

# ROLE OF WOMEN'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

"Higher education for women, whether taken up by a women's university or by a co-educational institution, has a certain role to acknowledge and perform."

This is the topic discussed by the conference or "consultation on designing education for to-morrow's women" held in Madras, India, 2-6 December, 1977, attended by participants from all over India.

A final report was drawn, out of which the following extracts are worthy of consideration.

The role of higher education for women was summarized by the following points:

1. Promoting a new image and identity for today's women.
  2. Designing a more adequate educational program to tap woman's potential and to meet her needs.
  3. Offering new courses centered on women's studies.
  4. Developing an awareness among both men and women of the constraints that society has placed upon women, which have stifled their growth and reduced their contribution to development.
  5. Helping women to become agents of social change and promoters of social justice for all.
- Recommendations of the conference

regarding developing women's leaderships:

There should be a career counselling center in the college or university, staffed by a group of committed competent women, to help the students choose the right career.

Through notice-boards, college bulletins, debates, and other activities, publicity should be given to the status of women (in India or elsewhere). Special attention should be paid to cases of actual infringement of women's rights.

Profiles of women leaders should be included in textbooks for study. The struggle for women's rights could be presented through dramas and film shows. Students should be encouraged to contact and interview women leaders and active feminists.

The library should contain a special section on women's studies in a prominent place.

Colleges should foster political leadership by helping students to understand the need for women in politics, the type of legislation they could initiate for the benefit of women and for the whole country.

## Towards equality

The equality of women is not

only a matter of national development but is basically one of women's fundamental rights as human beings.

Women must be given decision-making positions. In the family, they should have an equal say in deciding every matter concerning the family.

They should have the right to choose their role in society, which may or may not coincide with their biologically determined role.

## Educational Orientation

Women's colleges should be given freedom to design employment oriented courses such as poultry farming, printing and dyeing, designing and manufacture of electronic components, garment making, food canning, etc.

Women's colleges should provide information on sex-education, child rearing and family planning.

Women's colleges should consider that they have a special duty to help in the eradication of illiteracy, which is much more prevalent among women than among men, through the establishment of adult education centers and preparation of basic education programs for adults.

## Article 562 of the Lebanese Penal Code must be amended

This article, which has repeatedly been attacked by feminists as well as by the Women's Rights Committee, stipulates that "any man who surprises his wife, his sister, his daughter, or other kinswoman in flagrant act of adultery and kills her without premeditation, benefits from alleviating circumstances." The penalty to which he is condemned does not usually exceed that im-

posed on those who violate the traffic regulations, i.e., a few weeks imprisonment.

On the other hand, women who kill their adulterous husbands have no right to any alleviating circumstances.

Mr. Bakhos, lawyer and member of the Lebanese Parliament, has recently submitted to his colleagues

a law project claiming the amendment of laws regarding adultery and especially article 562.

An amendment is equally necessary in the penal code of all other Arab and Eastern countries where the laws on adultery are still based on the "double standard" which oppresses women and considers men as a privileged class.