

Women's Right

Women won their present status through struggle and sacrifices rather than through men's kindness. Women and their supporters have fought and in some places continue to fight for the same rights as men. Laws were made to replace local customs which denigrated and suppressed women's rights. Women have gained higher positions in the world at all levels: political, economic and social.

Historically, whether in Hindu, Greek or Roman civilizations women were always minors and subject to men. It was only during the Islamic civilization, between 610 and 661, that the early reforms were undertaken. The reforms gave women greater rights than Muslim women in pre-Islamic Arabia and medieval Europe. These reforms included greater rights in marriage, divorce and inheritance. Women were not accorded with such legal status in other cultures until centuries later.

During the middle ages women were enslaved and were denied all rights in Europe. In the late 18th century, however, women's status became a subject of political debate. In the 19th century women started their fight for equal rights. In the late 19th century they won the right to vote (suffrage) in various countries in the world. More gigantic steps were taken during the following years. Women gained more economic, social and political status in various degrees and in different countries.

In Spite of all the success women still suffer from discrimination at various levels. For example women work more and earn less than men. In addition to that, the majority of the world's poor and illiterate are women. The road to real equality is still long.

Questões:

1. The first reforms occurred in Europe.
 True
 False

2. Political debate over women's status started in the 18th century.
 True
 False

3. Women gained the right to vote during the 19th century.
 True
 False