

Gender roles: then and now essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Feminism](#)



Gender roles have always been a sensitive subject. Women came a long way since the days Suffrage and the Women's Liberation Movement. Society is now seeing women as strong, independent, and fierce individuals who can do all that men do. Sometimes they do it even better. Now that roles have switched since the early days, problems such as discrimination, sexism, and chivalry still exist. By doing extensive research, Society is the reason this problem exists today. Society, mainly male counterparts, has not fully accepted this newly found independence of the new age woman. This paper explores not only the negative side of gender role reversal, but it also shines a light on the many accomplishments and accolades that women hold now. The goal of this project was not only to expose the unacceptable behaviors displayed by society, but also to enlighten the reader that women are much better off today than years ago. Gender Roles Then and Now Times are a-changing."

Bob Dylan quoted these simple yet powerful words. Are times changing? How are they changing? Are the new changes accepted? These are some of the questions that need a reader to use critical thinking to find the answers. The roles of a man and a woman have changed drastically. The roles of women have always been in homemaking, child-rearing, and all around "good" wife. With the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s, women are becoming more dominant and affluent in modern day society. Women are holding high political rankings, playing Major League sports, and are CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. Women nowadays account for 12.6 percent of the highest officer positions, a boost from 11.6 percent in 2007 (Welch, 2013). Even though men have become more domesticated over the years

than they used to be, there have been situations in the media and society that has confirmed that the gender roles change have not been accepted.

In the early history, the place of a woman was always in the home and cared for the children. This part was accepted and never questioned by a woman. This part was to be carried out and never compromised. Some stereotypes of women included being domesticated dependent, illogical, and private (Radek, 2001). With the Women's Rights Movement of the early 1900s and The Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s, women were perceived in a different light. Women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902), Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), Elisabeth Freeman (1876-1942), Emma Goldman (1869-1940), Rosalie Gardiner Jones ((1883-1978), and Carol Downer (1938) women had a voice challenge the status quo and demand their rights.

Both of these events brought out a side of women never seen nor heard. Women wanted to be more than a housewife, seamstresses, cooks, and nannies. They were ready to do the jobs and careers their male counterparts were doing. They wanted equal rights as men and were determined to do everything within their power to get those rights heard and granted. One would think with all the struggles, trials and travails that women endured being looked at as equals, women would think of with high morals and pedigrees. It is not the case in today's society.

Today's society sees women as mere commodities or objects of a sexual nature. While many feminists describe the sexual objectification as appalling and shameful, social commentators say that the modern day woman uses their sexuality as a " form of expression of empowerment over men." (Barry,

1994). There are many illustrations of women being treated as sex objects. Some areas include music videos, song lyrics, and social networking. In an article called, “ Sexual Objectification in Music Video: A Content Analysis Comparing Gender and Genre,” the two authors, who happen to be associate professors at various universities, did a study on the subject at hand. In the study, they concluded that, in all the musical genres available, hip- hop had not only the most, but the worse sexual objectification of women.

The problem is prevalent in almost all the major music channels, which include MTV, MTV2, BET, and YouTube. (Aubrey & Frisby, 2011). Sexual objectification is very present also in music lyrics. Artists nowadays are not afraid to refer to women in a derogatory manner, call them disparaging names, and label them as pejorative human beings. The social networking websites and blogs have not made objectification any less prevalent. With websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and many more, women being sexual entities are seen often. Others do not only see the objectification, but it is felt direct by the victims. News has surfaced about women killing themselves or doing harm to themselves as a result of constant verbal and written abuse pertaining to sexuality.

Gender sexuality plays a major role when it comes to workplace discrimination. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 states that it is illegal to pay men and women different wages if they are doing equal workload or hold equal job titles. Even though this is clearly written out, some employers fail to adhere to this law. Fortune 500 companies have been in murky water due to gender discrimination in the workplace. In 2011, Walmart was sued by a

group of women over the issue of gender discrimination. The ruling luckily was not in their favor. The ruling stated “ women did not share enough in common to qualify as a class in what would have been the largest class action discrimination suit in history.”(Huffington Post. January 24, 2012).

Ameripath, a subsidiary of Quest Diagnostics, was another company that face lawsuit. Unlike Walmart, Ameripath neither admitted guilt nor knowledge that this problem was going on. The company paid \$152 million dollars to over 5, 000 current and ex-employees of the company (Star Ledger. January 12, 2012). Gender discrimination extends further than just employee pay scale. Women have been discriminated on due to pregnancy. A woman may be turned down for employment hat she was qualified for only because she is pregnant and the company knows that they will have to go out of their way to accommodate a pregnant woman. These “ accommodations” may include extra insurance for her maternity leave and extra care for a woman.

Despite all the negative attention that women gender role changes have been exposed to, there are instance that positively show the progression of women roles from the old days to now. The change is especially referring to women in media. In the olden day movies, women played roles that they lived in the real world. These roles include housewife, mother, teacher, and nanny. Women in Hollywood such as Sigourney Weaver (Aliens 1986) and Lynda Carter (Wonder Woman 1979) have paved the way for broader fictional role for women to play. In modern day movies, women are portraying roles meant for their male counterparts. There are roles such as

political figures, action heroines, and construction workers. Just as women have played roles meant for men; men too are playing the role of the women. In the movie " Mr. Mom" 1983, Michael Keaton played the part of a man who is a stay at home father while his wife, Teri Garr is the bread winner.

Just as men are playing part's women are used to occupy, women are taking over industries their male counterparts have been occupying. In this modern day, society women are dominating politics. Michelle Obama, Queen Elizabeth, Hilary Clinton, and Nancy Pelosi are just some of the powerful women that hold rankings in the highest forms of government. There are more women in sports now than ever. There are women like Lisa Leslie, Serena William, Shirley Chisolm, who faced great adversaries to get to the positions that they are in now. There are more women in Fortune 50 companies as well those that run their own businesses.

In conclusion, Women are more dominant than ever. Even though in ancient history women were looked at as the homemaker, dressmaker, and domesticated individuals, Women have come out on top of men's roles and positions. Modern day society addresses women as their political leaders, presidents of top name companies, scholars, and sports figures. All these labels were unacceptable in the early 1900s. With all the accomplishments that women have done over the years, it is very commendable for society to accept the gender role change. " Times are a- changing," quoted by Bob Dylan, is a very accurate and appropriate statement. Times are changing fast and if one is not careful or up to speed, they will get left behind. Those

in Society will have to get used to the new lifestyle of the modern ay woman. She is not only here to stay, but she is here to dominate!

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