



Women's Education and Social Development

**POKKULURI
SURYAPRAKASH**

FORMER LECTURER, S.C.I.M. GOVERNMENT DEGREE COLLEGE, TANUKU,
ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

ABSTRACT

Education is an important device for helping a person to attain full development physically, mentally and spiritually. Education is very necessary for both men and women. The woman is the focal point regarding all matters concerning the family and the society. Women's education is essential for the well-being of the family and for the welfare of the society, especially in the 21st century, when the world is witnessing extraordinary progress in almost all fields including education, culture, science and technology. So, top priority should be given to women's education. Educational institutions should be established, especially in rural areas. Hostels, libraries and laboratories are to be constructed. Playgrounds are necessary for playing sports and games. In this regard, the assistance of voluntary organizations can be taken. In fact, today, many women are pursuing different courses in different educational institutions. They are working in different fields with confidence and commitment. They are able to lead various agitations against social evils. If encouragement is given, women can do more good to society and prove their mettle. In fine, all support should be given to women's education, so that they can contribute to the development of healthy society and progressive world.

KEYWORDS : Women, education, institutions, home, society, development.

1. Introduction

I welcome the growing number of girls in school and colleges because it means that the schools and colleges are carried bodily into families. We will not need to multiply universities, if only our mothers are all university products. Then every home will in itself be a university... Do you then doubt the evaluation. Make that every girl graduate is worth five boy graduates, taking the average of a family to be five?

-C.Rajagopalachari

Women have been playing a very significant role both in the family and in the society. In the family the woman has been playing several roles as mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, daughter, daughter-in-law, sister, sister-in-law and wife, in addition to the role as a teacher and preacher to her children. In the society, women have been participating in many nation-building activities. They have achieved distinction in many fields. India has the distinction of having women as President, Prime Minister, Governors, Ministers, Justices and Police Officers. In other countries also, there is a remarkable progress in women's education and social development. In this regard, Claudia Zeisberger writes thus:

Historical perspective perhaps can help us understand the current situation by showing us that today's generation of C-suite-eligible executives grew up in a world, in which the levels of education among women were significantly lower than nowadays. In the United Kingdom, for example, the number of years of schooling received by the average woman has increased by more than one-third since 1970, from 9 years to more than 12.

But, it has come to be known that there is a tendency in some working women to drop out, leading to less female representation at the top rungs in various organizations. The reasons for this drop out are: (i) some women find it difficult to maintain balance between domestic life and office work, (ii) some top executives lack faith in the professional competence of women and (iii) some companies pay working women less salary. However, recent research has established a strong link among women's education, their development and the progress of society. In essence, women's education is essential for their all-round development, for happy homes and for prosperous societies, especially in the present era of globalization, liberalization and technological advances. In fact, what is education? What is development? What is social development? What are the effects of women's education on development, especially social development? What are the problems, which hinder women's education and development? What are the steps to be taken to promote women's education and social development? What is needed today? All these important and current issues are discussed, in detail, here-under.

2. What is education?

Education, in general, refers to the act of imparting knowledge and

developing the power of judgement. Education also refers to the act of imparting knowledge or skills for a profession or a trade. Education helps a person to grow physically, mentally and spiritually. Regarding education, the advice of Herbert Spencer is: "Never educate a child to be a gentleman or lady only, but to be a man, a woman".

3. What is development? What is social development?

Development, in general, means progress or growth or expansion. Development refers to "Growth or change in structure, function, or organization, constituting and advance in size, differentiation, complexity, integration, capacity, efficiency, or degree of maturity", according to C.V Good (1973). Social development refers to the development pertaining to the life, welfare and relations of human beings in a society.

4. What are the effects of women's education on development, especially social development?

The following are the effects of women's education on development, especially social development.

- (i) Women's education helps to considerably close the gender gap in many matters including education and employment. It makes possible to ensure equal rights and opportunities for both men and women.
- (ii) Women's education improves the quality of life of people, in general and women, in particular. Educated women arrange nutritious food to one and all in the family. They can look after their health and the health of the whole family. It is well known that "Health is wealth". This is more true today, when the cost of medical treatment and medicines is very high.
- (iii) Women's education creates social and political awakening in women. They are able to attend social and political meetings more actively, at present. Further, they are able to secure benefits for themselves and for the society.
- (iv) Women's education enables women to keep away from superstitions and develop rational outlook.
- (v) Women's education makes possible democratic governance in different countries in the world.
- (vi) Women's education helps women to take positive and useful decisions either in domestic matters or other matters. These decisions bring both social and economic benefits. The educated mother in the family encourages both boys and girls to attend schools and colleges. She develops them as responsible citizens. She knows well, how to minimize household expenditure with maximum benefits. In case of need, she can take on employment and assist in the economic development of the family and the country.
- (vii) Women's education can lower infant mortality rate.
- (viii) Women's education can bring down fertility rates. In Bangladesh, "one of the biggest benefits of the education is seen in reduced

fertility", writes R. Prasad, a correspondent, THE HINDU.

- (ix) Women's education can lower maternal mortality rates. Bangladesh witnessed a 40 per cent reduction in maternal mortality during the period 2000 and 2010, according to R. Prasad.

5. What are the problems, which hinder women's education and development?

The problems, which hinder women's education and development are:

- (i) lack of adequate number of schools and colleges, particularly in villages.
- (ii) dearth of qualified teachers.
- (iii) unsuitable curriculum.
- (iv) lack of well-equipped libraries and laboratories in some schools and colleges.
- (v) lack of necessary facilities to play sports and games.
- (vi) poverty and consequent decision of parents to employ their children in work for money.
- (vii) drop outs, particularly in high school and college stages.
- (viii) lack of facilities to working women at workplace.

6. What are the steps to be taken to promote women's education and social development?

The following are the steps to be taken to promote women's education and social development.

- (i) to impart education with values, quality and content.
- (ii) to establish adequate number of schools and colleges, particularly in villages.
- (iii) to appoint the required number of qualified teachers in schools and colleges.
- (iv) to introduce such curriculum that can be practically useful to women.
- (v) to arrange well-equipped libraries and laboratories in schools and colleges.
- (vi) to provide women, necessary facilities in educational institutions to play sports and games to improve their health.
- (vii) to provide financial assistance to poor parents and convince them to send their children to educational institutions.
- (viii) to provide women, a safe mode of transport and bicycles to go to schools and colleges.
- (ix) to ensure that there are no drop outs, particularly at high school and college stages.
- (x) to provide women, access to basic health care services.
- (xi) to provide working women, the facilities they need at their workplaces.
- (xii) to pay working women the full salary due to them, regularly.

7. Opinions of writers

(i) As regards the desirability of not neglecting women's education, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India expresses thus his opinion:

For my part, I have always been strongly of the opinion that while it may be possible to neglect men's education, it is not possible or desirable to neglect women's education. The reasons are obvious. If you educate the women, probably men will also be affected thereby, and in any event, children will be affected.

(ii) As for the amenities and conveniences to be provided to working women at the workplace, Suparna Banerjee, an author opines:

In order for a woman to be able to hold down a job, it is essential that her employer provides her with certain amenities and conveniences needed to balance the demands on her made by her domestic duties on the one hand and those of the job on the other.

8. Conclusion

The role of woman in any society, whether as house-wife or career woman is very important. As a house-wife, she looks after her family, the home and the society. It is essential to enable her to realize her potential. For this purpose, opportunities for her education and development are to be provided. Of course, women's education throughout the world is on the increase. Women have been participating in many activities related to them and to the society. But, women have to improve themselves and develop further. In this regard, what is needed today is: (i) to give due importance to women's education and development, (ii) to encourage women to take active part in the task of building better society and better world, and (iii) to remember the words of Swami Vivekananda about the education we want: "We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet".

REFERENCES

1. Claudia Zeisberger, "Ready for the female talent explosion?", THE HINDU, Empower, | 2 April 2014, Vijayawada ed.,; 15. Claudia Zeisberger is an affiliate professor of | decision sciences, entrepreneurship and family enterprise at the International | business school, Insead and academic director of Insead's Global Private Equity | Initiative. | 2. Good, C.V Dictionary of Education, McGraw-Hill Books Co., New York., 1973. | 3. Jawaharlal Nehru Selected Speeches, Volume Three, 1953-1957, Publications Division, | Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, | 1996:398. ISBN: 81-230-0422-2. | 4. Maurus, J. Something to think off, The Allahabad Saint Paul Society, Allahabad, 1978:54. | 5. Prasad, R. "Bangladesh: women's education cuts maternal, child mortality", | THE HINDU, 3 July 2014, Vijayawada ed.,; 15. | 6. Rajagopalachari, Chakravarti, popularly known as Rajaji, was the first Indian Governor | General of India and one of the greatest statesmen. The lines quoted occur in a | speech delivered by him to the students of a technological institute at Nagpur on | 26 August 1948. These lines reveal the importance of education of women, in | particular. | 7. Suparna Banerjee: "To lean in or not", THE HINDU, 12 April 2013, Vijayawada ed.,; 9. | 8. The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Volume V, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, | India: 342. |