

## **CHAPTER III**

### **FEMINISM IN SWEDEN**

#### **A. The Construction of Feminist Norms in Society and Sweden Government.**

Sweden government has announced that feminism perspective will be applied in all aspect of Sweden policy both national and international. Practically, Sweden government commit to building a society in which girls and boys, women and men can fully enjoy their life to their full potential. Gender Equality is a matter of human rights, justice and democracy and gender equality in Sweden it has not happened by itself but it is largely the result of political struggle decisions together with hard work and supported by civil society.

##### **1. Women Movement and its Organizations.**

In the last years of nineteenth century, the lack of legal, political, and social rights towards women gave rise to a women's emancipation movement in Sweden. The general purpose of these movements was to get their rights and to develop fully their own personality, and the other purpose were equal voting rights for women and men, equal wages, and the same rights to obtain an education.

Within the working class, the competition for jobs between men and women was less marked. Employers were not against hiring women because they were paid lower wages than men. The proportion of women in the industry and some service occupations grew without special efforts being expended by the women's movement. Working class women often identified themselves with male workers. Their own organizations joined the male labor unions and the political parties. Not the middle-class women's status organizations. This happened even though the women's movement claimed to be working in the interest of all women, regardless of class or status(Maalina, 1981).

When the Social Democratic Party became the driving force behind social reform and the welfare state in Sweden from 1932, Swedish women participated in exercising their voice and their desire to be included in the process of developing Sweden. Such as the convening of the first congress of the female league on February 1920 by women's league of the Social Democratic Party, known as the Social Democratic Women's Federation (SSKF), held its first congress, with representatives from 120 women's clubs from around Sweden. Eight years after that congress, Social Democratic Women's Federation (SSKF) announced "we women do not want to be invited into the People's Home only after it has been completed; we will be happier if we take part in laying the foundations" (Earles, 2008).

The first women's status organizations were established in Sweden was Married Women's Property Rights Association (Föreningen för gift kvinnas äganderätt) active between 1873 and 1896. Its purpose was to work for the introduction of reformed laws in favor of women's equality with men. The association was founded with the goal to reform the marriage laws regarding the guardianship of men over their wife and to make it possible for married women to handle their own economy. Women's Property Rights Association (Föreningen för gift kvinnas äganderätt) was founded by Anna Hierta-Retzius and Ellen Anckarsvärd in 1873 but this association formally headed by Male parliamentarian Gustaf Fridolf Amlquis. Rights for a professional married woman to control the money she earned after marriage a legally reform introduced in 1874 and In 1884 married women allowed to control over their inheritance and property not only that a reform declared unmarried women of legal majority at the same age as men.

Women's Property Rights Association (Föreningen för gift kvinnas äganderätt) also worked for many other issues regarding reform in women's rights except for their main issue. During the 1880s they participated in a campaign to increasing participation of women voters in the elections but in 1896, the association was absorbed by the Fredrika Bremer Association (Fredrika Bremer Förbundet) and dissolved. This new organizations was founded in 1884 by a group largely consisting of the

board of the women's magazine *Home Review*, and *Fredrika Bremer Förbundet* word used to honor of the Swedish novelist Fredrika Bremer. She was a Swedish writer and feminist reformer and during the 1840s and 1850s, *Her Sketches of Everyday Life* was very popular in Britain and the United States. She is regarded as the Swedish Jane Austen, bringing the realist novel to prominence in Swedish literature.

Fredrika Bremer Association (*Fredrika Bremer Förbundet*) is a member of the International Alliance of Women, which has general consultative status with the United Nations. The purpose of the organization was to support women's rights, to inform women of their rights and to encourage them to use them. They worked to affect public opinion in order to support gender equality by information and activities, and by handing out money from various funds and scholarships. In the field of political representation, the aim of the association is for women, to the same degree as men, to assume responsibility in decision-making and as members of advisory bodies. The activities of Fredrika Bremer Association (*Fredrika Bremer Förbundet*) have been mostly directed toward improving the position of middle-class women it has been classified as a bourgeois association.

There are also feminist groups in Sweden. *Grupp 8* (Group 8) started in 1968. It consists of local groups of only 10-15 women in each. It has a large annual general meeting, a rotating representation system, an

action plan, and a journal, Kvinnobulletinen. The members are socialists and feminists. In 1973, a faction separated from the main organization and founded Arbetetskvinnor (Working Women), a proletarian women's movement grounded in scientific socialism. This faction accuses Grupp 8 of stressing the struggle between the sexes instead of the class struggle(Maalina, 1981).

Women movement is the first steps of the development feminist norms in Sweden. Women movement was have the important role in influencing Sweden society and the government to joint combating gender inequality in order to make all of women and men have the same rights and the same opportunity.

## **2. Gender Equality Policy in Sweden.**

Sweden believes that women and men should have been equal to shape society and their own life. Gender equality is not only about human rights, justice and democracy but it is also an essential solution to face the challenges as well as a prerequisite for sustainable development. Gender equality will be achieved through a policy agenda that combats inequality and inhibitive. There is four sub-goals Sweden government to achieving gender equality in Sweden (Sweden g. , 2016).

a. Equal Division of Power and Influence.

The rights and the opportunities of women and men should be equal, to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making.

b. Economic Equality.

The condition where there is an equal condition and opportunities between women and men regarding education and paid work which gives economic independence throughout life.

c. Equal Distribution of Unpaid Housework and Provision of Care.

It is the equal opportunity to give and receive care and has the same responsibility for housework.

d. Men's Violence against Women Must Stop.

The right and opportunity for physical integrity must be equal for Women and men, girls, and boys.

In the 1970s, there were three important reformations to promoting gender equality by Sweden government. The reformations of gender equality was in the labor market and social policy, the purpose of this reform was to encourage gender equality, and to increase women's prospects to have the same opportunities as men to enter the labor market and to remain and to develop in the labor market. The gender equality reformation in Sweden has contributions towards the development of a modern welfare state.

The first reformation was separate income taxation for wife and husband in 1971. The Separation income taxation was beneficial for wife

and husband because it created an incentive for women to work and their income was no longer seen as part of the husband's income. The second reformation was government decision to developing public child care in 1974. Women often entrusted their children to their mothers, nannies, friends and relatives because they are faced with impossible daily schedules and frequently had to work unsocial hours when the children's fathers were at home. Public childcare facilities were developed to a prerequisite to Sweden's large proportion of women in gainful employment.

The third reformation was gender-neutral paid parental leave in 1974. Sweden is the first country in the world introducing a gender-neutral paid parental leave benefit. Although the parental leave reform has been revised several times, the parental leave system has contributed to the high proportion of women in the Swedish labor market. In the early reforms parental leave system in 1995s, each parent was entitled to a nontransferable month of paid parental leave and it is expanding in 2002 became two months. Nowadays, Sweden government gives 480 days of paid parental leave for women and men per child.

In the promoting gender equality, Sweden government also creates gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budget policy. According to the Swedish Government Offices, gender mainstreaming defined as the incorporation of a gender equality perspective in all policy areas and the

actors involve into the policy-making process; Gender-responsive budget defines as an application of the principle of gender mainstreaming in the budget process. Gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budget is the strategic tools for feminist government to realize their policy.

The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to implement gender equality objectives and to combine it with special measures, and also to use it to promote development in specific policy areas, for example, action plans, extra funding, etc. Then, the gender-responsive budget has a purpose of making sure that a gender equality perspective can be realized in the budget process. Every minister in the Sweden government has responsibility for gender mainstreaming in his or her areas. Sweden government has assigned 41 government agencies to work actively with gender mainstreaming from 2015 to 2018 with allocation budget SEK 26 million, this program is called the Gender Mainstreaming in Government Agencies (GMGA) program (Sweden g. , 2016).

The purpose of this program is to integrate gender equality in all aspects of each agency's work. The program comprises 59 government agencies and one organization including agencies in the cultural, judiciary and healthcare sectors and over 30 universities and university colleges. In the University level, there were more women attending & graduating from higher education in Sweden. However only 26 per cent of professors were



women, Sweden government has a goal in 2030 that half of all newly appointed professors shall be women.

In the labor market, gender equality is very important for jobs and economic growth. The national goals of Sweden government are to increasing the employment rate above 80 percent by 2020; to increasing employment of women and to reduce differences in employment rate between women also to changing full-time work become a norm, and part-time a possibility. In Sweden, women in gainful employment proportion are larger than other European countries. However, part-time jobs are still very common for women and almost 30 percent of women have been working part-time. Especially when the children are born, women reduce their time in employment but men's times have increased in gainful employment. In 2015, the employment rate in Sweden for women was 78 percent, men was 83 percent (age 20–64).

In the health life, women's health tends to be less prioritized, it can be seen from the lack of awareness of the right to health for women. Therefore, the Swedish government gives the initiative to provide health, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and abortion. Such as free mammography screening and contraception, legislation on abortion based on a right to planned parenthood and minimizing health risks, sexual and reproductive health and rights. The purpose of Sweden government to give free mammography screening and contraception is for

helping women to be healthy and to protect young women's right to their own sexuality without unwanted pregnancies. Mammography screening is specialized medical imaging that uses a low-dose x-ray system to see inside the breasts. A mammography exam, called a mammogram, aids in the early detection and diagnosis of breast diseases in women (Radiological Society of North America, Inc. (RSNA), 2017 ). Free mammography screening has been carried out since 1 July 2016. Sweden government has also proposed free contraception for people under the age of 21.

Sweden government has been provided legislation on abortion for women. These regulations allow women to have abortions without having to give any reason, but it can be done if before the eighteenth week of pregnancy. After the eighteenth week of pregnancy, an abortion may be performed only if the National Board of Health and Welfare grants the woman permission to undergo the procedure. The purpose of Sweden government allowing women to have abortions is to minimize health risks for women who become pregnant involuntarily.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights is about women's power over their lives and the right to decide freely over their own bodies. Women and girls must have the right to decide and exercise control over their own body, sexuality, reproductive health and childbearing. Thus,

gender equality can be realized because it gives women choice over their lives and bodies. So, women have an equal footing with men in society.

In the countering gender inequalities, men's violence against women is part of a form of gender inequalities. Sweden government makes prevention and combats violence and sexual abuse against women as the main priority. There are some efforts that have been made by Sweden government to stop violence against women, such as giving counseling centers for perpetrators and creating rehabilitation programs for male offenders, provided by the Prison and Probation Service.

Sweden government also cooperates with schools to give an education about violence prevention and combat for women. In 2008, Sweden government presented gender equality program for Swedish schools, this program includes the establishment of a special gender equality committee and further training courses for teachers. The role of a special gender equality committee is to enhance knowledge and awareness of gender equality in schools. Not only that, Sweden government also has allocated more than EUR 10 million per year to support women's shelters including shelters for women with substance abuse, women with disabilities and women in prostitution or human trafficking for sexual purposes.

The commitment of Sweden government in preventing and combating violence against women is undoubted, Another effort that has

been done by Sweden government such as reviewing the Penal Code's provisions on rape and commissioned the inquiry to consider introducing a consent-based regulation and a negligence offence regarding rape.

Prostitution and human trafficking are serious crimes for Sweden government; almost 80 percent of trafficking victims are women and girls. Sweden government gives more priority towards prostitution and trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes because it is one of the government's agenda to combat men's violence against women. In 2008, Sweden government allocated their budget to combat prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes in total of SEK 213 million up to the end of 2010.

Sweden was the first country in the world that introduced a legislation of criminalizing the purchase, and not the selling of sexual services. Since the implementation of the legislation, purchase and attempt to purchase sexual services have constituted a criminal offense.

*A person, who obtains a casual sexual relation in return for payment, shall [if the act does not constitute another sexual crime] be sentenced for a purchase of sexual service to a fine or imprisonment for at most one year. (Penal Code Chapter 6, Section 11) (Sweden, 2016)*

Although the legislations criminalizing the purchase, and not the selling, of sexual services, have been introduced, most of the cases in sexual services, the prostitution service providers is a weaker party

because they get punishments, so it is frequently used by buyers to get sexual services. In combating prostitution and trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes, Sweden government gives the social services in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö operate so-called FAST (people with experience of prostitution) and KAST (purchasers of sexual services) groups that help with outreach activities, motivational interviews, different forms of therapy and psychosocial support. Sweden government also support the development of guidance materials for professionals that have contact with people experiencing prostitution because of their ability to see signals of for example young people at risk of falling into prostitution.

Promoting gender equality policy was never success if there is no support from women organizations. Swedish government considers that the role of women's organizations in achieving the goal of gender equality is important, gender equality without the role and support by women's organization in Sweden will be difficult to achieve. Therefore, Sweden government gives grants for women organizations to support promoting women participation in the democratic process and in public life. National Board for Youth Affairs each year distributes SEK 28 million in grants to promote women's organizations and distributes SEK 6.9 million per year in grants to projects designed to promote gender equality.

Sweden government also gives a grant for gender equality among national minorities; a total of SEK 6.5 million has been allocated during

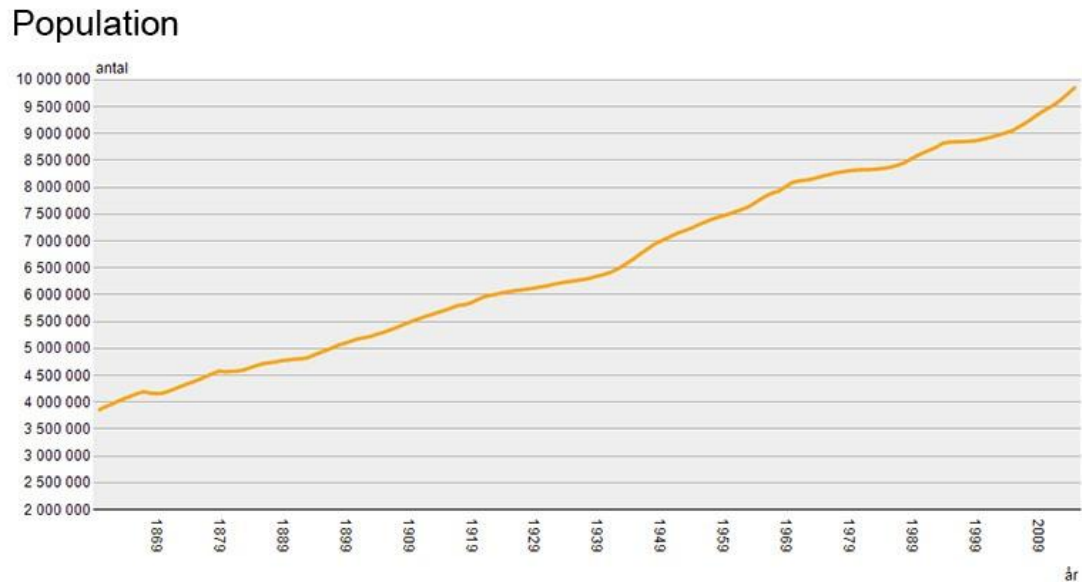
2008 up to 2010. National Board for Youth Affairs distributes grants to organizations to encourage their efforts to promote gender equality among national minorities. In the same time, Sweden government gives grants SEK 15 million each year to the parliamentary parties' women's organization. The aim is to encourage women's organizations and strengthen their role in society.

### **3. Sweden as Humanitarian Superpower.**

Sweden is Humanitarian Superpower. Humanitarian superpower means an extremely powerful nation that having concern for or helping to improve the welfare and happiness of peoples, especially one capable of influencing international events and the acts and policies of less powerful nations. Sweden has received more refugees than others European's country. In the 1990s around 100,000 refugees arrived in Sweden, they are majority women, children and men fleeing the carnage of the Balkans, most of them from Bosnia, and most of them were Muslims. Since that time, Sweden has made its mark on the world not by fighting wars but by offering shelter to wars' victims. Over the past 15 years, some 650,000 asylum-seekers made their way to Sweden. Of the 163,000 who arrived last year, 32,000 were granted asylum. In 2015, European migrant crisis noted that more than 160,000 people arrived in Sweden requesting asylum.

Figures 3.1

Swedish population graph



Source: Statistiska Centralbyrån (SCB)

Sources: Today: Sweden's Population has Reached the Ten Million Mark

(Kjolberg, 2017)

In 2010, Sweden was predicted to reach ten million in 2021, according to Statistics Sweden. The population has however increased faster than expected. This means that Sweden today officially is the first Nordic country with a population in the tens of millions.

#### 4. The Successful of Sweden Decreasing Gender Gap.

Sweden government was known as the first feminist government in the world. Sweden government believes with implementing feminist norms in all aspect, it will be creating fairness between men and women.

Domination gender or unequal rights is related with government role as the policy makers. Since 2006, International organization World Economic Forum noted that Sweden ranked in the global gender gap never lower than fourth, this rank based on the gap between women and men according to indicators within health, education, economy and politics.

Sweden has changes after the last years of nineteenth century, the lack of legal, political, and social rights for women gave rise to a women's emancipation movement in Sweden. Sweden government is very serious in supporting women and girls to enjoying their fundamental rights. In the 1975, Sweden government was allowing abortion and it is states on abortion act. Women have legal rights to abortion if an abortion during the first 18 weeks of pregnancy, it means women can decide for herself whether to have an abortion up to and including the eighteenth week of pregnancy without having to give a reasons. After eighteen weeks up to twenty two weeks, if they want to do an abortion they should give special reasons for doing it. Since 1998, the act on violence against women was come into force in Sweden. The law states that the violence abuse to which a women is subjected, for instance by a man in a close relationship, is assessed cumulatively. Each blow and/or instance of sexual and psychological degradation against the women is taken into account, and the maximum sentence for a gross violation of women's integrity is six years in imprisonment (Sweden g. , 2016).



Sweden governments also create the Equality Ombudsman and Minister Gender Equality as the seriousness on gender equality. The Equality Ombudsman is government agency and their responsibility was to fights discrimination and protects equal rights and opportunities for everyone; and the Equality Ombudsman also have responsible to ensuring that the law regarding parental leave is followed and that parents who go on leave are not adversely affected at works. Then for Minister Gender Equality their responsible also the same with equality ombudsman regarding gender equality issues.

In the political participation, women participation was increase after Sweden government implementing feminist norms in their domestic policy. In the last general election 2014, the proportion of women in the parliament and the municipal council has increase because of women's movement and the government support. The proportions of women elected to public office are roughly in proportion to those nominated for election: 44% for the last general election to the Riksdag, 42% to municipal councils and 45% to county councils (Potter, 2014).

This is the percentages of women in the Riksdag by Eight political parties in the 2010-2014 mandates.

Table 3.2 Women proportions in the Riksdag by parties.

Party	Women	Man	% Women
Left party	11	8	58%
Green Party	14	11	56%
Social Democrats	54	58	48%
Moderate Party	51	56	48%
Liberal Party	10	14	42%
Christian Democrats	7	12	37%
Centre Party	7	16	30%
Sweden Democrats	3	17	15%
Total	157	192	45%

Sources: The Swedish General Election 2014 and the Representation of Women (Potter, 2014).

Based on the above table the higher percentages of women in the Riksdag is Left party but in terms of the number of women representatives in the Riksdag Social Democrats party higher than Left party and others. While there are no legal quotas, three parties have some kind of arrangement for a minimum number of women on party lists for Riksdag elections. The provision of Social Democratic Party is Zipper system: sexes alternate on party list and for Left Party is 50% quota for women on party lists; the provision of Green Party is 50% gender quota on party lists, plus or minus one person.

In addition to these party rules, other parties have various policies or recommendations for equal representation, although not enforceable in the same way. Taken alone, the three parties with rules regarding candidate quotas do not have a majority of seats in parliament, so the measure cannot be considered the single causal factor for high levels of women's representation (Potter, 2014). Although Men still disproportionately predominate in leadership position with seven male party leaders and two female party leaders in the parties represented in the Riksdag. There is a feminist party, Feminist Initiative which gained representation in the elections to the European Parliament in 2014.

In the government ministries proportion, half of number government ministries in Sweden are women such as Minister for culture and democracy, Minister for higher education and research, Minister for upper secondary school and adult education and training, Minister for employment and integration, Minister for infrastructure, Minister for the environment, Minister for finance, Minister for foreign affairs, Minister for EU affairs and trade, Minister for international development cooperation and climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for social security, Minister for children, the elderly and gender equality.

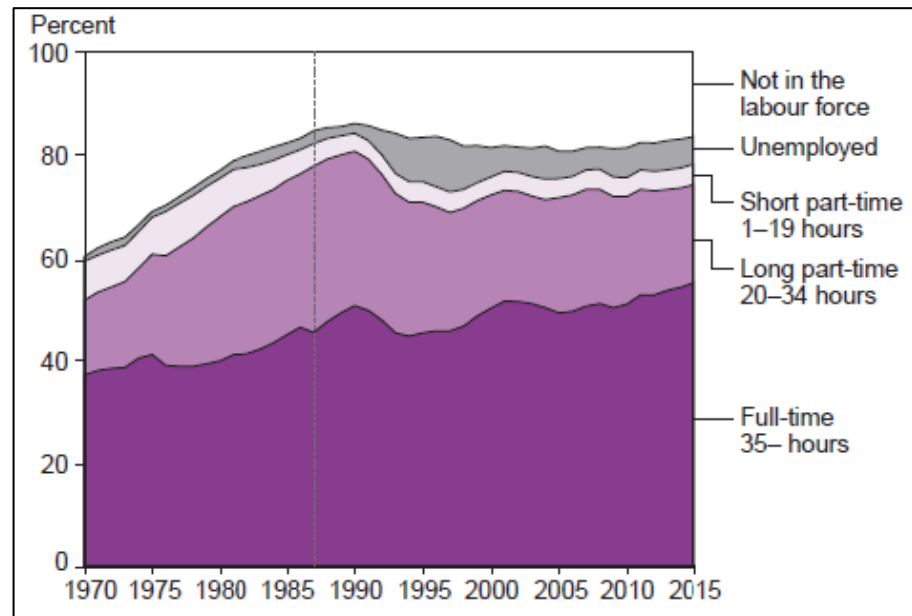
In the labor market sector, women's employment in fulltime is rising. Sweden has greatly increased the economic equality between women and men over time. Since 1980s, Sweden government not allowed gender discrimination in the workplace, Sweden government through the Swedish discrimination act demand to the employers to not only active in promoting equality but also actively in measures against harassment. In the Swedish discrimination act Sweden government states employers who have been or will be parental leave should get the same treatment from their employers.

In the early reforms parental leave system, each parent was entitled to a nontransferable month of paid parental leave and it is expanding in 2002 became two months. Nowadays, Sweden government gives 480 days of paid parental leave for women and men per child. The parental leave system has contributed to the high proportion of women in the Swedish labor market.

The figures 3.3 show that the rate of gainful employment rose among women between 1970 and 1990. The percentage women with long part-time employment increased in particular during the 1970s and 1980s. At the same time, the percentage of those working full-time increased during the 1980s. During the 1990s, unemployment rose among women. The percentages of women not in the labor also increased slightly. At The beginning of the 2000s, the percentages of unemployed women dropped even though the rate remained higher than during the 1970s and 1980s. The percentage working full-time has increased since mid-2000s. In 2015, the relative figure for women aged 20-64 in the labor force was 83.7 percent and the relative unemployment rate was 6.4 percent (Sweden, 2016).

Figures 3.3

Women aged 20–64 by labor force status and hours normally worked, 1970–2015.



Sources: Women and men in Sweden 2016 facts and figures(Sweden, 2016)

Education is having important roles to supporting and shaping characters of the next generation, the government as the higher authority have bigger role to create and control system education in their own territory. Since 1842, Sweden government was making a school reformation to allowing girls to be educated. Sweden government strongly emphasized gender equality in education. Sweden government through

education act states that gender equality should reach and guide all levels of the Swedish educational system.

Today, Women and men in the Sweden have the same position or opportunity to access education from elementary until higher education, and now generally girls in Swedish school have better grades than boys. In the national test the girls also performs better than a few decade ago and the girl's proportion in completing upper secondary education is higher. In the university a few decade ago was dominated by men but today nearly two-thirds of all university degree in Sweden are awarded to women; and now women and men have an equal number in taking part postgraduate and doctoral studies.