

Freedom for African Americans

Social Limitations:

On January 31, 1865, Congress passed the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery in the United States of America. This Amendment was ratified in the same year on December 5. Yet, African Americans faced brutal social limitations for many decades to come. The social freedom of black people was restricted in numerous ways. The time period from 1861-1900 is known as the Reconstruction era in American history. Though we know it as the time of important transformation in American society, it was also the time of the appearance of oppressive policies and practices that limited African Americans' social rights and opportunities. The emergence of Black codes and Jim Crow laws indicated the implementation of social limitations on Black people as these policies imposed racial segregation and maintained white people's supremacy. These codes and laws restricted these people's access to public places, educational institutions, employment, and voting rights. There were segregated facilities, and discriminatory practices against black people became the norm. There were violent acts of racism, such as lynchings, committed during this period. The Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist groups terrorized black communities. They instilled fear and violence, enforcing the limitations of the social freedom of African Americans.

Political Limitations:

From 1865 to 1900, the political atmosphere of African Americans was in shatters, or it will not be incorrect to say that the political atmosphere of black people didn't exist at all. As stated above, although slavery was abolished in 1865, the political freedom of these people was severely limited. The African Americans faced such political obstacles that their participation in the political sphere of society was almost completely blocked. They were denied access to basic voting and political rights. Grandfather clauses were also implemented, exempting white voters from these requirements while targeting black voters. Fear, violence, and intimidation were used to suppress black people's political participation. The fear of retribution often discouraged black individuals from registering to vote or engaging in political activism. Such policies and laws aim to maintain white supremacy and marginalize African Americans politically. Further political limitations came in the form of a Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). The Supreme Court ordered the establishment of a separate but equal doctrine for African Americans. By ordering this decision, the government legalized racial segregation by forming segregated public facilities and reinforced the notion of African American inferiority. All in all, it resulted in the extension of systemic racism and political disenfranchisement.

Economic Limitations:

The end of slavery did not immediately translate into economic opportunities for African Americans. Many formerly enslaved people became trapped in the exploitative sharecropping system. The economic condition of the African Americans was the same as any other enslaved person. The end of slavery didn't mean there was any improvement in the economic condition of black people. There were numerous obstacles and discriminatory practices that hindered their economic advancement. There were tortured to unending cycles of poverty and inequality. Due to absurd policies, black people were forced to work on land owned by white landowners and

give a significant portion of their crops as rent. This inequality left African Americans heavily indebted and unable to accumulate wealth or improve their economic conditions. There was discrimination in jobs and employment during this period. First of all, there weren't any jobs for black people in the government sector. And if one somehow managed to secure a job, there was no chance for any advancement. Moreover, despite performing the same tasks, they were paid less than their white counterparts. Overall, the economic freedom of African Americans was severely constrained during this period, with limited access to fair employment, educational opportunities, and economic mobility.