

IN DEFENSE OF GENDER EQUALITY: A STUDY OF CHISHOLM

BY

**FAITH ASEMOTA
*ART1801882***

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work titled: *In Defense of Gender Equality: A Study of Chisholm*, was carried out by **ASEMOTA FAITH (Miss)**, Matriculation number **ART1801882**, in the department of Philosophy, Faculty of Art, University of Benin, Edo state, Nigeria.

Prof. Anthony Afe. Asekhauno
(*Supervisor*)

Dr. Wesley T. Osemwegie
(*Head of Department*)

DATE

DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God, whose Grace has sustained me through those trying periods of my sojourn at the University of Benin;

To my dear parents, Mr. and Mrs. Eric Asemota;

and

To my lovely sisters, Rebecca and Victory.

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My profound gratitude to God Almighty: my Father, my Helper, my Provider and my Strength. Lord, words are not enough to express my gratitude to you; all I can say now, is thank you for standing by and your abiding love for me.

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ABSTRACT

There has been a growing interest among gender sensitivists' and agitation for women equality with men. Philosophical interest on gender is historical. But the recurrent question that remains unanswered is: what is the basis of quest for gender equality or otherwise? Is gender equality real, possible or necessary? Several plausible claims are made by the equalitarians. But Chisholm worries why it be acceptable for women to be secretaries, librarians and teachers, but totally unacceptable for them to be managers, administrators, doctors, lawyers and members of Congress? Why is the unspoken assumption that women are different; that women should not have executive ability, orderly minds, stability, leadership skills and they are too emotional; that women should not have the opportunities that men do? The underlying issue, therefore is that men and women despite their common humanity are socially construed; why? According, this paper espouses Shirley Chisholm's (amongst other) views on the controversy. The work is theoretical/analytical and therefore adopts a content analysis to review some of existing theoretical amid evident material; to examine the concept of on gender equality, and to review some perceptions on the subject-matter. Essentially, the work discovers that Chisholm's position is that men and women are equally human an...rational as humans; second is that the existing relations between the sexes, in which women are subordinated to men, are unsatisfactory and therefore ought to be changed. Consequently, the work concludes that the existing distinctions between the sexes are not only arbitrary but are also socially/humanly and culturally contrived, and therefore should be displaced. Hence the work suggests that everyone, anyone ought to have the opportunity to actualize or fulfill his or her potential.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The society is a conglomeration of two gender male and female, which supposedly are responsible for equal rights. To this fact, none of these gender should be treated unequal with others. Hence for a better understanding of this research work which aim at addressing “Shirley Chisholm” work on gender equality, we cannot but outline or bring to consideration the importance of human rights in as much as the idea of human right encompasses the right given to both male and female gender. According to Maurice Cranston in his discussion on human rights, he examined human right as a matter of paramount important by which their violation is a grave affront of justice¹. By this fact, human being by nature is a social being who should not be stripped off his or her social rights or benefits and whose dignity is to be observed on pedestal of justice and truth without prejudice to gender, culture, ethnicity, or tribe. Thus the doctrine of human right has a way of influencing the equal nature of gender in the sense that the attribution of right to humans (male and female) as a necessity for growth and personal development are to be equally addressed.

Nevertheless this doctrine has been violated and has faced a lot of physiological controversies whereby only a part of a whole enjoys the rights that are to be

addressed to both genders. Hence since time immemorial, women have been seen as a weaker or lesser being compare to men. And ever since various, people from various works of life has advocated for equal rights of both gender. One of those who opined for gender equality is “Shirley Chisholm” in whose work this research is based on. Chisholm advocated for the rearrangement of rights as equal for both gender, negating the idea of only men syndrome. The quest of this thesis is to address Shirley Chisholm’s work on gender equality, a pointer to the development and growth of a nation is upon the maximum utilization of both genders. A female gender is also human and should not be eradicated from the face of affairs be it economic, political, and so on. Chisholm crafted her argument in three stages namely; by demonstrating how sex discrimination negatively affect both gender, by refuting argument opposing equal right amendment, and by building a case that change was needed. Hence she provided numerous examples of how women were discriminated against under existing laws and how things would change if the amendment is passed².

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The emotional, sexual and psychological stereotype of the girl child begins when the doctor say it is a girl and for this reason tremendous amount of talent are being lost on daily basis simply because these talents are girls. The unspoken assumptions are; women are different and unlike men, they do not have leadership

skill, quality and orderly mind that men have, and are way too emotional to occupy a major positions. This is why it is acceptable for women to be Liberians, teachers, secretaries and unacceptable for women to be something much more like president, members of congress etc. As though the capacity to lead is not part of their biological makeup. Nigeria like most developing nations in the world is faced with the mirage of problems and harsh reality one of which is our topic of discussion. Even till this very day, women are being relegated to the background especially in the north where the female gender are not allowed to receive basic necessities in life such as proper education, instead they are forced into marriage at an early age. As a result a lot of women and girls dreams and aspirations has been killed and are still being killed on daily basis simply because they have are females a gender which apparently they have no choice over.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Gender equality refers to a situation where male and female gender enjoys equal benefit to develop their full potential, exercising equal human right and are able to contribute equal development to the national, political and educational activities as well as benefit equally from the result. Ban ki-Moon opines that in order to achieve gender equality there should be a concrete engage of women and men, boys and girls which could addressed everyone's responsibility, this is done without prejudice but rather for all gender to have equal rights, opportunities, and

responsibility³. The doctrine of gender equality is also known as sex equality or gender egalitarianism addressing the tendency to ascribe in various settings across societies, different roles and status to individuals without gender bias. Example of gender equality is equal pay for equal work and this is exemplified in a practical way as concerns equal wages or salary payment at the end of labor without gender discrimination. Notwithstanding, a violation to gender equality is to disregard the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities including economic participation and decision making on equal level. Hence it is more than a goal when we talk on gender equality. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, and building good governance⁴.

Nevertheless Shirley Chisholm observe the fundamental issues surrounding the idea of gender equality and made a proposal on equal amendment in order to provide protection to those who are mostly abused and reaped off their right and to begin the process of evolutionary change by compelling the insensitive majority to reexamine its unconscious attitudes⁵.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The importance of this work cannot be over emphasized as gender equality is a topic that has been widely discussed. Prejudice against women is still acceptable, there is very little understanding yet of the immorality involved in double pay

scale and the classification of most of the better jobs as “for men only”. We are not oblivious of the facts that there are multiple factors contributing to the disparity of gender equality particularly for majority of women living in developing countries who faces disproportionate challenges to equal participation in their communities, labor force and economics. These factors could be due to gender based violence, discrimination, and lack of access to education. However, this work seek to present the relevance of equal rights to gender particularly to address the female gender on equal rights. According to research more than half of the world population is female yet the female gender occupies few percent of the managerial positions. This made Chisholm advocate for a constitutional amendment on the equality of both gender which will enhance improvement of national productivity and economic growth, increases organizational performance, and enhance ability of companies to attract talent and retain employees.

Moreover, the significance of this research work is aimed to give an understanding of Shirley Chisholm’s take on gender equality and its implications.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This work is primarily concerned with Shirley Chisholm’s idea on gender equality. This topic is majorly built on women empowerment, human rights, and sexism. It is also limited to the critical evaluation and implication of the subject matter. Thus since there are materials to consult which also treat the above issue related to

Shirley Chisholm's idea on gender equality due consultation shall be made to relevant.

1.6 Methodology of the Study

This research will adopt not only analytic but theoretical methodology to indicate what it take for a conception to become a pedestal for social order. It shall be shown that while a genuine commitment to whichever standard so discussed has its relative advantage, the critical methodology helps to reveal its inadequacy as the all-time all-place sole standard. While the attempt here does not adjudicate which breed the better ideal social order. It shall verily espouse the outright unproductive of the attempt to impose one over the other. In other to succeed, the study relies on existing text materials on the subject of sexism, human right, and the acknowledgement of women empowerment.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Black Feminism

The concept of feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged by comparison with men. Although in the early phase of feminism, advocate focused largely on the reform of women's social position arguing that they should have access to education, work, and civil rights. But during the latter half of the 20th century, feminist have become increasingly interested in the variety of social practices⁶.

However, feminist movement have campaigned and still campaigning for women's rights including the right to vote, run for public office, work, and earn equal pay, own property, receive education, have equal right in marriage and maternity. They have also worked to ensure social integration, protect women and girls from sexual harassment and domestic violence.

Feminism

The idea of black feminism also known as afro-feminism is centered on the idea that "black women are inherently valuable". This dwells on the liberation of black women as a necessity and not as an adjunct to somebody else's because of our needs as human persons for autonomy. This concept is known outside the United States which centered on women of color⁷.

Moreover black feminism highlight and engage with the many aspect of identity that women have, which was significant because it gave them the opportunity to talk about being black along with gender inequality. Despite the prejudice and discrimination they are faced, black women were and still critical to lack liberation and equality of both gender.

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CHAPTER TWO

HUMAN SEXUALITY AND GENDER EQUALITY

2.1 Human Sexuality

The concept of human sexuality is a broad concept which has varied with historical contexts over time. Human sexuality as it were does not have a precise definition. Hence, the expression of sexual desire and related intimacy between people is referred to as "human sexuality," and it might encompass biological, psychological, physical, erotic, emotional, social, or spiritual feelings and behaviors.¹ According to the World Health Organization, Human sexuality, includes sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction, it is the only aspect of being human throughout life, in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles, and relationships are some characteristics of human sexuality as is experienced and expressed.²

Socrates in particular has shed light on the essence of love in different ways. These reflections on love cover a wide range, from the profoundly romantic story of the broken people yearning to once again be whole to the dismal tale of the lover who pretends to be uninterested for the benefit of his beloved. They all demonstrate that for love to be truly right and virtuous, love must penetrate the depths of the mind and soul in addition to the physical body³. This is true even

though each character in these three exchanges has his own particular view of love and its suitable code of conduct. legal, and philosophical aspects of life, influence human sexuality.⁴ Thus, two factors are typically considered when attempting to define this term this includes the biological approach which is the essentialist approach and the socio-cultural approach which is the constructivist approach.⁵ Explaining this differently, in a biological standpoint, reproduction is the main point of emphasis. Where Human sexuality is influenced by genetic, hormonal, and neurological factors. Throughout history, the biological aspects of human sexuality have been restricted to Male and female. These gender categories have grown over time and with shifting cultural and anthropological in each iteration of the Symposium and Phaedrus, and identities, can be just as important or even more so.⁶ Moreover, the scientific knowledge of anthropologists, biologists, medical researchers, sociologists, and psychologists, to name a few of the professional groups engaged in the topic, is used in the study of human sexuality.⁷

2.2 Gender Equality: Some Philosophical Perspectives

2.2.1 Plato

The fundamental tenet of gender equality is that males and females should have equal access to political, economic, social, and legal rights as well as equal treatment. It is unacceptable to treat men and women differently only because of

their gender.⁸ In view of this, Plato vigorously pushed the notion that everyone deserving would receive education and training, regardless of sex, in an ideal society. Although Plato thought women were physically weaker than males, he establishes in *Laws* that if they had the right instruction, women would inevitably become more equal to men. In his discuss on the *Republic*, Platonic support for female public engagement challenges an organizational culture in which women's actions, movements, and behavior were tightly constrained.⁹

However, the status of women in Plato's political philosophy is perhaps at variance with the larger Platonic corpus, which seems to speak to the inherent inferiority of women, as well as the negative and oppressive portrayal of women in Athenian philosophical thinking as a whole. Insofar as the body and the spirit are separate, women and men can co-manage the state equally, according to Plato's radical argument.¹⁰ Plato thus explains the inferiority of women in terms of devolution from an original creation consisting of men. *Republic V*'s discourse implies that while there are various ways in which people can differ from one another, specific characteristics are irrelevant when it comes to allocating distinct roles to individuals in accordance with their natures.¹¹ The idea that the female form reflects an evil nature, as stated clearly calls into question Plato's endorsement of the egalitarian ideal as such, even as he broadens the variety of occupations available to women.¹²

Undoubtedly, Plato's emancipation of women is based on the metaphysical claim that the body and the soul are separate and that the body obstructs the aspirations and potential of the soul. A female with a philosophical nature may aspire to re-enter life as a man to the extent that she serves her attachment and dependence on the body in favor of philosophy if a male soul may live in a female body and vice versa¹³ To put it mildly, women's social status in ancient Greece was quite constrained. There were few advocates for women's equality during a time when they were nothing more than domestic slaves. Surprisingly, none other than the famous philosopher Plato was one of these unusual supporters. On the Republic, his classic essay on the ideal form of government, offers justifications for the political equality of women, which was not generally practiced until recent decades.¹⁴ Women had limited, if any, rights in Plato's day in ancient Greece. They were supposed to administer the family while also being obedient to their husbands' wishes. In ancient Greece, a woman was normally constantly under a man's authority or protection. If this is the case, then arguing that women are less capable than men might be seen as an attempt to systematically disadvantage women in the modern world.¹⁵ Simply asserting that women are less capable in this situation could make an already hostile stance against gender equality. To put it another way, it's possible that the prescriptive assertion that women need to be treated differently and the descriptive argument that women are less capable are already connected in some manner by the present feminist intellectual construct.¹⁶

Uncertainty surrounds the existence of a comparable structure in *The Republic*, nevertheless, until such an underlying construction is found, Plato's disapproval of women's experiences will remain an empirical fact.

2.2.2 Socrates

According to Socrates, the difference between the Form of Equality and equal objects is that the latter can occasionally be perceived as equal and occasionally as unequal. On the other hand, equality itself is consistently equal. 'Gender mainstreaming' is one of the gender equality ideas that guides the Socrates program. The under-representation of one sex in particular professions or grades is an example of how persistent disparities may manifest themselves.¹⁷ The execution of particular initiatives to advance the interests of women or men as distinct groups may be necessary in an effort to remedy this application taking explicit steps to advance either the interests of men or women as separate groupings. The strengthening of gender equality rules provided the first impetus for the current research of gender equality in Socrates.¹⁸ The necessity to "promote equality through all future programming phases of the current Community programs, as Socrates and others. Thus, determining the gender balance of specific contacts in the coordinating and partner institutions was one of the study's areas of reference.¹⁹ It is reassuring to see that the gender balance of the individual contacts in the coordinating institutions was practically equal for

the centralized projects: 46 (48% female), 43 (45% male), and 7 missing data points. Regarding the decentralized initiatives, there was the following gender balance: Male 31 (36%) and female 72 (64%) (Missing data: 9).²⁰

However, it should be kept in mind when interpreting these results because the gender balance of the project coordinators would be influenced to some extent by the gender balance of the existing personnel at the institution.²¹ Therefore, the gender balance of the project coordinators is insufficient to demonstrate gender equality in project management. It was not always possible to tell whether project outputs had taken into consideration gender-related results because only a small percentage of them were available for review.²² Similar to this, there was no evidence of tracking and evaluating gender-related factors over time because the initiatives were only allowed to last one to three years.

2.2.3 Judith Butler

Gender equality, also known as sexual equality or equality of the sexes, is the condition in which all people have equal access to resources and opportunities, including economic participation and decision-making, and in which all people are valued for their unique behaviors, aspirations, and needs. Hence, Butler's opinion on gender is entirely a social invention, a fabrication, and not at all connected to physical or biological reality, making it subject to change and challenge: "Because there is neither an objective ideal that gender aspires to, nor

an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes.²³ furthermore, Butler's theory on gender equality is seen in her work on gender trouble, feminism and subversion of identity where she stated that the state in which everyone has equal access to resources and opportunities, including economic involvement and decision-making, and in which everyone is respected for their distinctive behaviors, goals, and needs, is known as gender equality, also referred to as sexual equality or equality of the sexes.²⁴ Butler is supporting Gloria Anzaldua's "Queer theory" by embracing the notion that there are multiple genders in society. In her essay *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler analyzes queer theory. They also distinguish between a single woman and a group of women, contending that these two classifications have various social connotations.²⁵ they contend that a number of variables, including sexual orientation, race, and class, may be to blame. These have largely been implemented as a result of patriarchy being one of the fundamental tenets of society.

2.2.4 Carol Gilligan

Different voices are followed by men and women. Men typically adhere to a morality of rights and organize social interactions in a hierarchical manner.²⁶ By adding a feminist perspective on moral development, Gilligan's work, which focuses on sex differences in moral reasoning, the perception of violence, the

resolution of sexual conundrums, and abortion decisions, provides a significant challenge to Kohlberg's theory.²⁷ Adolescent males score at level four (law and order) and are more likely to progress to post conventional levels than average females, according to Kohlberg's research, who found that the average female obtained a moral judgment rating of stage three (good boy-nice girl).²⁸ Gilligan contends that these results show a gender bias rather than that women are less mature than men. Females place a high priority on caring, compassion, and responsibility toward others.²⁹ talking about the sex gap theory in moral reasoning according to her thesis, women prioritize a caring orientation while making moral decisions, whereas males favor justice.

However, Gilligan's goal was to prove that women are not "moral midgets", so she was going against many psychological opinions, Strengths, for better understanding of each gender so they can work together better.³⁰

2.3 Gender Equality: Some Critique

In the last two decades, much research has been undertaken on gender related issues, exploring both their antecedents and repercussions. Gender equality is a significant challenge that places women at a disadvantage, stymieing economic growth and societal advancement.³¹ Hence, researchers have put a lot of work into understanding gender equality, its causes, the effects it has on women and society, and the best courses of action and laws to promote women's equality. Many

subjects have been discussed, including women's human capital and education, their role in society, their appointment to top positions in businesses and the performance consequences.³² Returning to the Republic by Plato, he holds the widespread belief that women are weaker than men in all aspects and believes that they are weepier and less valiant than men. These claims represent nothing more than an offensive stereotype in the eyes of modern feminists and the general public.

However, as they are merely his descriptive remarks regarding the appearance and personalities of women, they are insufficient to support a claim that Plato was anti-gender equality. It might be helpful to contrast Plato's views with other disparaging views of women that were popular at the time. For instance, Aristotle sometimes said that women do have the capacity for deliberation, but that this capacity is not given much weight.³³ Additionally, he emphasizes that ladies are in a melting mood and prefer women who tend to moan about unimportant things, are easily angered, and are easily disappointed. Women lie more often than men do, and they don't feel as bad about it. In reality, the positions and possibilities that exist between men and women in the workforce and labor markets are a subtle form of societal oppression. This theoretical idea has a significant impact on our discourse that extends beyond feminist academic debate. If this is the case, then arguing that women are less capable than men might be seen as an attempt to systematically disadvantage women in the modern world. Simply asserting that

women are less capable in this situation could make an already hostile stance against gender equality.³⁴

To put it another way, it is plausible that the modern feminist conceptual construct already functions in a way that is comparable to an underlying statement that connects the declarative claim that women are less capable and the prescriptive assertion. Further study may examine this possibility, but unless such an underlying architecture is discovered, Plato's disapproval of women based on empirical evidence alone is insufficient to prove that he opposes the ideal of gender.³⁵ The widely held belief that Plato supports a position opposed to gender equality in the Republic is unfounded. The out gap serves as a caution that we cannot immediately infer recommendations from descriptions. As a result, it is impossible to use Plato's descriptions of women's lesser physical prowess, intellectual aptitude, and virtue potential as weighty evidence against gender equality.³⁶ Those descriptions, however insulting, should be viewed as outliers and Plato should not be taken as an opponent of the ideal of gender equality unless other justifications are presented to close the out gap.³⁷

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CHAPTER THREE

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM CONCEPT OF GENDER EQUALITY

3.1 Shirley Chisholm: Her Background, Works and Influences

The first African American woman elected to Congress in 1968, Shirley Anita St. Hill Chisholm also became the first woman and African American to run for president of the United States in one of the two main parties in 1972.² Throughout her seven tenures in the U.S. House of Representatives, she was an outspoken advocate for women and minorities, as seen by her motto and the title of her autobiography, *Unbought and Unbossed*. Chisholm was the oldest of four girls born to Guyana immigrant Charles St. Hill and Barbadian seamstress Ruby Seale St. Hill in Brooklyn, New York, on November 30, 1924.³ she earned her diplomas from Brooklyn Girls' High in 1942 and Brooklyn College with honors in 1946, when she participated on the debate team and won awards. She responded that, despite her lecturers' encouragement to think about a political career, she had a "double handicap" because she was Black and a woman.⁴

Thus, Chisholm started out teaching in a nursery school. She wed private eye Conrad Q. Chisholm in 1949; the couple got divorced in 1977. In 1951, she graduated with a master's degree in early childhood education from Columbia University. She began consulting with the New York City Division of Day Care in 1960.⁵ she joined local branches of the League of Women Voters, the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, as well as the Democratic Party club in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, because she was always conscious of racial and gender injustice. Chisholm entered the New York State Legislature as the second African American in 1964 after winning her election.⁶ After a new, predominately Democratic district was created in her area as a result of court-ordered redistricting, Chisholm ran for and was elected to congress in 1968. Over 50 pieces of legislation were introduced there by "Fighting Shirley" who promoted racial and gender equality, the hardship of the poor, and the end of the Vietnam War. In 1971, she helped form the National Women's Political Caucus, and in 1977, she was appointed as the second woman and first Black woman to ever serve on the influential House Rules Committee.⁷ She wed New York State politician Arthur Hardwick Jr. in that year. Chisholm's campaign for the Democratic Party presidential nomination in 1972 was met with discrimination. She was denied access to the televised primary debates and was only given one speech after filing a lawsuit. Students, women, and people of color nevertheless followed the "Chisholm Trail."⁸ Despite a poorly funded campaign and opposition from the largely male Congressional Black Caucus, she participated in 12 primaries and received 152 votes from delegates (10% of the total). In 1983, Chisholm left the Congress. She co-founded the National Political Congress of Black Women and taught at Mount Holyoke College. She relocated

to Florida in 1991, and later turned down the nomination to serve as the United States' ambassador to Jamaica owing to poor health.⁹

Moreover, Chisholm stated of her legacy throughout her congressional career, which spanned from 1969 to 1983, Chisholm, a founder of the National Women's Political Caucus, backed the Equal Rights Amendment and supported abortion legalization. *The Good Fight* (1973), *Unbought and Unbossed* (1970) are two of her autobiographical works.¹⁰ Chisholm stayed active on the lecture circuit after leaving Congress. She worked as the Professor of politics and women's studies at Mount Holyoke College from 1983 to 1987 and visited Spelman College in 1985. She turned down President Bill Clinton's invitation to serve as ambassador to Jamaica in 1993 due to her frail health. In 2015, Chisholm received the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously.¹¹ Chisholm campaigned to increase possibilities for citizens in inner cities throughout her time in Congress. She favored raising the amount spent on social services like education, healthcare, and other programs. She was deeply worried about incidents of prejudice against women, particularly those that targeted poor women.¹²

3.2 Shirley Chisholm's Theory on Equal Rights

The conceptual analysis of Shirley Chisholm on equal right has to do with amendment of right. In her dialogue, she begins with an illustration that if a young woman is likely to have a stressful and even unpleasant experience when she

graduates from college and begins looking for a career.¹³ She will be questioned, "Do you type?" as soon as she enters an office for an interview. Behind that query is a calculated prejudiced system that is unstated. She exclaimed that, why are female managers, administrators, doctors, lawyers, and members of Congress utterly inappropriate, but secretaries, librarians, and teachers are acceptable? Unstated presumption is that women are unique. They are too emotional, lack executive ability, have disorderly thinking, lack steadiness, and lack leadership qualities.¹⁴ it has been noted previously that society for a very long time discriminated against black people on the grounds that they were inferior and different. Prejudice gave rise to the content "Old Darkey" on the plantation and the content tiny housewife. Even though she was black, she was accustomed to racial prejudice.¹⁵

However, Shirley had experienced gender discrimination far more frequently than racial discrimination in the political sphere. Despite the fact that it will take years to eradicate, racism is becoming intolerable. But it's doomed because white America is starting to cautiously acknowledge its existence. It's still permissible to discriminate against women.¹⁶ the immorality of double pay scales and designating the majority of the better positions as only being suitable for men remains largely unacknowledged. This situation is ridiculous given that there are around 3.5 million more women than men living in the United States. It is true that a contributing factor to the issue has been women's passive attitude toward

asserting their rights.¹⁷ for the black population, this was likewise accurate. They put up with oppression for a long time and even helped it. The same has been done by women. But now people are more aware of the situation, especially the younger demographics. Laws rarely solve such pervasive issues quickly, as has been the case with equal rights for Blacks, Spanish-Americans, Indians, and other groups.¹⁸ Instead, they are frequently employed to protect those who are most mistreated. It is for this reason that Shirley introduced a proposal that has been before every Congress for the last 40 years and that sooner or later must become part of the basic law of the land, The Equal Rights Amendment. Has she did not refute the two of the commonest arguments that are offered against this amendment.¹⁹ One is that women are already protected under the law and do not need legislation. Existing laws are not adequate to secure equal rights for women. Sufficient proof of this is the concentration of women in low paying jobs and they're incredible scarcity in the higher-level jobs. Why is it such a big deal if one happens to get elected to Congress if women are already equal? Discrimination is blatantly evident.²⁰

Moreover, the opportunities that men enjoy are not available to women. And women who try to deviate from the norms and challenge the status quo are labeled as "odd" and "unfeminine." The truth is that a woman who wants to lead a board or serve in the house has the same motivations as any guy, which are essentially that she believes she is capable of doing the job and that she wants to try.²¹

Another common criticism of the Equal Rights Amendment is that it would nullify laws that many states and the federal government have passed to give specific protection to women and that doing so would create havoc with marriage and divorce laws. The marriage laws need a thorough overhaul, and doing rid of the ones that are currently in effect would be a great place to start. Shirley didn't understand why working women should require more protection while Men do not require any additional protection that women do.²² Laws that safeguard working people are required, ensuring that they receive just wages, secure working conditions, protection from layoffs and illness, and provisions for a dignified, comfortable retirement. Both men and women require these things. The idea that one sex requires more protection than the other is a male supremacist myth that is equally absurd and devoid of respect as the white supremacist myth that society is currently attempting to free itself of.²³

3.3 Chisholm on Gender Equality: Approaches to Feminism

Many feminists advocate for some level of gender equality in both the public and private spheres. In terms of a more equal representation of men and women in the workplace and in politics, this takes the form of equality. When men and women share equal duty in the home, gender equality is considered to have occurred.²⁴ the majority of mainstream feminists are generally quite pro-gender parity in all of its manifestations. But there is a fine line between liberal feminists and socialist

feminists in this context. Liberal feminists truly believe that men and women should have equal access to opportunities. For instance, businesses should be pushed to offer child care services and flexible scheduling to support working parents, especially moms.²⁵

However, the coalition government's decision to allow women and fathers to share parental leave is a recent example. It is also important to note that there is a strong, cross-party consensus regarding the importance of equal opportunity. For instance, the Tories have kept many of the New Labor-inspired legislative initiatives ever since they took office.²⁶ From a liberal point of view, equal opportunities guarantee that everyone realizes their potential and, as a result, lives in freedom. According to Berlin (1969), in order to truly enjoy liberty, we must be free from gender discrimination. Women (and men) are free to express their own preferences and choices in liberal societies. Thus, liberal feminism takes up the rhetoric of autonomy.²⁷ A woman who chose to stay at home and raise the kids is expressing her own manifestation of feminism just as much as those women who choose to take on the position of primary (or single) earner, as seen through the lens of liberal feminism. However, socialist feminists choose a different strategy. The emphasis is on equality of outcome and the politics of sameness, as with many ideologies on the left of the political spectrum.²⁸ Socialist feminists are more dogmatic in their recommendations for a culture centered on a genderless concept of personhood. They base their case on the notion that this strategy is

advantageous to both men and women. "The better the treatment of women, the more civilized the society," said Charles Fourier. Liberal feminists generally support capitalism, but socialist feminists oppose it. According to Kat Banyard, "unequal gender relations are intimately connected with capitalism."²⁹

Nevertheless, Feminist theories have changed significantly as a result of feminists' increased understanding of the complexity of gender inequality and the pervasiveness of sex, sexism, and homophobia. Today, gender is recognized as a social status, a personal identity, and a set of interactions between men and women as well as between women and men.³⁰ Sex is now understood to be a complex combination of genes, hormones, physiology, environment, and behavior with loop-back consequences rather than a one-way input or basic material for social structures. It is recognized that sexuality is a social construct as well as a physiological foundation and emotional expression. Feminists have emphasized that gender inequality is not an individual issue but is instead rooted in society's social structures.³¹ The structure of marriage and families, employment and the economy, politics, religions, the arts and other forms of cultural output, as well as the language we use, all promote gender disparity.

Therefore, in order to achieve gender equality, social as opposed to individual solutions are required. Years of feminist viewpoints have been divided into three major groups that represent their political theories and approaches to the gendered

social order. These three types of feminisms are gender revolution, gender resistance, and gender reform.³²

3.4 Chisholm's Concept of Black Feminism

Chisholm joined a nationwide campaign by black feminists to unite the intersecting issues within the moment she was elected to Congress. Thus, the work of Flo Kennedy, Frances Beal, Mary Ann Weathers, Linda Larue, Pauli Murray, Michele Wallace, Toni Cade Bambara, the National Black Feminist Organization, the Combahee River Collective, bell hooks, and Audre Lorde was included in Chisholm's first memoir, *Unbought and Unbossed*, a collection of essays on feminist issues.³³ She saw the intricate connections between black women's struggles and other social justice issues and worked to explain them, just like they did, but unlike contemporary black feminists, she pursued those issues from within the halls of the national legislative. Second-wave feminism and the black freedom struggle.³⁴ Hence, Chisholm joined other black feminist theorists of her day and earlier periods in the development of this movement. Black feminism, which developed from various black freedom movement roots, came to be represented by white New Left activists.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Anastasia Curwood a Black Feminism on Capitol Hill 211 and Chicana a feminists from Chicano activism, founded their movements Welfare beneficiaries organized as a national movement in 1967

almost simultaneously. Despite having different origins, they all have the same objective of empowering women.³⁵ Thus, the most prominent and well-connected feminists fought for women's rights outside of the home, promoting workplace equality for all people regardless of class or race privilege. But personal safety, transportation, health care, child care, and racism were just a few of the structural challenges that black women had to overcome in order to have successful careers.³⁶ The demands of black women for financial independence were not supported by either protective black men or assertive white women. Black feminists formed a group just as Chisholm, already a strong opponent of racism and sexism, was elected to the House of Representatives in response to rising masculinism from black freedom struggle activists and indifference from white feminists and politicians.³⁷ Chisholm created her own anti-oppression agenda by working across social movements and in a variety of settings. She was speaking in line with other black feminists. Black feminist thinking is characterized by intersecting oppressions as well as by recognizing and combating several types of oppression at once. In an early chapter of her autobiography *Unbought and Unbossed*, she wrote an article titled "Women and Their Liberation," which emphasized the importance of understanding how all forms of oppression are interconnected and the need to challenge oppression by highlighting our shared humanity.³⁸ Black feminist ideology is born out of the numerous forms of oppression that black women experience, as Collins notes. Collins states that

social theories presented by women from [colonized populations] "typically do not emerge from the rarefied atmosphere of their imaginations." Social theories, on the other hand, "reflect women's attempts to make sense of lived experiences within intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and religion."³⁹ Women of color are not an exception. Black feminist thinkers' ideas have been directly influenced by the specific constellation of oppressions they have experienced both domestically and abroad. Black feminist theory further contends that black women's concerns are distinct from those of both white women and black men due to the unique combination of oppressions they experience.⁴⁰

Additionally, none of the kinds of oppression that black women face including racism, sexism, and others can be understood in isolation from the others. Last but not least, black feminist philosophy has a long history of campaigning for black men and children as well as black women. Chisholm highlighted the specifics of her black experience. She was a politician who highlighted opportunities for partnership across movements while being a woman.⁴¹ She developed a political critique that promoted a broad acknowledgment of shared interests and needs, but also taking into account the unique problems that each groups' members face. Her action is similar to what Ula Taylor has referred to as "community feminism": the notion that black women must work for both their own emancipation and the empowerment of their greater community.⁴² In addition, Chisholm used her career

to advance what Kimberly Springer has dubbed "interstitial politics" a politics that is "between race and gender but cognizant of both". Chisholm's words and deeds represent a black feminist coalition-building practice for the purpose of reshaping power dynamics. By elevating black women's interests, Chisholm's work on the ERA and abortion rights bridged the occasionally tense divide between feminism and the black freedom struggle. White feminists who had prioritized the Equal Rights Amendment over economic and racial justice in the years since 1920 had not done black women any favors.⁴³

However, the balance of this connection had been altered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which forbade discrimination on the basis of sex as well as race. It joined efforts to uphold the law and the rhetoric of racial and gender equality. Indeed, Chisholm and other black feminists made a point of highlighting the fact that black males were not being harmed by the fight against sexism. As mentioned above, she made a further point about sexism in black politics by saying that she thought that black male leaders had treated her differently as a woman than they had treated her because she was African American.⁴⁴ She made the implication that one sort of discrimination did not outweigh another. She addressed a group of black women, saying, "In battling sexism as women. "She cofounded the National Congress of Black Women in 1984 and served as its first national chair until 1992. This nonpartisan PAC supported black women candidates in "key political races" around the nation.⁴⁵

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CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

4.1 A Critique of Chisholm's Theory on Gender Equality

A critique of Shirley Chisholm's theory of gender equality will be denoted from her contributions, such as the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), support for abortion legalization etc. To start with, the push for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendments marked the advent of the contemporary women's rights movement. Where Chisholm advocated for a law to guarantee federal protections to both men and women, and of course to change national attitudes towards the capacities and rights of both sexes¹.

According to Phyllis Schlafly, who is believed to be the most visible opponent of the ERA ratification, the ERA would eliminate laws designed to protect women². In her argument against the ERA, she hinted that it would subject women to the military draft and remove child support rights. She also stated that the ERA would create a constitutional guarantee for abortion and legalize gay marriage which would be greatly frowned at by conservationists. This earned her the support of conservative unions, traditionalists, Christians, anti-communists and conservative beliefs motivated by the post - war American experience and the tradition of turn-of-the -century anti-feminism and anti-radicalism³. Schlafly believed it would attack the right of housewives, give the federal government

excessive power, and hurt women⁴, as it would leave them vulnerable to the military draft.

Eleanor Roosevelt, a social feminist and supporter of legislative protections for women did not endorse the ERA either, as she believed that the amendment got rid of all the protective legislation for women in the workplace, making it impractical as it ignored political and social realities of sexism⁵.

Chisholm as the honorary co-president of the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws in 1969, fought for reproductive justice (especially abortion). In her address to the Task Force, she stressed the need for abortion as an aspect of family planning. She emphasizes how contraceptive devices fail, how women are raped, forget to take a pill, or cannot afford the most effective birth control devices, hence pushing for the legality of abortion, as it was a last resort birth control measure when preventive techniques have failed or have not been used. She believed that forcing an underage to give birth is more immoral than killing a fetus, as the child would grow up unwanted and unloved⁶. For her, legalization of abortion was a fight for a woman's right to her own body. She is an active supporter of "Black Feminism", and black feminists support the abortion rights, as they deem it crucial to their right to liberty⁷. In contrast, this did not fit into the traditional view of women about the family, with an ultimate goal of nurturing children, according to Phyllis Schlafly. She was supported by female

conservatives who deemed it as a denial or deprivation of the obligation of nurturance, making motherhood seem optional ⁸.

The Roman Catholic Church also opposed the legalization of abortion, for to them, abortion for whatever reason is murder, hence is not an option. This was the difference between the Church's stance and the women's. The latter was on the idea of abortion being against their culture. In other words, for them it was a cultural fight, but for the church, it was a religious and moral one.

Nevertheless, Schlafly's fight against Chisholm's ratification of the ERA and abortion legalization, criticized Chisholm's point of view on gender equality, as the Equal Rights Amendments and abortion legalization seemed to do more harm than good to women.

4.2 Worth of Chisholm's Theory

Shirley Anita Chisholm's contribution to changing the status quo and achieving gender equality cannot be overlooked. She started the great cause in 1964 when she was elected a member of the New York Assembly until she left politics in 1983 to tend to her sick husband. According to her, she had two "handicaps": being black and being female. She said, "Of my two 'handicaps', being female has put more obstacles in my path than being black". She was a trailblazer and a pioneer for all women ⁹.

In 1971, she moved for the "Title IX", which is known as the Educational Right Amendment of 1972¹⁰. The most palpable impact has been the prohibition of formal inequality in the treatment of males and females by schools that partake of federal funding. Although, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibited sex discrimination, it was only with regards to employment, while the "Title IX" moved for gender equality in education and sports and also covered bias on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This Amendment gave females access to higher education for pregnant and parenting students employment, learning environment math and science protection against sexual harassment, standardized testing, and technology. Before this, females were not admitted into many colleges and universities, and were denied access to athletic scholarships, math and science ¹¹.

This simply shows that Chisholm's theory of gender equality moved this amendment, opening possibilities and opportunities for the "weaker sex". It paved the way for millions of girls and women to access equal opportunity with their male counterparts.

Also, Chisholm's theory of gender equality helped her found the National Organization of Women along with other feminists in 1966. This organization was founded to end sexual discrimination. Today, the organization remains as a cornerstone of the women's rights movement ¹². The organization addresses

abortion rights, pregnancy leave, pension rights etc. Its initial major concern was passage of the national Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution. The organization has now grown to be the largest grassroots feminist organization in the country. It is now focused on six issues: reproductive rights and justice, ending violence against women, economic justice, racial justice, constitutional equality amendment. The organization achieves these through laborious lobbying rallies, marches, and conferences ¹³.

Furthermore, Shirley Chisholm conducted a long political career in the service of black feminist ideas, shaking up New York and national politics by becoming the first African American congresswoman and later, the first Black major party presidential candidate ¹⁴. She inspired Black and women voters, pushed feminists of all backgrounds to examine intersectionality and privilege whereas Shirley Chisholm's theory has moved for gender equality during her time and even after. It has motivated feminists all over the world, who in turn, have fought for feminism.

4.3 Summary and Recommendations

In the course of this study and research, a dive has been taken into Shirley Anita's lifework on her theory of gender equality. As a black female politician in her first year, she was expected to be silent and not seen, but she did not let the shallow

and narrow expectations and opinions of the society stop her, nor did she allow her "handicaps" to stop her.

Her lifework is distinguishable from that of Eleanor Roosevelt, a social feminist who not only fought for the rights of women but mostly for female privilege. This privilege drew a clear line between her ideas and Shirley's. Shirley's theory was to make women on par with each other. For her, no gender should neither be privileged nor inferior. This can be seen in her fight for the repartition of the Equal Rights Amendment, making it known that every citizen has a right and obligation to serve his/her country without deprivation and obstructions. To show her support for this cause, she had a hand in the establishment of the National Women's Political Caucus, and National Organization of Women, an organization which has now become the cornerstone of the women's rights movement, giving feminism more support.

Moreover, her uninterrupted support and involvement in Black Feminism has given not just women, but black women their deserved rights in the United States of America. This has thus pushed other Black Women to continue the good fight as Shirley Anita Chisholm had in her time. On the other hand, it can be seen that some of Chisholm's opinions opposed that of her fellow women. For example, legalization of abortion and reproductive rights/ justice. These women saw it as a denial of motherhood. Not just that, but for some ethicists, conservationists,

traditionalists and devout Christians opposed it as they saw it as a vice, something against their moral standing, a crime against humanity, something that shouldn't even be acceptable, nor put in the constitution of the land - MURDER. These oppositions stopped the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendments during the time of Chisholm.

Furthermore, it is recommended that further research and studies are necessary to analyze the effects and influence that Chisholm's theory had in the United States Constitution during her time and after. Also, it is advised that additional research and studies are made on how she has greatly influenced the feminist movement of the 21st century.

4.4 Conclusion

Chisholm's theory of gender equality was targeted against sexism, sexist exploitation, oppression and to achieve full gender equality in law and in society. Although, it can be said that gender inequality is still alive socially, we can assume that it has been achieved in law, as all humans, irrespective of their gender, are treated equally in the constitution. This had further motivated other women to push for it and not only that, but also to push for the legalization of abortion in the United States. Also, Chisholm's accomplishments in the world of Black Feminism have inspired black women to fight against racism and sexual discrimination through rallies and lobbying, as they are aware that the law does not differentiate

sexes, but still does not have a say on how people feel about, view and choose people.

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