

Social inequality

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



Social Inequality Today, there are many stereotypes and discriminatory practices that act as barriers to a woman's advancement within the workplace. While it is undeniable that there are biological and physical differences between men and women, often times these differences are used to justify the unequal treatment of women not only in the workplace, but within society as a whole. Throughout history, women have often been viewed as the weaker sex and thus their place was thought to be within the home as the family caretaker. Unfortunately, these views continue to define the different social roles for men and women in the world today. This is an issue that almost every woman at some point in their life has had to face. Some may experience this unequal treatment at their work place, during their education, or in their everyday lives. Historically, a woman's primary job was managing the household. As housewives who had no source of income besides that of what their husbands earned. In the public's eye women were nothing more than wives, homemakers, caregivers, and mothers. It was not thought of for a woman to work a "real job" their place was at home taking care of the family. Throughout history women have struggled for equality. The Suffrage Movement and later the Affirmative Action were efforts to increase equality among genders. As the United States economy was changing to a more industrialized one it demanded more workers. While men were at war, the demand for workers needed for war production increased. Women decided to help out with war efforts by taking over the jobs left by men. This step was huge for women realizing their potential in the workplace. Prior to 1963 it was legal for a business to pay a woman performing similar work as a man a lower wage. It was also rare to

find a woman in a position of authority in a workplace. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 required gender equality for payment of wages. From that point forward it was illegal for an employer to pay a woman a lower wage than a man simply because of her gender. A woman who suffers discrimination under the terms of this law may sue her employer in civil court to recover lost wages and punitive damages. A year later, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed. This granted equal rights to women in all areas of employment. Discrimination of any kind in the workplace based on gender was now illegal. The passing of the Civil Rights Act opened new career doors for women and supplied them with the legal support to do so. However, The Civil Rights Act was amended in 1991 when the federal government moved to include sexual harassment in the law's statutes. This revision allowed women to sue employers who permitted sexual harassment in the workplace for compensatory and punitive damages in court. This amendment to the Act did not stop sexual harassment in the workplace but it does help to empower women to fight back against the behavior. Even with these laws there is still a significant pay gap among men and women. For example in 2011, women working full time in the United States typically earned just 77 percent of what men earned, a gap of 23 percent. This gap has narrowed since the 1970s, due mainly to women's progress in education and workforce participation and to men's wages rising at a slower rate. The subject of equal pay is not only a woman's issue but also the family's issue. Families are relying on women's earning more than ever just to make ends meet. In typical married households, women's incomes accounted for 36 percent of total family income in 2008, up from 29 percent in 1983. These days a large

majority of mothers are in the paid labor force, and about one-third of employed mothers are the sole breadwinners for their families. For the 34 percent of working mothers who are the sole breadwinner for their family; either because they are single parents or their spouses is not in the labor force. The gender pay gap can contribute to poor living conditions, poor nutrition, and fewer opportunities for their children. And for these women, closing the gender pay gap is much more than a point of pride it's a matter of necessity. In 2011 women working full time made annual earnings of \$37, 118, while men annually made \$48, 202. Although statistics show the gender pay gap is smallest among the youngest workers. For instance, in 2010 full-time workers ages 16—19, women earned 95 percent of what men earned on a weekly basis. Among workers 65 years and older, women earned only 76 percent of what their male peers earned. Women typically earn more than 90 percent of what men earn until around the age of 35, at which point median earnings for women start to grow much more slowly than median earnings for men. After age 35, women's median earnings fall to between 75 and 80 percent of the median earnings of men and remain there until retirement. When you look at education statistics you'll see that more education is an effective tool for increasing earnings, but it is not an effective tool against the gender pay gap. At every level of academic achievement, women's median earnings are less than men's median earnings, and in some cases, the gender pay gap is larger at higher levels of education. While more education is an effective tool for increasing earnings, it is not an effective tool against the gender pay gap. In nearly every line of work, women face a pay gap no matter their education background or training. While a pay gap

exists in nearly every occupational field, jobs traditionally associated with men tend to pay better than traditional female jobs, regardless of skill required. Even in 2012, women and men still tend to work in different kinds of jobs. This segregation of occupations is a major factor behind the pay gap. A significant part of the problem with workplace inequality is that women, throughout history have traditionally assumed the responsibility of child-rearing. As a result, women's work outside the home is still seen as secondary or supplemental, even when they occupy highly skilled, professional, or management positions. The reasoning is that the Father's responsibility is with employment, while the Mother's is with the household. However, this is increasingly no longer the case in modern society. Employers often perceive working mothers as confronting a conflict of loyalty between home and work, and assume that these women, regardless of their circumstances, will lack the commitment required of the "ideal worker," and thus they often exclude women as candidates for positions structured for such workers. Studies have shown that often times when a woman has to take a leave of absence from her job to meet family responsibilities, these absences have hurt their potential for future advancement within their organizations and others. Some businesses feel women will place their professional lives on hold in order to attend to family needs. This however is not always the case. If needed there should be a child care facilities on site, which should provide flexible working arrangements and hours. I personally believe that woman can balance the two lives, if the company is willing to provide assistance. There is experimental research documented showing that employers are less likely to hire mothers compared with childless

women, and when employers do make an offer to a mother, they offer them lower salaries than they do other women. Fathers, in contrast, do not suffer a penalty compared with other men. Clearly, parenthood often affects men and women very differently in terms of labor force participation and how they are viewed by employers, and that difference may be reflected in a worker's salary. According to the U. S. Department of Labor, more than 50% of women participate in the labor force. Of those 57 million in the workforce, only 72% work full time while the other 28% are part time workers. Many of those part-time workers hold multiple jobs. Even though women occupy more jobs than before, we can still a concentration in jobs being viewed as traditionally female. The top five occupations for women in 2003 were secretaries and administrative assistants (96. 3%), elementary and middle school teachers (80. 6%), registered nurses (90. 2%), nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides (89%), and cashiers (75. 5%). Women continue to get paid less than men. Despite the awareness of gender inequality, there are still arguments about gender difference and assumptions that women and men are from different plants. The workplace still remains an unequal area, by persistent sex segregation, wage inequality, sex discrimination, and sexual harassment. Both women and men work, not only because they have to but want to. Employers should not judge women as being non-dependable. Family structure has changed dramatically over the years. Both parents share the family responsibilities. To compensate for the change businesses have introduced flextime, job sharing, telecommuting, on-site day care, and parental leave. Employers should accommodate a woman's needs and expand the gender diversity in their company. There was a time

where balance of respect and roles never existed between the two, but today, both men and women are truly redefining themselves and their relationships with each other. Most importantly women have broken from the bondage of dependence on men. They no longer have to submit themselves to one main role in the family life as the mother; they can now go beyond that and become the family breadwinner.