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70 YEARS OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN MÉXICO

Dean's Office Presidency

Today, Mexican women can exercise their right to vote freely and responsibly in an accessible and voluntary manner during elections in our region; however, 70 years ago, this was impossible because women lacked the most basic civil right: the right to vote and be elected in an election.

Women's suffrage in Mexico, as in many countries, is a full and voluntary exercise in a normalized democratic condition, thanks to the struggle that hundreds and thousands of women waged in our country and around the world. It is the result and

conclusion of actions aimed at achieving women's political rights, to vote and be elected to decide the fate of the nation and to be elected to hold positions of popular election.

In Mexico, the feminist movement was primarily suffragist. "This movement for the acquisition of political rights was not limited to suffrage but questioned a society that excluded half of its population from the exercise of citizenship and, therefore, from integration into public life, while demanding changes in the prevailing gender order" (Lau, A. 2013).



In 1953, President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines promulgated constitutional reforms for Mexican women to enjoy full citizenship; in a political climate of fervor that cannot be understood without considering the Mexican feminist and suffragist movements.

Since the Mexican Revolution, women raised their voices to be taken into account in the social and political agenda of the moment, through various publications, meetings, and rallies; however, it was not until 1916 when the first feminist Congress took place, where a proposal was drafted to be sent to the Constituent Congress, which was drafting the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States. Unfortunately, the deputies did not even debate the matter.

In this struggle to achieve women's political rights, various Mexican women stand out, such as Hermila Galindo, author of the conference "Women in the Future," editor of the magazine "La Mujer Moderna," and an active suffragist as a member of the team of the first chief of the Constitutional Army, Venustiano Carranza. Other outstanding women in the fight were Elvia Carrillo Puerto, Cuca García, Raquel Dzib, María Ríos Cárdenas, Emélica Carrillo, Margarita Robles de Mendoza, and Amalia González Caballero, among many others.

From then on, hundreds of women joined the suffragist movement; their activities focused on disseminating women's rights, holding assemblies, and sending petitions to federal and state congresses.

With all the work carried out, the Single Front for Women's Rights emerged in 1935, which brought together feminists from various currents, including Catholics, Communists, revolutionaries, or Cardenists, whose ideological differences were overcome by a common goal: to demand the granting of women's suffrage. With this act, they managed to get Lázaro Cárdenas to send an initiative to Congress to implement women's suffrage; this was approved in 1940 by both chambers, however, President Cárdenas, fearing that women would vote for the opposition, did not publish the law in the Official Gazette of the Federation (DOF), so it did not take effect.

In the next six-year term, Manuel Ávila Camacho praised the domestic and maternal work of Mexican women; shortly thereafter, the reform of female suffrage in municipalities was published, so that women could "learn to exercise their vote progressively," starting from the local level (INEHRM, 2023).

Thanks to a women's campaign, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines promised women's suffrage during his presidential candidacy, which was supported by the presence of thousands of women at rallies and political events; consequently, he issued the reform initiative the day after taking office, and it was published on October 17, 1953, although it was not until 1955 that women voted for the first time at the federal level.

The feminist struggle does not end with the granting of the vote; it was an act of justice, but the demands continue and are diverse; currently, rights to a life free of violence, comprehensive sexual health that considers the freedom to decide motherhood, equity, equality, and justice are being advocated.