The Woman’s Equal Rights Movement & Amendment

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*"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."*

American society has always confined women to an inferior status. The discrimination has been persuasive and deep. Women were discriminated in every matter of life, so the late 19th and early 20th centuries concentrated on obtaining the right to vote for women. I believe that the constitutions were drafted on the supposition that women did not exist as a legal system in the American society. Women were conceded few rights at common law. The rights of women along with their legal status has gradually improved in the last century. However, I considered the Nineteenth Amendment a marked advance in the 1920s. The statement of ‘Equal Rights Amendments’ was proposed in the United States Constitution to stop discrimination against female gender. The basic purpose behind this amendment was to end the legal distinctions between men and women regarding employment, financial property, martial matters and other stuffs (Lalive & Stutzer, 2010). In 1921, the amendment was proposed in the United States. It is notable to mention that the idea was first presented by Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman. They strived to show a greater message in their journey for the betterment of women in American society.

I believe that the Equal Right Amendment prohibited discrimination based on sex. In the shadow of Equal Rights Amendments, women started the Equal Rights Movement. The main objectives of that movement included federal support for day-care centers, equal pay for equal work, continued legalization of abortion, recognition of lesbian rights, and discrimination against minority and older women (Soule & Olzak, 2004). I believe that if the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) were passed at that time, then it would have addressed all of these issues. I think that the ERA would have resolved the absurdity of a troubled population. However, that amendment stayed on hold for nearly half a century. Men in the constitution assembly believed that women should focus on their family and their house. They did not consider women worthy enough to cast a vote. In the early 1906s, second-wave feminism began in the United States along with the Civil Rights Movements, and it lasted roughly two decades. The movement was started to upsurge the equivalence for women by gaining more than just enfranchisement. I believe that in the aftermath of World War II, the lives of women changed dramatically with the access of household technology. It dramatically increases life expectancies and opened thousands of jobs. Regardless of such opportunities, women were still discriminated in society on the basis of their gender. Many women writers were engaged in writing stuff to highlight the oppression and discrimination (Lalive & Stutzer, 2010). In 1949, *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir changed the perspectives of people towards women gender. It raised feminist consciousness by emphasizing that women should have the same status as men in American society.

It is noteworthy to mention that women were treated as a slave in the American society. They were oppressed and sexually assaulted in the society. Even at the workplace, women were given minimum wages as compared to men. A limited number of professions were available for women in society. Majority of the women who worked in 1960 were limited to jobs such as a nurse, teacher, or secretary. There were not allowed to apply in any professional programs. Women only comprised of six percent of total American doctors at that time. There was less than one percent of women engineers and three percent of lawyers. It is miserable to know that women were denied opportunities to advance in any profession. It was assumed that women would soon left their job when they become pregnant. According to my viewpoint, women were accounted for their own actions at that time. They did not make any effort to fight for their rights since the beginning. However, after the emergence of their Equal rights movements, they fought to gain their glory in American society.

In 1962, *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan captured the frustration of women and girls, who considered themselves trapped in the house. They believed that they are not given the opportunity to get a quality education. I believe that Betty Friedan’s book urged women to get out of their comfort zone in order to grasp their right in society. Friedan stunned the nation by contradicting the views of men that women just had to serve their families. The primary purpose of the feminist movement is to dismantle workplace inequality in America. Women wanted to have access to better jobs that incorporate reasonable wages. In 1964, the Civil Right Act was under consideration when Howard Smith, the Representative of Virginia proposed to add the clause of gender discrimination in it. However, many Congressmen greeted him with laughter on this suggestion.

Despite the efforts of women, nearly 50 years passed when that amendment was proposed. In the 1970s, the concept gained increasing visibility due to the efforts of women. I believe that the revival of the women's rights movements was brought in the 1960s. The participation of women in the anti-war movement and civil right movement demonstrated that they had no other dream than social equality in American society. The issue of equal rights won popular support, and it emerged as a national issue in America. Finally, Congress, as submitted to the states in 1972, approved it. On March 22, the Senate approved this amendment by a vote of 84 to 8. Hawaii was the first state to ratify this action on 22 March. By the end of 1972, the amendment was accepted by 22 states, which demonstrates that it seemed well on its way to adoption (Soule & King, 2006). It is noteworthy to mention that eight additional states ratified in 1973. Thirty-five states ratified the amendment by the end of 1977. However, the constitutional requirement was 28 states. In 1979, five states had passed rescission actions. Due to all these circumstances, the Equal Rights Amendment was rejected which meant that the US Constitution did not protect the voting rights of women. However, in the late 20th century, many states have passed their own legislation in order to protect the legal rights of women.

According to my viewpoints, Equal Rights Movement plays a vital role in addressing the issues of women. Women were oppressed and discriminated by men in every aspect of life. They were forced to work for minimum wages as compared to men. Women had access to a limited number of jobs. The Equal rights movement had made it easy for them to have access to better jobs that provide reasonable wages. I would like to mention that equality is a quality and it cannot just be given. It requires hard work and determination. Women made efforts in the past to achieve a reputable status in the society, and now, they have gotten what they needed. I believe that the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment is much needed in modern society, as it will stop the oppression and discrimination. Every person is worthy of enjoying a respectable status in the society. I hope that in the future, women will be able to enjoy a reputable status as men do now.

**References**

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