

Womens education research paper

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Women in the United States of America have come from a troubled history that initially saw them as second citizens. Perhaps the development within the place and role of the woman in society shows how the United States' democracy has grown. In a continuous flow, women in the United States of America may now enjoy suffrage rights, seek education and participate in contests for political office. The best illustration of the achievement women have made can be seen in the 2008 Democratic Presidential candidacy of Hillary Rodham Clinton. However, this paper shall be limited to the strides women have made in the area of education. It is instructive to note that overtime, American women have evolved from a domesticated lot to joining professional ranks and contributing effectively to the national and international economies. This paper seeks to trace the historical journey of women in education. It is imperative to appreciate the strides made and in equal measure advocate for an even more informed realization of education of women.

United States of America up to the late 1800s believed women had no need and right to education. In those times, education was a preserve of men. Colored in this gender discrimination was ethnic and racial discrimination. Indeed, women alongside minorities like the Black Americans were denied several if not all rights which today one may argue are unalienable to human beings. Women did not exercise suffrage rights and could neither attend school or any form of formal learning organizations. The general belief then was that women were supposed to handle domestic chores and leave issues of commercial economics to the men. This position remained in place till early 1800s when the agitation for women empowerment began.

It is essential before considering the 1800s' strides to account for the state of affairs pre-1800s. Women did not participate in the economic development of the nation. Indeed, women sufficed for house chores. The economic position of women was low. They relied on their husbands, fathers and brothers for upkeep. The problem was informed by the deceptive conception during that time. Women were thought of as lesser beings with lower intelligence. In fact, extremists up to date still cling to this archaic argument. They use the existing evidence and records conveniently to show that women have been generally on the lower radar when it comes to intelligence levels. However, this needs to be analyzed and consumed in perspective. It must be noted that women are generally bundled with loads of issues that affect and contribute to their lower intellectual outplay. This, however, must not be read to infer that women are in any way intellectually inferior. This retrogressive reason happened to influence the developments pre-1800s. In overall, it made women generally dependent on the men. In that power relation, the word of man was final, hence the popular saying, "it's a man's world."

1800 is rich with remarkable historical accounts of the strides women made in education. However, this paper shall only cover some of the outstanding strides that point to a direction of success for women. In July 1840 Catherine Brewer earned her bachelor's degree at the University of Wesleyan, then a college. This was remarkable in the sense that it was the first time a woman earned a bachelor's degree. This development came amid agitation by feminists and women sympathizers for access to education to be extended to the womenfolk. Therefore, the graduation of Catherine Brewer came in as

a boost on the groups in support of the agitation. This opened the space for women to pursue education up to college level which then was the main form of higher education (today higher education surpasses degree level to masters and doctorate levels). Nine years later, in 1849, efforts towards education for women received a boost when Elizabeth Blackwell graduated from medical school being the first female medical graduate and equally topping her class in Geneva Medical School. This direction motivated women all over the country to pursue their education dreams. The world was slowly awakening to the reality that women too could pursue education. Within the same discourse, the Blackwell graduation was used illustratively to show that women could perform in areas considered to be traditionally a man's reserve. The fact that Blackwell emerged top in a class of a relatively difficult science sufficed to prove naysayers wrong on the face. It was really a historical occasion for the womenfolk in the United States of America. It should be appreciated that the terrain after the two mentioned instances was receptive of women education. In the same century, Mary Jane Patterson became the first African-American woman to receive a bachelor's degree, Helen Magill earned a doctorate in Greek studies and Ada Kepley became the first female legal graduate from law school.

However, incidentally, while the 1880s afforded the women an opportunity to get education, it did little in improving their place in society. Indeed, the retrogressive reasoning still persisted. It took a new form seen in what women were allowed to interact in. Incidentally, women were seen as being suitable for caregiving work mainly nursing and teaching. Sadly, this misconception persists to date with male chauvinists opining that women

should be denied access to some professions seen as a preserve for men. While women accessed education, they did not get jobs commensurate with their qualifications and competencies. Instead, a majority of the women were compelled to work in lower ranks and or alternative jobs which were nonetheless inferior to what their male counterparts engaged in. In addition, wages and salaries offered to women were lower. The argument in support of paying women less as compared to their male counterparts had an international foundation. The general reasoning then was that women were not to be paid as much as men. The motive flung from the fact that they had little or no financial commitment, and that paying the woman the same would reduce the men to the woman's level. However, it should be noted that women did not entirely give up on their pursuit of education. Therefore, while the 1880s offered the women education opportunities, the working environment was negative and prohibitive. This demoralized some of the women who opted out of work. Instead, women would opt for marriages and reduce themselves to keeping the family. The typical housewife concept was general in such times. It is noteworthy, however, that the women in these generations were informed and at a better bargaining position. Such women would argue for the education of their children despite their gender. This approach is seen as the onset for an education of the women.

The period between 1800 and 1970s does not offer much in terms of progress in the education of women. Worth observing is the fact that women at least had a chance to access education. This period equally represents the growth of the United States of America. It was during this period that

America witnessed the civil war that would lead to the declaration of independence and the end of slavery by America's iconic president Abraham Lincoln. It is the end of this period that would see the agitation for civil rights led by celebrated activist Dr. Martin Luther King. At the same time, it is significant to mention the developments in the legal system seen in Brown v District Board of Education. Although the case would be more relevant in cases of Black empowerment, it is of equal significance to appreciate that the seven students denied admission were all girls. The court in declaring that they be allowed admission passed a vote on the education of the black woman. However, despite the celebrated developments of this period, it is not until 1970s that real change was witnessed in the American women education.

1970s would be remembered in the calendar of women for two main Acts enacted at that time. Title IX of the Education Amendment Act, 1972 effectively eliminated discrimination based on sex by boards administering federal aid to college students. This Act was remarkable since it facilitated access to federal aid by the womenfolk. By eliminating discrimination, the law indicated by theory and practice that it considered man and woman equal in all rights including education. Two years later, in 1982, the Women's Educational Equity Act was enacted facilitating a state of equity for the womenfolk. It is on those premises that women have worked up the ladder to date.

This final section seeks to examine the changing trends in the United States of America. Researchers have observed that the journey the womenfolk have endured has led to changes in five main domains. These are family, people,

education, employment and health. Incidentally, the connecting thread in all the five domains is education. In other words, the accessibility to education by the womenfolk is responsible for the consequential improvement in their standing in the five domains. In addition, it has been observed that over the last forty years, women have made more progress than their male counterparts in terms of education. In fact, statistics indicate that currently, more females are enrolled for education at the university level. However, in the midst of this impressive statistics is the worrying trend of women shying away from science and mathematical courses. Most of the women have concentrated in the humanities. This trend only contributes towards women involvement in care giving professions such as nursing and teaching. In the long run, it is imperative for women to bridge this apparent gap and participate conclusively in the development of the nation through an involvement in the sciences.

In conclusion, this paper appreciates the troubled history that characterizes women`s education in the United States of America. It equally assumes the position that the terrain has since changed and is supportive. Women need to capitalize on the opportunities currently availed and continue to agitate for more. In cases where affirmative action is justified, such must be entertained so that in the long run a state of equality in society is achieved.

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