

The fight for equality: addressing inequality in the modern world

Why do some people still believe that gender defines worth and opportunities in the world today? Many argue that gender inequality is no longer an issue. Yet, despite significant progress in securing equal rights, there is still a long way to go. The gender rights movement began in July 1848, when women, particularly in the USA, started fighting for equal rights and opportunities for all genders. These efforts have shaped society and created a fairer world, but true gender equality remains elusive. Some of the most pressing issues include the gender pay gap, gender-based violence and crime, gender stereotypes, and gendered poverty. These will be the main topics of this essay. Achieving equality requires continued discussion and action, particularly in the workplace.

Almost 90% of women still work for companies who pay them less than their male colleagues. The gender pay gap has been decreasing over time, but it still exists. The gender pay gap remains significant, with women globally earning 24% less than men. This is exacerbated by the underrepresentation of women in high-paying, traditionally male-dominated fields like engineering and construction. Women are less likely to be employed in traditionally male led jobs which can have a significant impact on girls and their opportunities in the future. The Equality Act 2010 is supposed to protect people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. However, this hasn't been happening because only 11.2% of women get paid the same or more than their male colleagues. I believe that if we continue to challenge companies that don't pay their employees fairly, no matter who they are, then in the next few years the gap should decrease.

In a study, taken in 2023, more than a quarter of people said it was acceptable for men to hit their partners. Gender can have a significant impact on violence, crime and how it's dealt with. Millions of women and girls face many forms of gender-based violence throughout their lives including rape, sexual exploitation and child marriage. This is a huge problem and thankfully it is being spoken about and challenged more often but we're still a long way away from fixing this issue. A study surveying 42000 women, found that up to 21% of women in the EU had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months and 1 in 3 women worldwide will experience some form of gender-based violence. It is estimated that every 11 minutes a woman or girl is killed by a member of her own family. Is this acceptable? Should this remain something that isn't challenged? I believe that if we continue to challenge unfair behaviour then women

should experience less violence because of their gender and men and women will be viewed equally

Gender stereotypes make gender inequality worse. Gender stereotypes are generalised views about someone's characteristics based on their gender. We are all familiar with the common stereotypes such as, maths and science are boys subjects or that boys don't like makeup and hairdressing. Other stereotypes could include that cleaning is a job for women and engineering is a job for men. These stereotypes can shape people's views and what they believe and can in some cases, make gender inequality worse. For example, the stereotype that engineering is a 'male' profession can discourage girls from pursuing it, leading to fewer women in the field. Women currently represent just 26% of the STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) workforce, and progress is slow, suggesting it may take more than 100 years to reach gender equity in STEM. Those who do enter may face discrimination or unequal opportunities which perpetuates the gender pay gap. The stereotype about boys not liking makeup can lead to them believing that it's not acceptable to be themselves. All these stereotypes shape self-perception, attitudes and relationships and can have an enormous impact on people's mental health. Telling people that they can't do the things that make them happy is just not right. But if people continue to push back against these stereotypes, then the world might become a little more accepting of everyone's choices.

Is poverty gendered? According to a survey taken in 2024, 1 in every 10 women in the world lives in extreme poverty. Women in the UK are more likely to experience poverty than a man. In the UK, women perform at least twice as much unpaid care work as men. This limits their time for paid employment, contributing to the gender pay gap and greater financial vulnerability. This is a huge issue particularly in developing countries where women are often expected to stay at home instead of working or even going to school. The gender pay gap is also a key factor in poverty. Because lots of women get paid less than their male colleagues, they end up with less money which can lead to poverty. Despite some progress recently, women are still more likely to live in poverty than men, but in the next few years we can change this and help both women and men escape poverty.

In conclusion, I believe that gender inequality is a huge problem. It is unfair that women should get paid less than men. This shouldn't be a problem. Everyone should have the same opportunities no matter their gender. This essay has looked at how women are disadvantaged by gender inequality, however it has not covered the impact that gender inequality can have on

men. Unfortunately, this is also a huge issue today. I believe that if we continue to push back against stereotypes and unfair standards, unequal pay and opportunities, all based on gender, then the world should become a more understanding and fairer place.

Sources

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