

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 1 Society – Role of women and women's organization.

On Women's Suffrage – Women's vote achieved

The history of the women's suffrage movement spans the 19th and 20th centuries, driven by protest voices primarily in English-speaking nations. From 1893 to 1960, 129 countries granted women voting rights. Some nations tried to impose restrictions based on race, age, education, or marital status, but these were mostly discarded.

1. **Role of Social Activism:** Initially, other social activism causes fueled the demand for voting rights. For instance: a. In 1893, New Zealand became the first nation to grant women the right to vote in national elections, prompted by a fight against alcohol. b. In the USA, where suffrage was granted in 1920, activism against slavery laid the groundwork for suffrage protests.
2. **Impact of World Wars:** The suffrage movement accelerated after World War I, particularly in the Western world. The wars expedited women's enfranchisement.

Women's Political Empowerment:

Granting the right to vote hasn't significantly challenged entrenched patriarchal structures dominating power dynamics. Efforts must shift towards achieving genuine representation in governance, moving beyond the basic voting right.

Despite advancements in women's political participation, their substantial influence in shaping global political decisions and policies remains limited. There's a need for enhanced representation to transform the state of affairs globally.