

# American women



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American Women Part How have the concepts of motherhood and the family unit changed since the 1980's? The concepts of motherhood and the family unit have changed significantly since the 1980's. Historically, women were seen as the one who stayed at home and looked after their families. The family depended on each other playing their various roles on the farm. The children also played an integral role in the survival of the family. The men ran the farm or the shop while the women cleaned the floors and washed the clothes. Women also baked bread on the open hearth, made candies, butter, cheese, cloth, and cured meat. When the men went to war the women would manage the farm or the shop. It was accepted then that women did not need to be educated and so emphasis was only placed on educating males. The women were represented by their husbands or their fathers in public affairs. Once they got married they lost the right to property. Today, with the industrial revolution and other changes that have taken place since the 19780's the family unit is less cohesive and stable as their survival is no longer dependent on the family farm. Women are now free to vote, to attend college and to work outside the home. They no longer live on farms but in suburban communities. Women are now seen as equal to men and being able to take up positions in business and politics where they help to make decisions. . Part 2 How have women's roles changed from the 1950's to the 21st century? What impact has the media had on these changes? The roles of women have changed from being the homemaker – cooking and cleaning to taking up careers outside of the home in politics, medicine and law. Women are now focused on education and jobs. Their lifestyles have changed along with the family structure. According to Francis (2007) in 2003 there were 1. 35 females to every male who graduated from a four year

college. This is in stark contrast to 1960 when there were 1.6 males for every female (Francis 2007). Statistics from the Bureau of Labor indicates that in 1950 the number of men in the labor force was approximately 43.8 million compared to approximately 18.4 million women representing 69% men and 31% women (Toossi 2002). In 2000 the figures have changed to 75.25 million men and 65.6 million women representing 53.4% men and 46.6% women (Toossi 2002). The media has had a huge impact on the change in role and lifestyle of women. It has shown the women as having a say in the role that they play in their families. Women are now filing for divorce more often because they see this on TV everyday. The movie “The Man in Gray Flannel Suit” has shown that men have a role in the home as well when Tom turns down a high pressure position so that he could work normal hours and spend more time with his family. Women are no longer seen as “Desperate Housewives” or “stay at home moms” but as persons who can continue to make a substantial contribution to the society outside the home.

References David Francis. (2007) Why Do Women Outnumber Men in College? Retrieved from: <http://www.nber.org/digest/jan07/w12139.html>

Toossi, M. (2002). The Century of Change: The U. S. labor force, 1950 to 2050. Retrieved from: <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2002/05/art2full.pdf>