

"Overwhelmingly, and worldwide, human communities and cultures were at that time so engineered as to give immense advantages to men" (p.25)

Throughout history, in cultures across the globe, women have always been looked upon as seconds in society. Ever since the beginning of time it seems as if the role of a woman has been limited to bearing children, cooking, cleaning, and performing all other domestic tasks. There has never been a time or place when women shared complete equivalence with men. Males have invariably been considered more intelligent, mightier, and more competent than women.

During the Middle Ages women were treated very bitterly. The wife would have to give all her land to her husband after getting married. The woman lost her legal standing and did not have a say in her life anymore. Medieval women were appointed to household jobs while the men held high positions in society such as judges, doctors, and military leaders. Young girls were not allowed to go to school and learned how to sew and cook at home. Married off by the age of thirteen to men sometimes as much as twenty years older to them, females never had a say in their lives.

In eighteenth century America, women had a fixed purpose in society. They were to perform conventional tasks such as preparing and serving food, making clothing, and rearing the children. The men enjoyed their lives ungratefully while their wives, mothers, and sisters did laborious and exhausting jobs at home. Women had no say in household earnings, property, or inheritance. Husbands could legally beat their wives. Soon women had to add the task of farming to their list of unjust chores. Later female slaves were brought to the colonies. They were forced to do a man's work in the fields and bare children so that the slave owner would have more property.

The issue of education also played a role in inequality between men and women. Women were considered inconsiderable and intellectually challenged. Later, women began to protest and gained the right to go to school. But even after the victory there was gender bias in education.

In many Indian textbooks it was found that men were the main characters in most of the lessons. They held high positions and were described as powerful, daring, and clever. When women were included in the lessons they were portrayed as weak and impotent, and they were mistreated and abused. In Thailand all men had the chance to study at the local wat, or temple to become monks. They learned the sacred languages of Pali and Sanskrit and obtained knowledge in astrology, medicine, poetry, and law. Women were barred from all this because of their sex. They were not allowed to learn anything that did not pertain to the home and farming.

Even in more modern times women were pressured to stand in the shadows of their husbands. During World War II, American women moved away from the traditional domestic conception that society had about women to a more modern image. After the war and the return of their husbands, women did not want to go back to the role of a housewife. Society urged women to go back to a more family oriented lifestyle, but females refused to listen. They were blamed for alcohol abuse of men and bad marriages. Men were given better jobs and pay. The women were discouraged, but society believed that a female's job was to stay at home and tend to the family.

Although the future of the role of women looks more pleasant than the past, there is still inequity in the job market and in many underdeveloped countries all over the world. Many cultures and societal norms are still "so engineered as to give immense advantages to men."