

Discrimination against women essay

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



Discrimination against women is a subject that has been discussed for many years now. Since the Suffragette movement in the early twentieth century, equality between the sexes has been getting closer. However, there are still many areas of life in which women are discriminated against. Two examples of these are in economic institutions and in education. These two areas are interlinked and influence each other. It seems that if women are to reach a time when they are paid as highly as men, and are accepted into as many highly skilled professions as men, subtle discriminations need to be eradicated, from the time when a child is born and throughout their childhood.

According to Dictionary. com (2011), discrimination can be defined as: “treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit.” It is common knowledge that women have been discriminated against for centuries and were, for a long time, considered as lesser citizens to men. Within the employment realm, discrimination still exists.

According to the National Organization for Women website (2011), “For full-time, year-round workers, women are paid on average only 78 per cent of what men are paid; for women of colour, the gap is significantly wider.” Such a gap seems strange, given that in 1963 an Equal Pay Act was passed and among its legislation, discrimination was banned. Nevertheless, equality between men and women in the workplace is still a long way from being standard, especially if such figures regarding wages are to be focussed on. Women are still much likely to work in jobs which are of low skill and which

are, correspondingly, on low wage. Examples include the childcare industry and the healthcare industry: both of these jobs do not require high qualifications and are not overly highly paid. As women tend to work in jobs such as these, it is unsurprising that they earn less than men, many of whom may be in highly skilled professions. However, the women are being paid less than men, even when working in the same job. It has been shown that among men and women who do the same kind of work, with the same value, men are being paid significantly higher in terms of salaries. When the Equal Pay Act was agreed, women were being paid fifty-nine per cent less than men in equal roles. This means that in over forty years, only nineteen per cent of this gap has been closed (National Organisation for Women, 2011). Family responsibilities provide another reason for women faring badly in the employment market. It seems that women are much more probable than men to take time out of work to care for children and other family related duties. According to the National Organisation for Women website (2011), when discussing a period of fifteen years, “ the more likely a woman is to have dependent children and be married, the more likely she is to be a low earner and have fewer hours in the labor market. The opposite holds true for men: marriage and dependent children make it much more likely that a man has higher earnings and works longer hours.”

When women take time out of employment, this can also have consequences regarding their earning abilities. When women return to work following a period of not working, they are generally expected to start on a lower wage than if they had not taken time out of work. Women who continue to work after giving birth are more likely to earn more money. However, for some

women, staying in work is not possible, and especially if there is no one else available to care for her child. Studies show that a woman who is married and has children is predicted to earn less than she would otherwise. While this is not discrimination against women in itself, the research also shows that men who are married and have children tend to earn a higher wage than their single counterparts (National Organisation for Women, 2011). When both parts of this research are examined, it is clear to see that discrimination exists in this respect.

A woman's ability to earn is largely dependent on her education. Education is another example of a setting in which women are discriminated against. Admittedly, education has progressed a great deal over the years but, in certain countries in particular, there are still differences in the opportunities given to girls and those given to boys.

Even today, many girls and boys are raised and taught that some professionals are suitable for them and others are not. For example, many young girls believe that nursing is appropriate, and obtainable, as a future career, whereas becoming a doctor of medicine is not. Some girls are even brought up to think that all they should aim for is to be a successful wife and mother. In this way, distinctions between the sexes are identified and adopted early, and it can be difficult to change such strong perspectives. Within elementary schools, research has revealed that teachers are still inclined to spend more time with boys when teaching subjects of sciences and mathematics. Subjects such as these are imperative to careers like medicine and architecture and, interestingly, these professions are both strongly male dominated (Wolfe, 201).

According to Lahle Wolfe (2011) in her article, Gender Discrimination Against Women: From Cradle to CEO, girls in middle and high school tend to be encouraged to join societies such as volunteering and social activities, but discouraged from joining in sports societies and clubs like debate. Being encouraged or discouraged, however subtly, regarding participation in certain activities furthers the message being sent to girls about what is and what is not appropriate for them.

Following schooling, young women are more often urged to continue their education but to do so in the direction of professions that fit the gender stereotype. Examples of these are, once again, nursing and teaching (Wolfe, 2011). Men, on the other hand, may be discouraged from such professions and pressurised into more highly skilled, and highly paid, professions.

Education and employment are closely related. Therefore, what a woman is taught in childhood is likely to still influence her in adulthood, especially while making life-changing decisions such as which subjects to study and whether to have children young without having a career in place. It seems that girls and women are both being encouraged into certain academic subjects, and then professions, and this is contributing to their lifelong inequality to men.

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