

# What Life Was Like for Women in the Late 1800

Tasneem Rashed Said Shahwan

Faculty of Languages and Communication, University Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia

## Abstract

The lives of women in the late 1800s were completely different because of several factors that comprised of non-availability of machinery and cooking or washing equipment, there was no dependency on technological work as they were subjected to complete their house hold activities. Women were involved in sewing in their free time instead of watching television serials as there weren't many at that time. Late evening hangouts or visiting different places for enjoyment was not appreciated by the past men. In most offices, there was a glass ceiling for the women and they were stopped from having advancement in education. With the help of this article, the challenges and oppositions faced by the women in the late 19th century will be brought forward along with how they were put into slavery since the beginning of their lives and were treated as animals, females of poor families were sexually harassed, and many strong women tried their best to spread awareness on this injustice. People of the 21<sup>st</sup> century do not know much about the details of how the women were denied from their legal rights and such, through this study they will get examine the harsh reality of the past. The research methodology that will be followed in the study is qualitative one and comprises of secondary data. The information for this journal is taken from the previous researches done on this subject matter. It has been founded from this article that women of the rich class had the facilities and rights that every other woman deserved to have even if she belonged to the poor family or black community. Being poor and black does not mean that the women is any less than the white one, justice and women empowerment should be given attention on.

**Keywords:** Women inequality, harassment, discrimination, anti-slavery.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

Women in the late 1800s were not that social, vociferous, confident, forthcoming, loud, opinionated, understood, straightforward, mainly prioritized, employed and were usually busy with their household chores most of the day (Mason, Vinovskis & Hareven, 1978). There is a vast history of women that were used for fun and sexual desires. At that time, most of the white women were satisfied with their lives and did every piece of work by themselves without using machinery or any other equipment as there weren't many available because they did not exist or were simply not able to afford a slave or maid. Some rich class females had excess to telephones to communicate with their friends to come over their houses for a visit at tea time because going outside to visit places that included parks, hotels, museums, beaches, farmhouse, several restaurants and such started in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even the origination of internet, deep freezers, microwaves, laptops, cord-less cell phones, digitalization, E-commerce, online banking system, ATMs, modernized restaurants, helicopter, tourist's places, aeroplanes, public transport system in the form of buses, posh pubs and clubs did not take place until 1873. The non-existence of such devices, technology and machines made the lives of the females more difficult in the late 1800s because they did not have excess to time saving technologies and did all of the work by themselves. The inventions of the 19th century constitute of battery, the tin can, matches, type writer, revolver, sewing machine, machine gun was invented in the 1860s due to civil war in America, telephone was invented along with a car that was powered by an internal combustion engine and in the end of this century the escalator was created. The reason of briefing about these inventions is that, life was very slow and mostly required man-power in the 1800s (Easterlin, 2000).

### 1.2 Background

The surroundings in addition with the upbringing of the person in relation to environmental temperament, plays a vital role in shaping the atmosphere as per the severity one is objected to face. In the late 1800, the behaviour of women was generally known to be reserved, distant and less gregarious (King, 2016). However, the African American women were outspoken and posed to have a strong sense of individual character even though they were treated badly and were bound in slavery for years and did not have the right to present their votes till 1815. Elizabeth Cady Stanton became the activist for antislavery in 1816 and the movements for antislavery and women's rights came into being that were not paid much heed to in the beginning (Collins, 2002). In the year 1820, Harriet Tubman who was born as a slave became the advocate for black women's rights.

### 1.3 Problem statement

Not much of the history of women is known by the people of today's world therefore, how those women lived their lives by going through the hardships and maltreatment must be studied. This research article will spread

awareness on the behaviour of the women in the late 1800s including the ways they were dealt with and what they were considered for.

#### **1.4 Research aim**

The purpose of this study is to explain what life was like for women in the late 1800. Detailed explanation on this context will ensure complete understanding of this subject matter.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

Following are the questions that will be critically observed:

Research question 1: What is the importance of reflecting on the history of women that lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century?

Research question 2: What hardships, challenges and problems were faced by the females of that time in England, Ireland, United States and India?

Research question 3: Why were black women subjected for slavery and inequality in terms of women rights? Were the white women of rich class treated in a better way comparatively?

Research question 4: What steps were taken for antislavery movement of the African American women?

#### **1.6 Justification**

This article will pertain keen annotations made by the past researchers on the life of women in the late 1800s. Through this study, a clear review of the past happenings that took place which the females of that time dealt with and what challenges they overcame will be highlighted. It is important to have a know-how about the behaviour of people with authority towards their female slaves who should have had equal rights to live. This journal article will be very beneficial for the general readers and research analysts for the purpose of getting information as associated with this context. Moreover, evaluation based on the complications past females faced will be provided including the knowledge of sexual abuse they suffered with. Investigation on the women of rich class will as take place for further clarification of the brief, some positive aspects of the women at that time will also be presented.

## **2. Literature review**

In Britain women did not get to have possession over her husband's property after divorce unless and until the husband pays off his debts. On the contrary, the husband can have full possession over his wife's dowry after marriage, this circumstance took place among the British women in the late 1800s. Their legal rights after marriage were also restricted in comparison with their husband's rights. Women were posed to deal with more problems in the process of separation and divorce. Even in the 1900s, some women were placed as the object for cruelty in marriages and were having abusive marital relationships with their husbands in which getting divorce from their men became stressful (Brenner & Ramas, 1984). The doors for higher education were closed for several females back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as they were said to stay at home, learn the house work that constitutes cleaning, washing, cooking, helping their family members, mending, sewing and all the other indoor activities. On appealing and showing interest for going to school they were told to marry and start a family. This resulted in early age divorces and since those women were young and uneducated, they were not accepted by their families as widowed women were considered to be bad luck in the 1800s (Dahl, (2010). In Greece, women had equal rights of education as men and similarly in India the women were not prevented for getting educated either (Purvis, 1991). No individual in this world is any less than the other one even if she is of distinctive social, cultural, religious or political background. Displaying discrimination because of the female gender does not classify men to take power over this or show any signs of bad behaviour towards them. There are several cases of sexual harassment and abuse that the women had gone through knowingly and unknowingly.

There are numerous cases of hardship that women faced during 19<sup>th</sup> century due to the discrimination in terms of their gender. There is the huge number of cases that are registered regarding the discrimination that women faced in different stages of time. At the time of marriage, various hardship is face women as well as their family in the name of dowry.in the19<sup>th</sup> century marriage consider as the financial game that groom family play. There are increasing demands from the bride family and in case if the demands are not fulfilled then the wedding got cancelled between some families. This is the reasons due to the mother put their girls in the womb to sleep. The echoing greediness of the groom's family is sometimes not even gratified with the booty it acquires on marriage and iterative demands are made even after marriage.in the 19<sup>th</sup> century burning of women from the groom, the family is very much common when their family unable to complete their huge demands. According to the Indian National, Crime Bureau reports there were 6787 dowry cases registered. Domestic violence is very common in the 18 century. Men were not considered this as a shameful act and 88% of women become the victims of domestic violence in the 1820s. Due to cruelty from the husband and its family ide lead to the suicidal attempts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even girls and women were not allowed to acquire education. The disparity rate in education was found high in the rural areas more as compare to the urban area. Early marriages became very

common. Susan Anthony and Elizabeth Cady raised their voices in the early 1860s and fought over for women equality, their prolong freedom and justice that they rightfully deserved.

It is also found that due to the dowry huge percentage of women were not married in order to escape themselves and their family from dowry (Jones, 2006). Before 1833 there was no proper anti-slavery moment in African America. Also, the timeline for the anti-slavery was much destructive and unequal right provided to them. According to the 1651 act related to the anti-slavery right the Rhode Island announced that “an enslaved person must be freed after 10 years of service.”, in 1663 the Virginia court declares that “child born to an enslaved mother is also a slave” and much other such acts were implementing. But the late 19<sup>th</sup> century improvement occurs. The Maria Weston Chapman start their Anti-Slavery campaign in the late 19th century. In the late 1800, it is also witnessing the development of African American school and schooling system in the New York. In the early 1820s, the South Carolina banned teaching any African Americans in the state, free or enslaved.

### **3. Methodology**

This article consists of qualitative data that has been extracted from various internet sources, books and journals as it is based on secondary data. The approach used for this research is purely qualitative as this article includes complete assimilation regarding the perceptions of the past researchers in addition with some facts.

### **4. Research findings**

With the help of overviewing the previous researches and articles, it can be understood that reflecting on the women history gives as an understanding in relating and comparing the past behaviour of women to the present ones. There have been dynamic changes in the past women’s clothing, living styles, there way of socialization, injustice shown to them along with inequality and not been provided with equal rights when we compare to the women of today’s world. That history is the part of the women culture that should be known by everyone. Women were not allowed to do jobs and work outside of their houses as they were restricted by their family members and in-laws, they were discouraged for this purpose. Although there were some women who were allowed to go out and work in the film industry or start teaching primary students. Rich class women behaved as if they had the full authority to embarrass their black women slaves and make them do all their good and bad work. The law of equal rights came after 1870s that turned the whole situation as the black women gradually regained their right to vote and have freedom from slavery. In 1825, black women were asked to work hard in order to earn their freedom right though in reality they were just given false hope. The rich women were allowed all the basic facilities and they dressed well and attended different ceremonies and became the part of different gatherings, they ate healthy food and gave all the leftovers to their servants. On asking and demanding of equal women rights, they were asked to evacuate or were sexually harassed in the late 19th century Goggin, 1992). Maria Stewart brought forward the movement of racial equality that gave encouragement to the not wealthy women and the African American ones. Poor women were compelled to become slaves and they had no choice of their own. However, there were women that belonged to well and educated families or simply from educational backgrounds that wrote numerous books for women’s right and justice in the late 1870s (Davis, 1980).

Lucretia Mott started the anti-slavery movement in 1833 to stop the women maltreatment and harassment. Prudence Crandall in 1834 was harassed for opening school to educate the female slaves. The black community was all indulged in working hard as slaves and their family members were also asked to do so, this concept of female slavery came into existence even before than the 15<sup>th</sup> century and it ran deep in the poor families and they were also abused for making some errors at work (Looser, 2005).

### **5. Discussion**

Several debates have been presented and many arguments were addressed on the lives of the women in the late 1800s. All in all, those debates mostly included information related to the inequality among poor females and injustice shown to the black community, women in Ireland were asked to study in order to educate their offspring (Luddy, 1995). In India, many females completed their higher education with flying colours even though the rural areas thought of women education as time waste and as an excuse for going out to meet random people. Women in Ireland belonged to a very distinctive cultural environment back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as their living style was tough in the 1840s. Between 1845 to 1849, the Irish people went through massive starvation period because the women were married at a young age and had a couple of children whom they were not able to feed as the family was only dependent on the father because he was the only one employed. Women were told to stay at home and do household chores, they were not allowed to go out and earn. This act made the situation worse as the families got poorer and died in the Great Famine period. The women were at the mercy of God to keep themselves and their dear children alive, approximately 1 million people died in Ireland and emigrated (Nally, 2011).

## 6.0 Conclusion

Natalie Davis, Duchess of Newcastle and Christine De Pisan were the French and American women that contributed their time in writing books on the lost opportunities for women and what problems they had gone through in relation with their liberty rights (Smith, 1984). Marrie Otis Warren in the early 1800s wrote about women politics that did not get much value or attention over. Lucy stone and Sojourner Truth were among the British women that travelled to different cities for the purpose of giving lectures and setting seminars in which they talked about women's rights and soon after that started anti-slavery movement to protect the black women and those of the poor families from harassment, discrimination and molestation (Brenner & Ramas, 1984). There are many real stories of child rape in India in which teenage females were targeted in the rural areas and were misused in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though there still are cases of child rape in India. Attractive women were kidnapped and sold to other cities for sexual liberation, they were tortured if they tried to run away and were killed on reporting or leaking what had happened to them and by whom (Frevert, 1989). But the conditions were not that bad for all the women in the world and numerous of them got educated, employed, became authors, social activists, actors, ran successful families, were designers and much more. This article is all about the problems and difficulties the past women dealt with and what their lives were like back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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