

The Changing Role Of Women

The role of women has changed in the last 100 years. However women have yet to achieve full equality with men.

The role of women has changed in several ways.

In the last century, only men went out to work. Women were expected to stay at home and take care of the household and the domestic side of things. This included the cooking, cleaning, laundry, ironing etc.

However, the improvement in technology has meant that the household jobs have been made much easier and timesaving. These labour saving devices include freezers, washing machines, microwave cookers, food processors, vacuum cleaners and manufactured food such as canned, tinned and frozen food as well as "instant meals" where no cooking or hassles is needed. These improvements have reduced the time spent on housework, releasing women so that they can go out to work in paid employment.

Nonetheless, women have yet to gain equality with men in employment. This includes the pay. Below are the ten worst paid jobs in Britain.

1. Kitchen porter
 2. Waitress
 3. Catering assistant
 4. Laundry worker
 5. Supermarket shelf-filler
 6. Cleaner/Domestic
 7. Bar Staff
 8. Child Carer
 9. Retail check-out operator
 10. Hair dresser
- ...And they're all nearly done by women!*

Although the equal Pay Act gives equal pay to women if they do the same or similar work as men, it is revealed above that women often do not do the same work as men which as a result means that they have no one to claim equal pay with. It is a sad fact that in 1997, women made up about 2/3 of all low -paid workers.

Another reason why women and men are unequal through means of employment is that women have to put up with a lot of prejudice regarding jobs, such as when interviewing for the job. The interviewer will ask questions like Do you have any young children? which gives most of an effect on women. They will not ask this to men because it is not important when it comes to men, as they are not the parent that is constantly looking after them. One of the only times when a male parent is looking after their children is if they are a single parent or the mother is needed elsewhere.

Also, if women were asked the question, do you intend to have any children, now or in the future, men aren't as affected by the situation as women would be. If a woman were to fall pregnant, she wouldn't be able to work as efficiently as she usually does, and also she will have to take maternity leave towards the end of her pregnancy. Employers know that men won't be as affected.

Some employers think that men are more suitable for jobs and they work more efficiently, therefore men are more likely to be employed. This is an example of sexism that women have to put up with. Yet women did do a great job when the two World Wars were taking place. The men had to go to be soldiers and there was no one to take the jobs they were leaving behind. The only option was for women to take them over and they proved themselves by working proficiently and with very much at ease. They hadn't even had any working experience or even any training yet they still worked as expertly as men. Men had always had a lot of training opportunities and educated themselves before starting work. Women showed during these war years that they were quite capable of doing what was previously seen as "men's jobs" and this began to change people's ideas about a woman's role.

The declining family size is both a reason and a result of the improving position of women. This had reduced the time spent in child rearing and given women better opportunities to enter paid employment. Today, once a woman had had children, due to the increase in life expectancy, she has a long life stretching ahead to pursue a career. 100 years ago once a woman has had children that would have been the end of her ambitions and social life. Still, women today spend more time with the children than their fathers. This inequality over the time spent with the children in the home is gradually balancing, although compulsory schooling since 1880 and particularly since 1994 has reduced the time necessary for the care and supervision of children in the family. This has given women with children a greater opportunity to go out to work than earlier in the twentieth century.