

GENDER DISCRIMINATION

VOCABULARY

- Gender = sexual identity, especially in relation to society or culture
- The labour market = *le marché du travail*
- An executive = *un cadre (dans une entreprise)*
- CEO = Chief Executive Officer = *président directeur général*
- Harassment = *harcèlement*
- Lawsuit / suit = *procès, poursuites judiciaires*
- Become pregnant = *tomber enceinte*
- maternity leave = *congé de maternité*
- wages = *salaire*

WAGE DIFFERENCES

In 1979 British women earned 62% of men's weekly earnings. By 1999 this figure rose to 74%. The gap in earnings between men and women has closed for a number of reasons :

- Firstly, there has been an increase in the number of well-qualified women entering the labour market.
- Secondly, many women now return to work immediately after maternity leave and thus avoid the loss of pay that result from delayed entry back into employment.
- Thirdly, in 1998 the National Minimum Wage was introduced and it boosted the hourly pay of some of the lowest paid workers.

However, in the UK, gender discrimination still prevails in the 21st century.

In 2003, women at British banks were paid 24% less on average than their male counterparts. In Britain, women fill about 30% of the management jobs in finance whereas in the USA, women number about 50%. American firms began to face the problem of gender discrimination in the mid-1990's because sexual-harassment suits and gender discrimination suits cost them money and employees. So American companies now have clear anti-discrimination policies. Moreover US firms have more transparent criteria for awarding bonuses and promotions than British firms.

The British government has been pushing for clearer guidelines to be enforced in all British companies. But what remains harder to change is the discrimination, especially in the finance industry of the City in London, perpetuated by the long-hours culture, which allows managers to justify penalizing women who become pregnant or ask for flexible work arrangements.