

Political Thinking Meeting Report No 21

Chiltern U3A 'Political Thinking'

Meeting No 21 Monday 21st May 2018

Topic: "Inequality of Women"

Question "Now that women have achieved political equality, why is equality in other aspects of life so far behind?"

Summary

Considerable advance toward equality with men for women has occurred in the last 50 years.

Inequalities in the workplace seem to provoke most discussion these days.

Responsibilities for household tasks and child rearing are more evenly distributed, with changes occurring in younger age groups.

As to politics equality of voting rights seems to have been achieved, but unequal numbers of representatives is seen as requiring change.

That progress is patchy is perhaps more due to the means of change. Legislation provides a spur and necessity for change, where the agent is a cultural shift change may take generations.

Discussion.

In the UK, there has been considerable progress over the last 50 years or so;

There remain many areas of marked inequality, especially in the workplace in terms of pay, politics, seniority and progression;

There is still much evidence of sexism, but young women are more likely to object to some instances of it (as in the 'Me-too' movement)

Child rearing and the costs and availability of childcare remain big challenges for women and affect inequality: both should be more highly valued;

Whilst equality between the sexes is a desired goal, variety, diversity, difference and choice should all be respected;

Many women are involved in menial work, often providing a back-up or support service for men;

There are notable differences in sex inequalities in Europe;

There remains the problem of men's ego.