

# The Social Function and Historical Reasons of Female Education

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## ABSTRACT

Female education is an eternal topic. This paper mainly discusses the social function and historical reasons of women's education, which is the basic problem of women's education research. First, it analyzes the social function of female education. This mainly includes four aspects: first, the social function of women's education is that cultural and scientific knowledge can promote the development of women's understanding. Second, women's education can enhance women's awareness of political participation and improve the quality of participation. Third, women's education can promote the development of social material production. Fourth, women's education plays an important role in improving the quality of the whole nation. Next, it discusses the reasons for the lack of female education. This is shown in the following three aspects: first, thousands of years of feudal traditional consciousness in doing mischief. Second, the development of women's education and the realization of its social functions are also restricted by women's own development. Third, the neglect of female education is also related to the underdevelopment of productivity. Women's education is attracting more and more attention from scholars and the public, and it is also an urgent problem to be solved in China's education. This paper aims to promote the improvement of women's education level in China.

**Keywords:** *female; female education; social function; historical reason*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a kind of planned activity that influences the moral education, intellectual education and physical education of the educated according to certain purpose. "Women's education" is to take women as the object of education, which includes more extensive content. In addition to the above contents, all professional, psychological and social education suitable for women's characteristics can be included. What needs to be explained is that due to the limitation of space, the female education mentioned in this paper mainly refers to making women have cultural and scientific knowledge, that is, through various forms and ways including schools, women of all ages are educated in cultural and scientific knowledge. Although the social function of women's education is not a new topic, it still has important practical significance as a theoretical issue. In real life, the phenomenon that women's education is not paid attention to still exists; many surveys and research results also show that the overall cultural quality of China women is still low; at present, many people worry about education system of China

and call for the revitalization of education, one of the problems that puzzles them is the high proportion of female illiteracy and girls' dropout rate. The development of these problems will have a negative impact on our socialist construction and the process of women's Liberation in China. The purpose of writing this paper is to create the atmosphere of attaching importance to women's education and talents in the whole society on the basis of scientific understanding of the social function of women's education, so as to give full play to women's social role.

## 2. THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF FEMALE EDUCATION

### ***2.1 The social function of women's education is that cultural and scientific knowledge can promote the development of women's cognition.***

The object of cognition includes two aspects: subject and object. The subject of cognition is to know women themselves. In the male centered society based on private ownership for thousands of years, Chinese

women's self-consciousness has been distorted and submerged step by step in the cultural atmosphere with Confucian morality as the main body in the past dynasties, so that women's understanding of themselves is limited to the concept of "men are in charge of women's obedience" and "men are superior to women's inferiority". Their life experience is so sad but unconscious. In his novels, Lu Xun has painfully provided a group of such women's typical examples: Xianglin sister-in-law donating her hard-earned money to the threshold; Shan Si sister-in-law who has no tomorrow but is looking forward to "tomorrow"; and the nine Jin old lady who laments that "one generation is inferior to another" from time to time. Ignorance made them agree with the feudal criterion of "men are superior to women" and "husband is wife" without hesitation, which makes them never think that they must change their own destiny and realize their responsibility to the country and society. Women's liberation, in the final analysis, depends on their own awakening and struggle. But without knowledge, there is no thought. If knowledge is lacking, thought is simple. Knowledge is the basis of human thinking, which can improve people's thinking ability. Therefore, it can help women to have a rational understanding and evaluation of their own attributes, history, status and mission from the perspective of culture and education. Among the women's patriotic activities since the Revolution of 1911 and the May 4th Movement, the young women who had been educated on different occasions were the first to realize that women's education played an important role in enlightening their thoughts. It will not only help women understand themselves, but also help them understand the world objectively. In the relationship between man and the objective world, man is in a dominant position, and knowledge is the constituent element of man as the subject. Knowledge restricts the depth and breadth of people's understanding of the objective world, that is to say, different levels of cultural knowledge lead to different levels of understanding of the objective world. People like to say that women have "long hair and short insight". In fact, many studies have confirmed that there is no obvious difference in intelligence level between men and women. This situation was caused by the fact that the feudal society deprived women of their right to education and even limited their ability to understand the outside world. Women's education will reshape the image of women from the perspective of culture, science and technology.

## ***2.2 Women's education can enhance women's awareness of political participation and improve the quality of participation.***

People often use "women's participation in politics" as an indicator to measure the process of women's Liberation and the degree of social progress. Our socialist system guarantees women's equality with men

in political status in law. Participation in political affairs is a democratic right enjoyed by women as citizens and is also their obligation to the state. However, the traditional consciousness of "men dominating the outside world and women dominating the interior" has a far deeper impact on people than the actual legal provisions. Even though they have been given the right to participate in politics, many of them do not know what "participation" is and how to use this right. Participation requires not only the consciousness of willing to participate, but also the practical ability to participate. The realization of these, knowledge is an essential and important factor. In his book <Comparative Politics>, American scholar Almond divides people into three categories: narrow-minded, submissive and participant. The narrow-minded people generally only have the education level below primary school, and they generally only pay attention to their own living conditions, and do not care about political ; obedient people only receive primary education, and have poor cognitive and analytical ability, and are politically submissive; the participants generally have university culture, who have political observation, are good at thinking and analyzing, and are willing to make their views known to the public. The division of American scholars is not necessarily scientific, but he raised a problem: the development of democratic political system must improve people's culture. The construction of democratic system requires all members of society to have conscious political consciousness, among which women are naturally involved. As for the quality of participation, on the one hand, it depends on practice, on the other hand, on the improvement of cultural and scientific quality. In the investigation of female leading cadres, most of them have talked about the hope of further study. As early as the 1911 Revolution, after the failure of women's first struggle for the right to participate in politics, the bourgeois revolutionary party members had summed up their lessons: they thought that women's cultural level was not high and they lacked the ability to participate in politics. They should be educated, increase their knowledge, especially the knowledge of law and politics, so as to create conditions for their participation in politics. Sun Yat Sen also held this view: "today's women's organizations should be initiated by women. Education should be advocated so that women's knowledge can be popularized. Only then can they compete with men for rights, and then they will be able to win." It can be seen that the purpose of women's education isto enable most Chinese women to consciously participate in social activities and realize their own values in politics, so as to show their conscious political consciousness.

### ***2.3 Female education can promote the development of social material production.***

In the construction of socialist modernization, women have become a large army that can not be ignored. Firstly, the improvement of women's cultural and technological level will promote the development of productivity. Comrade Deng Xiaoping believed that science and technology are the primary productive forces and emphasized the importance of knowledge to the development of productive forces. Man's labor includes physical and intellectual expenditure. Only relying on physical strength to transform the nature, after all, is limited. Over the past few years, the activities of "double learning and double comparison" carried out among rural women have made more and more women realize that their capabilities come from the power of knowledge. Women working in the field of science and technology contribute to getting rid of the backward state of society and constantly moving towards a more advanced and civilized stage. Secondly, women's education can create more wealth for the society. Of course, this is achieved indirectly and through the education. Many female scientists, whose inventions are applied to the society, create social wealth that is priceless. In rural areas, the "double learning" activity, which started with literacy, made the illiterate women change their traditional mode of production after learning culture and mastering science and technology, and carried out scientific farming and breeding, resulting in the emergence of many "Grain Growers" and various specialized farmers led by women. The fruits of their labor flowed into the society. It can be said that this is a wealth transformed by knowledge.

### ***2.4 Women's education plays an important role in improving the quality of the whole nation.***

In carrying out the modernization drive, the problem of people's quality has been raised. Of course, quality is not only a cultural issue, including cultural education, mental outlook, physical condition, moral quality, legal consciousness, etc., but cultural education is the foundation. The cultural quality of women, who account for half of the population, will directly affect the quality of the whole nation. Liang Qichao witnessed the tragic situation of women's ignorance, and the dangerous situation of the country. He once sighed with deep emotion that "gathering 20 million vagrants, the country is geometric but not harmful". Obviously, he regarded the ignorance of half of the population as one of the reasons for the decline of the country, so he urged to change the situation and set up a women's school. From the long-term goal of improving national quality, women's education will also play an irreplaceable role. Women's cultural quality is directly related to the care, training and education of the next generation. In order to improve the quality of the population, the Chinese

government has put forward the slogan "good birth and excellent birth". Whether these can be realized and to what extent will be closely related to the educational level of mothers and those who will be mothers. In a broad sense, family education is the foundation of all education, and the mother is the first teacher. Children's early intellectual development is often related to the mother's words, deeds and methods. From the comparison of urban and rural women in China, urban women are able to accept the propaganda and education of life knowledge because of their higher education level. Especially the educated women, they can realize that eugenics is not only responsible for the family, children, but also the society. Therefore, we should start with fetal education and infant education, which will lay a good foundation for school education and social education in the next step. On the contrary, if women's cultural quality is poor, they will inevitably unconsciously use the primitive means behind material production to raise their offspring, which is likely to damage countless talents and lead to the deterioration of population quality. To a certain extent, women's education can avoid and remedy this loss.

## **3. THE REASONS FOR THE LACK OF FEMALE EDUCATION**

Women's education in China has a history of nearly 100 years since Liang Qichao advocated the establishment of women's schools during the reform. Although it started nearly a century later than the west, it awakened a group of women to know themselves and society in the process of development, and embarked on the road of emancipating themselves and transforming society. Especially after the founding of the people's Republic of China, the large-scale literacy campaign and the legal guarantee of the equal rights of men and women to education have greatly improved the overall cultural quality of Chinese women compared with before liberation. This has indeed played a positive role in improving women's status, promoting social development and improving the quality of the whole people. Since women's education is so important, why do people's understanding of women's education not so profound in real life? Why is there a tendency to despise female education and female talents in our society? Why do women themselves have the phenomenon of self indulgence and low culture? These not only hinder the development of women's education, but also affect the realization of social functions of women's education.

### ***3.1 Thousands of years of feudal traditional consciousness.***

Because Chinese traditional culture emphasizes the idea that "women without talent is virtue", women's education in ancient China has always been ignored. At

present, although this concept is not accepted by people, but because of its spread and reproduction for thousands of years, the national subconscious still affect people's thinking and behavior for quite a period of time. Do you mean "It makes the expectation of women far lower than that of men, whether in family or society"?

### ***3.2 Restricted by women's own development.***

Women's education first acts on people, that is, to impart cultural and scientific knowledge to women, and then to society through them, that is, to realize the social function of women's education. Then, it is very important for women's own situation. Women's values in traditional culture have been deposited as weak links in women's psychology, such as the attachment of husband's honor to his wife and the love of his husband and his children's education, coupled with the inert psychology caused by the small-scale peasant economy, which makes women lack the initiative consciousness to strive for more education opportunities for themselves, or are satisfied with the current situation of low culture. This has a lag effect on the popularization and improvement of women's education, and makes it difficult to form a virtuous circle between the realization of women's education and its social functions.

### ***3.3 It is related to the undeveloped productivity.***

At present, China is in the primary stage of socialism, and the level of productivity growth is not high enough and extremely unbalanced. The economic poverty, simple labor, heavy housework and lack of leisure time caused by this kind of productive forces affect the development of women's education. In addition, the rural women and some urban women workers engaged in manual labor and simple technical operation do not require high education level, nor can they stimulate their pursuit of high education and knowledge.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The importance of women's education needs to be improved. Although education as a theoretical issue has been repeatedly mentioned, the party and the government have repeatedly stressed the importance of education. "Ten years of trees, a hundred years of people." Education can not directly create economic value, nor can it be effective in the short term. Therefore, we should have a long-term vision and strategic development goals in the practice of education. With the development of economy and society and the progress of education concept, the whole society attaches importance to education, talents, and then to female education, which has gradually formed an atmosphere.

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