinctions only allowed for the common good. The provision for social distinction ' for the common good' created a loophole that was used by men to vindicate the right of women to

freedom and equality. If, for example, it were decided that it was in common good for women not to vote or go to school, then the law would stand because society deemed it fit women not to exercise their right to education and participate in elections. The effect of this law was to create a perception of women as mere caregivers who could not participate in any meaningful social and political life (Wollstonecraft, 1792).

The right to the effect that," the law is a general will and every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his elected representative." It was in essence a mirage for women because they were not allowed to participate in elections. Wollstonecraft in her book cries foul on this right when she says, " But, if women are to be excluded, without having a voice, from a participation of the natural rights of mankind, prove first, to ward of the charge of injustice and inconsistency that they want reasonableness in this flaw" (Wollstonecraft, p. 4, 1792). The exclusion of women from the participation in governance and political life may be viewed as contrary to this law, hence a vindication of rights of women (Hawley, 2001).

The right to the freedom to do everything that does not injure fellow men and assure enjoyment of the right by fellow citizens had the effect of denying women equal participation in social life. This is because women were expected to be subjective to their husbands and not engage in activities that may shame the husband or portray her home unfavorably. This limited the women social activities and sought to restrain her from engaging in social activities. This was in essence a vindication of women rights because they were barred from participating in activities afforded to them by the rights in the Declaration.

Conclusion

Although the right of man contained in the declaration is universal and meant to be enjoyed by all, it limits enjoyment to the women folk and is often used to tyrannize women. The exclusion from participation in governance and political life due to their sex acts a vindication of their right to equality and freedom. This is also evident on their exclusion from equal educational chances and limited privileges in social participation. All this serves to maintain dominance of the men over the women thus keeping them in control on all fronts of the society. Viewed this way, the Declaration on the Rights of man is becomes a vindication of the rights of the women.

Works Cited

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1759).

Trish Hawley, *A Rediscovered Feminist Vision: Mary Wollstonecraft and Global Education for Girls and Women*, 2001.