

Gender discrimination  
in the canadian and  
usa workforce  
sociology essay



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In today's world, society has come a long way since the general stereotyping of men bringing home the bacon and the women staying home to cook it.

Discrimination is often based on an assumption of white, male, able-bodied or heterosexual superiority. Today, women are out in the workplace working alongside the opposite sex. Women are still not promoted as widely as men in the workplace. In today's work field, women experience fewer opportunities or encouragement for higher promotions or authoritative positions. Moreover, for those women who are illiterate, they have fewer chances to get job in labour work. However, every company wants fast working people so every company hires younger people. So that's why the old people and women don't get job easily. Women are often looked for job advancement that they are more qualified to fill than their men competitors because employers afraid that they will not be as committed to the company as they are to their families, or that they will miss time due to future pregnancies, family obligations or children. " Gender inequalities are an age old problems and a detailed action plan with a definite road map is needed to achieve gender equity", said Raj Kumar, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Government of Gujarat; as reported by an article in the TOI. He also said " Gender inequality restricts a society's economic growth."

Examples of Gender Inequality at work:

Employers pay unequally based on gender.

Average income of women in Canada : \$13806 and average income of men in Canada: \$22, 673

In Canada today, women constitute approximately 47 per cent of the labour force. Despite recent changes in formal equality – the introduction of protection for women in the Constitution Act, 1982 and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, for example – informal barriers are still present which lead to the discrimination of women (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 89). On the contrary to the first definition of gender discrimination, Julie Walters, an Oakland University professor, and Connie L. McNeely, a George Mason University professor, emphasizes that “ even in the 21st century, women faculty members are generally paid less, promoted more slowly, receive fewer honors, and hold fewer leadership positions than their male counterparts, discrepancies that do not appear to be based on productivity or any other objective performance measures.” “ Women comprise 66% of the U. S workforce, yet only 21% hold middle management positions, and a mere 15% are at the senior management level”( Sipe, Johnson, and Fisher 340). This statistic shows that women occupy less of the higher authority positions than males. It is stated that “ although the equity gap between men and women in management careers appears to be closing, the glass ceiling still persists in today’s business environment” (Sipe, Johnson, and Fisher 340).

Females in the labour market may experience the pay gap, which is when they are paid less because of their sex even if they put in the same effort as a male. In Canada, there is a wage gap 27% in Canada, 23% in USA, 23. 2% in Africa. Walters and McNeely states, “ A clear violation involves discrimination where employees of one sex are paid at a rate less than that paid to employees of the opposite sex for equal work on jobs the

performance of which requires comparable qualifications and skills, effort and responsibility, and which are performed under similar working conditions." Women tend to be paid less because of their gender, yet men with the same position held as a woman, with the same qualifications, and skills will be paid more. The mere fact that an organization would pay anyone less because of their gender is a violation of the Equal Pay Act. It is unacceptable for organizations to pay different wages to men and women holding identical positions, especially if those workers have similar individual characteristics. Even though paying anyone less because of their sex is illegal, it still happens in many jobs. When workers hold similar positions with similar individual characteristics it is very easy to prove that an organizations is partaking in discrimination. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission states that women make 65-75 cents of a dollar a male makes. It is estimated that the unequal payment between men and women won't be fixed until the year 2193 expressed by Sipe, Fisher and Johnson.

In a male dominated work environment, women either have to put on an act to succeed or they are perceived in a stereotypical manor. They are put up against harassment and stereotypical attitudes. Female's employers can feel a sense of power over their employees, in most cases this power leads to sexual harassment. The closeness the employer feels makes them forget about the professional boundaries that exist and they cross the line. More women feel sexual harassment in male dominated areas, such as blue collar jobs. Women are perceived to be less aggressive than men, they are passive, can't handle pressure, can't handle criticism, are not good problem solvers, they are multi-focused, and they are home makers. Family

responsibilities are not equally shared with men, leading to additional barriers for women to enter and stay in the workplace and have a career. Organizations feel that men don't hold overwhelming priorities that will interfere with their work, that's why more upper management positions are granted to males. However, the data shows that men can also become just as overwhelmed with their families and outside responsibilities as women, yet they can hold higher authoritative positions. Asha Kaul, a communications area chairperson at the Gender Resource center in India, explains that " Women often face the double bind. To perform well they must behave like ' men in skirts'/ ' conceptual men,' but cannot lose their feminine qualities for fear of being ridiculed by peers, superiors, and subordinates alike".

Women have to put on a false act to achieve any type of superiority. They have to act as men while at work, but they have to keep their feminine exterior. Since women hold several stereotypes they are more likely to quit a job several days after they have begun. In the article " Gender and Workplace Experience" Kaul expresses that " after trudging along in an environment created by and for men achieving great heights, women are still entangled in the revolving door and are on most occasions in the exit position". The pressure of a male dominated field and a stereotypical area is often too much for most women to handle and often leads to women with having no possibility of career advancement or showcasing of their abilities. Not only are women stereotyped and discriminated against depending on how old or young they are. If they are a younger female or male, they may be looked at as if they are not as qualified or wise as others who have been

there longer than they have. If they are an older female or male, they may be looked at as they are losing skills and forgetting knowledge. Many people can also look at these characteristics as discriminatory and stereotyping.

Many laws have been made to enforce non gender discrimination workplaces; however, there has been strong resistance to enforce some of these laws. The article expresses that " for 50 years, laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1991, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963 have protected women from overt discrimination" (Sipe, Johnson, and Fisher 339). Many employment discrimination has been eliminated by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, prohibits employment from discriminating against people who are seeking a job at their organization. It also protects discrimination against employees on the basis of race, pregnancy, religion, sex, and nationality, it also protects against harassment. The Equal Pay Act requires employers to pay men and women equally for doing the same work, regardless of their gender. Title IX of the Employment Protection covers " every phase and nuance from pre-employment behaviors to culture of the work environment, including promotion and demotion, termination, and hiring, and compensation and resources" (Walters and McNeely 321). In order for a work field to become non-discriminatory the organization has to recognize and enforce the set laws. Recently President Obama proposed the Paycheck Fairness Act, in an effort to close the wage gap among genders. This Act was already passed by the House of Representatives and is currently being looked over by the Senate. Fred W. Alvarez, partner at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, where he leads the firm's employment law litigation practice, and Allison Moser, associate in the Palo Alto office of Wilson Sonsini

Goodrich & Rosati, both state the Paycheck Fairness Act " amends the Equal Pay Act of 1963( EPA) to provide stronger remedies and procedures for gender-based wage-discrimination claims, and to require more active federal government involvement in combating wage disparities. Passage of the Senate bill is likely given the strong backing by nonpartisan groups, including the American Bar Association". If President Obama's new law passes, this could potentially end gender discrimination in the workplace. It will enforce that females get an equal pay for an equals day work as males. No single laws can completely extinguish gender discrimination. However, employers have a legal obligation to uphold the laws to not treat women in an unfairly, discriminatory manner.

Employers must recognize gender discrimination, whether it's towards men or women to eliminate it in the future. Elisabeth K. Kelan, a senior researcher at Lehman Brothers Centre for Women in Business, informs us that, " organizational members often construct their workplaces as gender neutral despite the fact that gender discrimination exists" (1). Lower economic growth does not just affect women, it can affect everyone. So, when an employer discriminates in his organization he is potentially affecting himself. If an employer constructs their work area as a gender discriminated area they are not setting a good example for their employees, other organizations, and the society. Training is highly recommended to employers and employees to enforce non-discrimination, detect it, and go about reporting discrimination. By recognizing gender discrimination employers can make equal pay for equal work, equal policies for male and female employees, and equal treatment for promotion promotions, pay raises,

family needs, and other medical or financial benefits. By correcting gender discrimination, establishments could possibly send a great message to future generations to come. Throughout the research, it was identified that, women in the workplace are discriminated against by receiving lower salaries, fewer promotions, and are often negatively stereotyped; however there are many laws that enforce non-discrimination and there are proper ways to go about extinguishing it.

### Conclusion

Overall, Sipe, Johnson, and Fisher emphasize that “ employers and employees must recognize and prepare for the continuing existence of gender discrimination in the present workforce, or they may risk real opportunities to correct gender discrimination through training, enforcement, and deliberate human-resource planning”. Overall, the world gender income gap is 15. 6%. Throughout, the women have faced a lot of problems because of gender discrimination. They had a high position in the hearts of the people in old days especially in India. They have also paid less. Companies will show all people that no matter what their gender is, they will be encouraged to achieve their best potential.