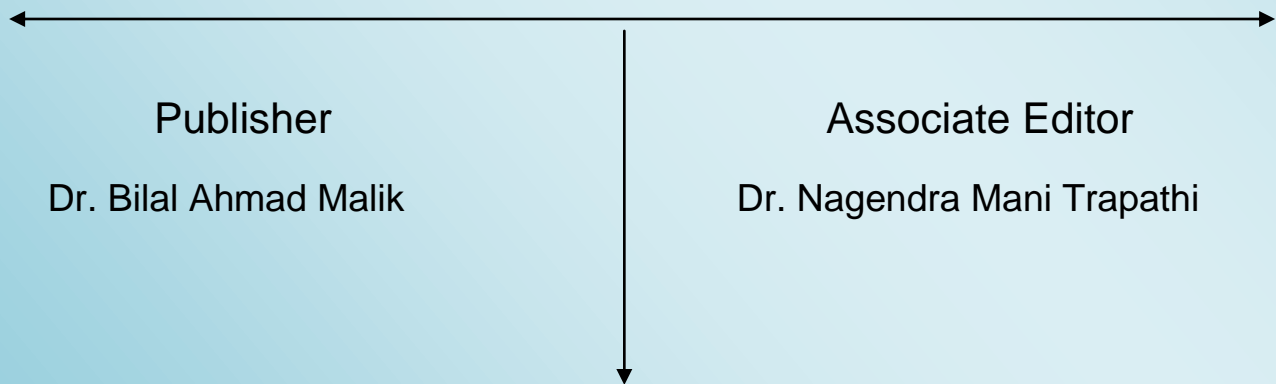


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WOMEN RIGHTS AND MODERN WOMEN: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT:

This research article analysis the women's rights movement over many years, women and girls around the world are still married as children or trafficked into forced labor and sex slavery. They are refused access to education and political participation, and some are trapped in conflicts where rape is perpetrated as a weapon of war. Around the world, deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth are needlessly high, and women are prevented from making deeply personal choices in their private lives. Human Rights Watch is working toward the realization of women's empowerment and gender equality protecting the rights and improving the lives of women and girls on the ground. Which rights are included under "women's rights" has varied through time and across cultures. Even today, there is some disagreement about what constitute women's rights. Does a woman have a right to control family size to equality of treatment in the workplace to equality of access to military assignments Usually; "women's rights" refers to whether women have equality with the rights of men where women and men's capacities are the same. Sometimes, "women's rights" includes protection of women where women are subject to special circumstances (such as maternity leave for child-bearing) mistreatment (traffic in women, rape). In more recent history, we can look at specific documents to see what were considered "women's rights" at those points in history. Although the concept of "rights" is itself a product of the Enlightenment era, we can look at various societies in the ancient, classical and medieval worlds, to see how women's actual rights, even if not defined by that term or concept, differed from culture to culture.

Key Words: *Women's rights, marriage, divorce, Proto-feminist movements.*

INTRODUCTION:

Today women enjoy equal legal access to health care, education, civic participation, and economic justice as a result of generations of advocacy on behalf of women. However, despite gains in gender equality over the past century, women are still victims of harassment, assault, and discrimination in the workplace and at home. As

Lenora Lapidus observes, barriers to full equality for women continue to exist in our society, and yet the call for advancement and reform can go unanswered. There are many who have dedicated their lives to the furthering of women's rights, yet advocates are still needed in the field of women's rights to continue important this work. The term "women's rights" encompasses many different areas, making it among the most difficult areas of law to define. Women's rights are most often associated with reproductive rights, sexual and domestic violence, and employment discrimination. But women's rights also includes immigration and refugee matters, child custody, criminal justice, health care, housing, social security and public benefits, civil rights, human rights, sports law, LGBT rights, and international law. Often feminist leaders today focus on areas of intersection between women's rights and other issue areas and consider these areas of intersection as one larger movement for social justice. These areas of overlap offer an opportunity for lawyers to focus on many areas of social policy important to them. For example, if you work for an immigrant rights group or for a labor union, you can find areas of overlap with women's rights whenever women are involved. You can be an advocate for women's rights from a many of types of organizations, because when a woman is involved, women's rights are involved. This guide will mainly focus on the traditional "women's rights" areas, and discuss the variety of opportunities, issue areas, and practice settings to advocate for women's rights. However, there are an infinite number of women's issues to fight for, and an equally large number of avenues in which to advocate for equal justice. Be creative in your thinking, spread wide your research, and find the issue and practice area in which you can most effectively achieve your goals. Women had it difficult in the mid-1800s to early 1900s. There was a difference in the treatment of men and women then. Married women had few rights in the eyes of the law. Women were not even allowed to vote until August 1920. They were not allowed to enter professions such as medicine or law. There were no chances of women getting an education then because no college or university would accept a female with only a few exceptions. Women were not allowed to participate in the affairs of the church. They thought they were totally dependent on men. Then the first Women's Rights Convention was held on July nineteenth and twentieth in 1848. The convention was assembled as planned, and over the two days of discussion, the Declaration of Sentiments and twelve resolutions received agreement and endorsement, one by one, with a few amendments. The only resolution that did not pass unanimously was the call for women's authorization. The thought that women should be allowed to vote in elections was impossible to some. At the convention, debate over the woman's vote was the main concern. Women's Rights Conventions were held on a regular basis from 1850 until the start of the Civil War. Some drew such large crowds that people had to be turned away for lack of meeting space. The women's rights movement of the late nineteenth century went on to address the wide range of issues spelled out at the Seneca Falls Convention. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and women like Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and Sojourner

Truth, who were pioneer theorists, traveled the country lecturing and organizing for the next forty years. Winning the right to vote was the key issue, since the vote would provide the means to accomplish the other amendments. The campaign for woman's right to vote ran across so much continuous opposition that it took 72 years for the women and their male supporters to win. They finally received the right to vote in 1920. There were some very important women involved in the Women's Right Movement. Esther Morris, who was the first woman to hold a judicial position and who led the first successful state campaign for woman's right to vote in 1869. Abigail Scott Duniway was the leader of the successful fight in the early 1900s. Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Mary Church Terrell were arrangers of thousands of African-American women who worked for the right to vote for all women. Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt were leaders of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in the early years of the 20th century, who got the campaign to its final success. These women are the reason that women finally got rights in the United States and could be considered the founding mothers of this country.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND FAMILY LAW:

Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines the right of consenting men and women to marry and found a family.

"(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State."

Article 16 of CEDAW stipulates that, " States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations Among the rights included are a woman's right to freely and consensually choose her spouse; to have parental rights to her children irrespective of her marital status; the right of a married woman to choose a profession or an occupation, and to have property rights within marriage. In addition to these, "The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect".

BACKGROUND:

The issue regarding women's rights is not a new one. In the past, there were distinctive differences between men and women, between their roles in society and their models of behavior. However, considerable changes have been found since those times. Today gender roles have been shifted, making strong impact on society. Women in the Western culture are now no more satisfied with the role of a homemaker; they prefer to make their own careers and share the same rights with men (Howie, 2010). This fact means women's rights are based on freedom that can be viewed as a virtue, but not as a burden. Women continue to fight for their rights. The emergence of feminist movements and ideologies united under the title of feminism (Gillis & Hollows, 2008). Today, there is a continuous discourse on the behalf of both opponents and proponents of feminism, but the main thing is to understand the very roots and reasons of the phenomenon (Gillis et al., 2007). Therefore, the major goal of this study is to find out the objective state of the problem and conclude whether women do win by acquiring the equal status with men in human society. For that end, the existing literature covering different perspectives will be analyzed. In particular, the study will be focused on proto-feminist movements in Europe of the 19-the century; passing the Representation of the People Act in 1918; demonstrations on women's suffrage; women's efforts during the First World War and the Second World War; the first wave, the second wave and the third wave feminism on the whole. The research is expected to prove that although social reconstruction of sex and gender is not always beneficial neither for women nor for men, the struggle for equal opportunities has become a historically determined stage of social development. These events reflect the changes in feminist movements and help to better understand the successes and failures of women in fighting for their rights. The impact of each event or development that will be discussed in this paper is connected with the changing role of women and with their changing opportunities in achievement of the established goals. Thesis statement: Women's role in the struggle for equal opportunities highlights the positive effects of feminism on the social reconstruction of sex and gender that was caused by a number of important historical events and developments, such as the development of proto-feminist movements in Europe of the 19-the century; passing the Representation of the People Act in 1918; demonstrations on women's suffrage; women's efforts during the First World War and the Second World War; the development of the first wave, the second wave and the third wave feminism. The major goal of this paper is to review the historical events and developments which involve women from 1865 to the present. This paper will explore six specific events or developments that span the years covered by this course, based on their impact on the topic "women's role in history". The research is focused on the analysis of both European Women's rights

and the women's rights movements launched in the U.S, defined as the first wave, the second wave and the third wave feminism.

Proto-feminist movements in Europe of the 19th century: The development of proto-feminist movements in Europe of the 19th century played an important role in the promotion of the philosophy of feminism. Women were inspired by proto-feminist concerns that women should be equal to men. Proto-feminist movements contributed to women's achievements in different spheres of human activity. Actually, in the 19th century, women's condition under the law differed from that of men. In economics and politics, women had no power. However, women's consciousness was more progressive compared with that of women who lived earlier than the 19th century (Worell, 2000). In other words, the development of proto-feminist movements is connected with the development of feminist consciousness focused on the expansion of women's rights and development of women's rights movements. The Female Moral Reform Society is an example of effective proto-feminist movement aimed at representation women in a powerful position, placing emphasis on the public advocacy of personal ethics (Gillis & Hollows, 2008; Worell, 2000).

Passing the Representation of the People Act in 1918: The Representation of the People Act (1918) criticized the limited rights of women and continued to call for equal rights. This act provided an opportunity to establish fair relationships between men and women, promoting the idea of equal pay for equal work. New reforms of the 1900s contributed to the growth of feminism. According to the Representation of the People Act of 1918, all women included in the local governmental register, aged 30 and over, were enfranchised (Gillis & Hollows, 2008; Worell, 2000). The right to vote was granted to women who were householders, the householders' wives, and who occupied the property with an annual rent of L5 and more, and who were the graduates of British universities (Gillis & Hollows, 2008). Moreover, the debate regarding the passage of the Representation of the People Act raised the issues about the effects of the law, but it failed to change the established culture of parliamentary politics. Many women politicians did not criticize male-dominated political parties, remaining loyal to men's power (Early video on the emancipation of women, 1930). In the 1900s, men remained in the positions of power, although the political movement regarding women's suffrage in the U.K. began before the WWI (Worell, 2000).

Women's efforts during the First World War: Women's role during the First World War reflected their social and economic position. Feminists were not satisfied with the idea that women's work was classified as less important than men's work. Besides, the working class women who were the representatives of the first wave

feminism promoted the ideas of feminism at work and in homes, in stores, halls and local newspapers. They believed in their rights and were focused on the promotion of collective actions aimed at realization of their agenda. However, men opposed women's involvement into male jobs during the First World War. Male trade unions defended the division of labor based on gender (Gillis & Hollows, 2008). Finally, women's activism in the era of the First World War, the considerable increases in the cost of living in that period, as well as the recognition of the established trade unions and the passage of the constitutional amendment to support women's suffrage contributed to women's mobilization during the war. According to Howie (2010), patriotic women highlighted the importance of the ideas of feminism. Due to the diversity of experiences during that period, women could become more independent in their choices. Although many women realized that their rights were limited, they supported feminism and motivated others to join wartime mobilization (Howie, 2010).

Women's efforts during the Second World War: Women's efforts during the Second World War were focused on more radical changes. Unlike in the First World War, during the Second World War women's position was more stable. The governments allowed women to join the armed forces and be involved in the war-related production. All women aged under 40 years old were divided into two categories: mobile and immobile. Mobile women were allowed to join army and carry out war work duties. Immobile women were responsible for caring children and elderly people. Many of them were involved in voluntary work, either in industry or in voluntary organizations (Howie, 2010). Women were allowed to work 16 hours a day and perform men's duties. However, women were paid less than men. Besides, they were discriminated in the workplace. Thus, women played an important role in the war effort, although their position in society was still less valuable, comparing with men's position (Howie, 2010; Gillis & Hollows, 2008).

The first wave, the second wave and the third wave feminism: As the American women's movement is characterizes as "waves", there is a necessity to refer to three waves of feminism and identify certain differences between them. Actually, the development of the first wave, the second wave and the third wave feminism highlight the importance of women's involvement in social reconstruction of sex and gender (Howie, 2010). Although these waves are closely connected with one another, there are some differences in their philosophies. It has been found that each wave of feminism is based on the successes and failures of previous generations of women. For example, the first wave feminism is reflected by the following successes: suffrage and voting rights. These developments occurred in the late 1800s- the early 1900s, influencing further changes in women's representation (MacKinnon, 1995). Moreover, the first wave and the second wave feminism created certain

challenges, such as the concerns about racism and discrimination, tensions between generations, etc. These concerns can be found in the next wave of feminism – the third wave feminism, which was launched in the 1990s (MacKinnon, 1995). The third wave feminism is based on criticism of collective past of women's movement and building more diverse and dynamic movement. In other word it is characterized by the increased role of multiculturalism (MacKinnon, 1995). Alice Walker (1983) helps to assess the role of virtues, beliefs and values in the creation of a womanist virtue ethic, which forms the basis of third wave feminism. She states that social activism helps in promotion of feminist ideas and addresses the challenges caused by diverse society.

The modern Women in the 21st century: Women in the 21st century have expanded their roles and positions in society, especially those that were formerly dominated by men. These areas include careers, independence, decision-making, and military combat, to name just a few. Women are still trying to prove their equality to men, but have made major strides in the last 100 years. Clearly, circumstances of family life have changed in the 21st century. The modern era has taken the woman out of the home and into the workplace. Furthermore, large families are no longer as economically practical or as socially desired. Today's family model has changed; the traditional family structure of woman as homemaker and husband as breadwinner makes up only 10 percent of today's families. Women have made advances toward equality in their careers. For example, the modern woman may compete in the workplace for positions such as doctors, engineers, architects, and construction workers. These occupations were previously dominated by men. Today you see women climbing the corporate ladder of large companies earning salaries approaching, if not equivalent, to those of men. In the past, the "glass ceiling was much lower. Many more women are occupying the position of Chief Executive Officer and are even sitting on Boards of Directors. One of our local examples is Carli Fiorina who heads up Hewlett-Packard. Additionally women are not only obtaining an education for self-enrichment as was done in the past, but more women are going to college and earning degrees enabling them to advance in corporate America. In the independence and decision-making arena, other drastic changes occurred for women of the 21st century. In the past, most women did not make their own decisions with respect to finances, politics, purchases, and education. Males, such as fathers or spouses, typically made these decisions for them.

Today's women: Every woman deserves a certain amount of respect. Situations have been made difficult by those who do not agree. To find examples of how life can be hard, look into the life of a woman. Women, from the beginning of civilization, have been looked down upon by men. Some men today believe a woman has no right to pursue a career other than being a housewife and mother. Women are strong beings who have earned their

rights to equality and respect. Women have and continue to be strong individuals and work towards equality and a better future by creating groups and social awareness. A great woman, Eleanor Roosevelt, once said, "A woman is like a tea bag - you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water." Eleanor was a leader and helped her husband make decisions when he was President of the United States. She is known as one of the greatest women of the 20th century for her actions as a humanitarian and civic leader. Roosevelt was an active member of the women's suffrage movement. Another excellent example of a strong and able woman is Lindsay Hyde, the founder of Strong Women, Strong Girls. programs such as Strong Women, Strong Girls by saying that girls are not good or smart enough. Sadly, I myself have seen this happen. As I have grown these past years I have also discovered the disappointing aspects of the "real world" and its jobs. Almost one hundred years ago in America, women saved our nation. Women were strong and supported their children and country when the men were by working in factories, building planes, and maintaining victory gardens. Once World War II ended, women had their jobs taken away, were pushed to the side, and disregarded by the men returning from the war to their jobs. Things are a bit easier on the working woman today. Something that shocked me when I first learned of it as a middle schooler was women's wages versus men's. Although the same work is being done, maybe even better by the woman, a man still gets a higher salary and paycheck than a woman. One of my female cousins, Krista, is an important asset to her company. She works in management and human resources, yet a man in her position receives a higher pay. She may work harder than any man in her department, but that means almost nothing, in some cases, to a male boss who is friends with her male coworker. The only possible shred of good that women have gained from these prejudiced views has been the exemption from drafts in the past and today. The problem with this exemption is that it stemmed from sexual prejudice and women being viewed as weak. The military today is fairer to women.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Women have proved themselves in the past, in the present, and have the mindset to do so in the future. Whether or not change is in our future as a people, I know women can handle it. Our fight is one full of difficulty, but one worth fighting. If women of all ages could help our country win a war, we can push for success in everything we do. Women are thankful we have made the amount of progress we have made, and they look forward to working with the men they respect in the future thus, it is necessary to conclude that women have always played an important role in the development of history. This paper is based on providing evidence regarding the effects of social reconstruction of sex and gender on women and their participation in the struggle for equal opportunities,

which has become a historically determined stage of social development. The history that involves women has been developed over centuries, constantly changing its goals and forms, increasing the popularity of women's movement, mainly in the 20-th century, when suffrage and voting rights were popularized. The role of women in the 19-th century differed from their roles in the 20-th century. The events that occurred in the 1900s contributed to the developments in the later decades. For example, proto-feminist movements in Europe of the 19-the century contributed to the development of more independent views on women's rights and duties. The third wave feminism completely changes women's views on their role in social development through the relationship between feminist movement and popular culture. Generally speaking, women's role in the struggle for equal opportunities throughout the history emphasizes the positive effects of feminist ideas on the social reconstruction of sex and gender that was caused by a number of important historical developments, demonstrations on women's suffrage; women's efforts during the First World War and the Second World War; the development of the first wave, the second wave and the third wave feminism

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