

## Women in Workplace

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In the past decade a dramatic increase in the number of women participating in the labour force has taken place. Since early history and the ancient civilization of man, women have played a secondary role, in which women were and still are viewed as less than a man. A woman's role in society was that of raising children, and duties surrounding the household. Many women today want and desire careers and a place in this world. They want to stand on their own two feet, to become self-sustaining individuals, independent and free from other individuals. The one thing that is clear is that women in all careers are striving to gain equality in the work force today.

The issues that have and still surround women and the workplace are many. For a long time, women were at a disadvantage when it came to competing with men in the workplace. Women were not given the educational opportunities that men were, and women were stereotyped into certain jobs. Discrimination of women in the workplace has for years been fed by gender bias. Since the time when women entered the work force, they have been paid less than a man for doing the same job.

Although women in the workplace have had several odds stacked against them one thing remains clear, that women have and still do make a great contribution to the workplace. Through their determination, women have been a driving force in the enactment of laws to protect themselves and others in the workplace. These laws are not just for gender discrimination based on marital status, pregnancy, race, disabilities, sexual preference, and age. Women now have the ability to break out of the gender roles that were created for them by society long ago.

One of the issues that has affected women in the workplace is that of stereotyping of women. Throughout history women have taken the role of housewife, mother, and nurturer. Women are stereotyped to stay at home and take care of the house and children. It has been their job to cook the meals, do the laundry, motherhood is still considered to be the primary role for women. Women that do not take on this role are still today thought of as selfish. Women that look to establish careers outside the home, for years, were thought of as being selfish and self-centered. Because women were viewed as homemakers, they were often given jobs that were meaningless, and they were not thought of as managers or professionals.

Clearly, circumstances of family life have changed in the modern era. Large populations of women have, and will continue to join the workplace. Although this period of change has helped to shape the role of women today, women in corporate India is still oppressed. Even today, women are not treated the same as

men. One area of equal pay for equal jobs. The female labour force is seen as an inferior part of the work force. When looking at earnings and job distribution, a person could assume that women were in some way not as accomplished or competent as men. Yet a more in-depth investigation would show that women are just as qualified as men.

Area in which women are at a disadvantaged in the workplace is through discrimination. Discrimination can be an uncomfortable situation for the women involved. There are two types of discrimination, indirect and direct, each affects woman in a different way. Indirect discrimination might be a woman being overlooked for a promotion, or an employee displaying inappropriate sexual material in the workplace. Direct discrimination may include a woman being discharged from her employment because she is pregnant, or being excluded from after work group events. There are laws that address direct discrimination; however, people can find very slight ways of discrimination, making it hard to prove.

Another major area where women have been affected in the workplace is sexual harassment. Women working in low level jobs are often the targets of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is very damaging to women, and the workplace most of the time the harassment goes unreported. Up until just a few years ago women has no recourse when confronted with such harassment by a boss or co-worker. This conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Another form of sexual harassment can be by men expressing their resentment and trying to reassert control when they view women as economic competitors. Sexual harassment is closely linked to sex discrimination. Sexual discrimination forces women into lower paying jobs, and sexual harassment helps keep them there. One thing is clear, whether the problem is sexual harassment or sexual discrimination the problem continues to exist in the workplace, reminding women of their vulnerability and creating tension that make their jobs more difficult.

In the last decade companies have turned their attention to some of these issues. There has been more training and education about women's issues, such as sexual harassment, in the workplace. Even though there is more corporate training for these issues, this training may not work, but educating people is a start. Women need to overcome the image that they are sensitive people, which let their emotions control their mind. They need to prove that they can think with their minds and not their hearts when it comes to business. No matter what sex a person is there will be times in life when the person is confronted with, and must defeat, a stereotype based on the person's sex.

Most people want to correct the unequal treatment of women in the workplace. One method that can be used to support equality would be to introduce federal legislation to guarantee equal pay for equal work. The logistical problems associated with this solution would be great. How would people measure the value of one person's work to another's? who would decide this and how would it be implemented?

Our attitudes toward women in the workplace are slowly starting to change. More opportunities are appearing for women worker today than ever before. The unequal treatment of working women will take years to change, but change is occurring. This topic will remain until people treat and pay women equally, based upon their abilities and nothing else.

There have been many remedies introduced into the workplace that have tried to address the injustice toward women in the workplace. Although there have been many improvements for women in the workplace, there are still many inequalities for women when compared to men. Remedies are needed to secure women a fair, and equal role in the workplace. However, I do think that gender equality can be achieved. This change can only fully occur when we change the attitudes of every individual toward women. When we accomplish that then we can finally achieve gender equality in the workplace.