

Gender discrimination: Facts you need to know

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Discrimination in the workplace based on an individual's sex or gender is an unfortunate but common occurrence. Gender discrimination, also known as sex discrimination, is the unfavourable treatment of employees or applicants based on their gender. Sex/gender discrimination takes many forms and can happen to men as well as women and individuals who identify as male, female or transgender.

At its most basic, sex/gender discrimination is the differential treatment of an individual based on their sex/gender or their perceived sex, gender or sexual orientation. This form of discrimination is more serious than simply reprimanding a female employee for being late to work, for example, which constitutes normal and accepted company policy. Instead, it generally involves recognizing differential treatment in regards to pay and benefits, wrongful termination, company privileges, working conditions or discipline. Sex or gender discrimination can include sexual harassment, sexual orientation discrimination and many other kinds of related bias.

Examples of Gender Discrimination

Unequal pay: *This is one of the most pressing examples of sexism in the workplace.*

Unfavourable recruitment strategy: *This can include questions about whether a female candidate intends to have children, or suggesting in your job spec that the role is more for men.*

Different opportunities: *If your business has career progression opportunities that favour men over women.*

Redundancies: *Terminating a female employee for making a claim of unequal treatment at work.*

Bias: *Showing preferential treatment towards male colleagues over female ones, such as in promotions or day-to-day conversation.*

Sexual harassment: *An act of gross misconduct, this behaviour towards men or women can have serious consequences.*

It is not a new issue and it affects women more than it affects men. In an effort to alleviate it, in 2015, the 193 member countries of the United Nations came together to commit to 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 5 focused on gender equality and set the ambitious target of achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls everywhere by 2030. Five years later, large gender gaps remain across the world. Gender inequality is not only a pressing moral and social issue but also a critical economic challenge. A 2015 report from the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), [*The Power of Parity: How advancing women's equality can add \\$12 trillion to global growth*](#), explored the economic

potential available if the global gender gap was narrowed. Five years ago, women generated 37% of global GDP despite accounting for 50% of the global working-age population. The research found that in a best-in-region scenario in which all countries match the performance of the country in their region that has made the most progress toward gender equality, \$12 trillion a year could be added to GDP in 2025. That would be equivalent in size to the GDP of Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom combined, and roughly double the likely growth in global GDP contributed by female workers between 2014 and 2025 in a business-as-usual scenario.

Women make up 39% of global employment but accounted for 54% of overall job losses as of May 2020. McKinsey research on [Diversity Matters](#) (2015), on [Delivering through Diversity](#) (2018), and most recently in May 2020 on [Diversity Wins](#) examined whether companies with higher levels of both gender and ethnic diversity have greater economic performance. The 2020 research examined a data set of more than 1,000 large companies in 15 countries and found that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity were 25% more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile. Companies in the top quartile of ethnic and cultural diversity were 36% more likely to outperform on profitability. The highest-performing companies on both profitability and diversity had more women in line roles (that is, owning a line of business) than in staff roles on their executive teams. The research also found a penalty for bottom-quartile performance on gender diversity: companies in the bottom quartile for both gender and ethnic diversity were 27% more likely to underperform the industry average than all other firms.

Facts You Need To Know About Gender Discrimination

1. **According to the World Economic Forum**, it will take 217 years for the economic gender gap to close internationally
1. **McKinsey proffers that** if women participated in the world's economy identically to men the world would see a GDP boost of US\$28 Trillion!
2. **Research by McKinsey** found that despite making up 50 per cent of the working-age population women generate 37% of GDP globally,
3. **McKinsey also discovered that** only 25% of women are in management positions in the global workforce
4. There are only 24 female CEOs in the Fortune 500 – America's largest corporations (less than 5 per cent of the total list) (Fortune)
5. The Harvard Business Review found that women rank more highly than men in 12 of the 16 traits identified as essential to leadership – including problem-solving, communication and innovation. But this is not reflective of the leaders in the markets.
6. The Harvard Business Review also found that it only takes **One** woman required to boost the collective intelligence of a team
7. In 2016, just 57% world's working-age women are in the labour force, compared to 70% of working-age men (**Department of Labor**)
8. Women with full-time jobs still earn only about 77% of their male counterparts' earnings. (**White House**)
9. African-American women earn 64 cents and Latina women earn 56 cents for every dollar earned

by a Caucasian man.

10. 62 million girls are denied an education all over the world, and former First Lady **Michelle Obama** started shining a light on this issue through her Let Girls Learn initiative in 2015.
11. Every year, an estimated 15 million girls under 18 are married worldwide, with little or no say in the matter.
12. 4 out of 5 victims of human trafficking are girls.
13. Until recently, women in Saudi Arabia **weren't allowed to drive** and are still discouraged from working jobs that would put them in contact with men. The unemployment rate for women is **33%** for women, **7% for men**.
14. Less than 30% of the world's researchers are women. (**UNESCO**)
15. Men Hold 62% of Manager Positions to Women's 38% (and it Gets Worse Higher Up)
16. In 2018, women made up 48% of entry-level employees, but only 38% of managers, 34% of senior managers or directors, 29% of VPs, 23% of SVPs, and just 22% of C-suite executives.

Although significant progress has been made in recognizing women and men as equally capable contributors to society and the workforce, gender discrimination continues to be a major issue nationally. Women especially are often victim to such discrimination in the workplace despite laws that exist to protect them against unequal hiring practices, policies and pay. Furthermore, sexual harassment is a unique form of discrimination that primarily, though not exclusively, affects women. Some acknowledged biological differences between the genders can make for challenging cases, but employers should generally aim for equality.

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