

## MEN GRAB A MAJOR SHARE OF NEW JOBS



There is no area of work, earlier considered exclusive male domains, which women have not breached. There are high women achievers in every field and in many areas they have even outshone their male counterparts. Ironically however, even though they have climbed up the economic ladder and in many cases earn higher salaries than men, it is found that when there are new job openings, employers opt for men over the ladies. Studies show that since the recession officially ended in June 2009, men have been preferred for 80 percent of the 2.6 million new jobs. Last year the percentage was 61. Although no reasonable reason can be given for this disparity, one reason could be that the manufacturing industry has shown a renaissance and this is a male-dominated industry. On the other hand more women than men find themselves employed in government jobs. The government, as Labor Department statistics show, continues to wallow in gloomy depths, hence the job openings for women are not as often as for the men. However, if that were the reason, how is it that men are also managing to snatch a larger share of work, in areas that were considered to be women-domains, for example retail sales? Not only do women land a lesser percentage of new jobs than men, the work that they do is often dubbed as womanly and attracts lesser pay and offers poorer benefits and chances of promotions are rarer compared to the males. Paul Cordova and his wife, Betty Mowery, a couple in their forties, living in San Francisco experienced this partisanship first hand. Both of them, unhappily, lost their respective jobs almost simultaneously. He was laid off from his job managing facilities at a San Francisco law firm whilst she found that she wasn't wanted anymore at an air freight company where she worked as a customer service representative. Strangely, Cordova got a new job as a clerk in a grocery store, which paid him less than his earlier job, but at least he had one, but Mowery, try as much as she could, couldn't land one. Frustrated she decided that instead of wasting time, looking for that elusive job she would return to college to upgrade her knowledge and retrain for a career in mental health. "It's a huge step down," Mowery said of their family income, close to \$100,000 before the start of the recession at the end of 2007. The male intrusion in the retail trade shows how times have changed. Proven data shows that women have dominated the retail trade for over three decades now and even up to as near as the last three years, they were the dominant and foremost force in the retail industry. Ever since the retail industry reached its lowest levels in December 2009, men have landed more than 440,000 retail jobs while women have lost 49,500 positions. The male have outpaced the females and now hold 51 percent of the 14.75 million retail jobs pushing the once overriding females to second place with 49 percent. Incongruously, even though there are more women than men in financial services such as banking and real estate, healthcare and education, and leisure and hospitality businesses, the male proportion of payrolls is higher than the women. "During this recovery, men have looked for alternative careers and jobs in other sectors," said Adriana Kugler, the Labor Department's chief economist. However, the last few months have shown a reversal in the trend and more women than men have landed jobs, but it is uncertain whether the trend will continue. The gap has been noticed by the Presidential candidates and both have expressed their concern over it. Republican Mitt Romney's campaign said that President Obama's policies were responsible for the hardships that the women have to face. However, he very conveniently forgot to mention that men faced unemployment a full year prior to the women started facing them. As no fathomable reasons have been given for this gender gap, concerns have been raised about probable discrimination in hiring. If this continues, experts say, it could undo all the good work that has happened for women in the workplace. Joan Entmacher, vice president for Family Economic Security at the National Women's Law Center expressed concern saying that she wasn't too sure if employers were showing an intentional preference for men, but what worried her even more was that opening for women in higher-paying industries like manufacturing are dwindling. "It's hard to know [whether] some employers place a priority on men going back to work," she said. The resurgence of manufacturing has seen nearly 500,000 net new jobs added but there were as many women working there as before. Apparently most of the new jobs have gone to the men. Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, said that men score over the women because they have a longer working history. He reluctantly admitted that, it may be that some employers will "take a male applicant more seriously even though [men and women are] equally qualified." Gender discrimination in hiring is not easy to prove. In 2011, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission says, more complaints of unfair hiring based on gender were filed by men than women. One reason could be that more men are vying for jobs in workplaces that were earmarked as women-domains. Dov Charney, chief executive of American Apparel Inc., said that he was happy to see male applicants for jobs in industries such as retail. "Gender stereotypes still exist; many men don't want to work on the retail floor. More and more men are interested in fashion because gender definitions are changing," he said, "because the world is saying it's OK." Given a choice most men would prefer to work in male oriented workplaces. For them to choose careers that are considered not so manly is because they do not have much of a choice and, analysts feel that it is "an act of desperation." "They really need the work; they can't afford to be choosy," said Harry Holzer, a labor expert at Georgetown University and the Urban Institute. John Moser had opted for a job in the retail sector, following the loss of a high paying job and his inability to land an equally paying job. He said that he had no option but to latch on to the first job available. "I decided to do what I had to do to keep the family going forward," John Moser said, noting he has a daughter in college. How strong the public sector is will largely depend on how many new jobs will be available to the women. Women, compared to men are more likely to hold public sector jobs. Teaching and clerical jobs are also known for the large proportion of their women workers. However, budgetary deficits have seen their jobs cut disproportionately in the last three years. Betsey Stevenson, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School said, "It may be that among the hundreds of thousands of female teachers and other women who lost their jobs, some may be giving up the idea of working — at least for now." Andrea Fogelman, a 26-year-old single mother of a 10-month-old boy, was laid off in June from her job as a kindergarten teacher in Reading, Pa. Not only has she moved in with her parents, her only sources of income are the unemployment benefits she gets. Kim Duellay, 51, was a second-grade teacher for three years, she also lost her teaching job in Reading in June. She says she knows what it is to breach a male haven, having been a police officer in Orlando for 2 decades. She says that she isn't young anymore and is anxious about the tough economy. "Outside of education, I'm not sure how I would do," she said. "I'm scared to go out in the job market because I don't know what I'm going to be facing."