

The Pertinence of Professional Women and Decreasing the Gap

Women have had better grades than men for decades according to the American Psychological Association; however, women are less likely to enter the workforce, especially in the fields of journalism and law. Women have higher attendance in journalism classes and programs, yet only make up a small percentage of high-ranking journalists and are paid significantly less, according to the Reuters Institute, and while women are just as likely to be enrolled in law school or work as associates, only 4% of the 200 top U.S. law firms have firm-wide managing partners that are women, according to The Washington Post. The problem is not due to a lack of ambition or a biological disinterest in these fields, but an unintentional systematic accommodation toward men over women.

Women consist of half the population, so it would make sense that women have similar, if not equal, roles in the workforce to men. Whether it be news stations or law firms, there are inclusion initiatives and diversity seminars but not systemic changes within companies that recognize the integral role women play in society.

Women are expected to work **and** be the homemaker, while men are allowed to work and leave the brunt work of raising children to the mother. This has contributed to the idea that has put women behind in the workforce for decades and cannot change unless there are legitimate changes within society.

A study by Pew Research Center found 51% of women have said being a working mother made it difficult for them to advance in their career, which has held women back from both entering the workforce and starting a family.

In Japan, the total fertility rate dropped significantly because of the influx of women in the workforce. There were not enough children being born to have a sufficient replacement level fertility rate, which has proven to be detrimental to Japan's economy, according to The Washington Post. The solution to bringing more women into the workforce, specifically into media and law, is not to stop having children as seen by the situation in Japan, but to stress a societal shift in the weight of parenting. The U.S. has one of the most deplorable maternal and paternal leave plans across the globe, which is discouraging to women who want to have a career **and** a family. With adequate plans for working parents, women's roles in legal and media roles will reflect this shift.

Without women being an intrinsic part of any media or legal process, voices are lost and democracy cannot exist without the equality of its people. Instead of consistently creating a system of male accommodation, the media and legal roles must be willing to accommodate women's needs as well.

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