

Despite Record Gains for American Women in the Eighties, Black Women Still Pay Heavy

Price of Double Discrimination

First in a Series of Comprehensive Portraits of the American Woman
Released by Policy Research Group

Despite record increases in earnings, labor force participation, educational achievement and political clout over the past 15 years, equality remains elusive for many American women—and especially for the nation's 14 million Black women. They continue to bear the double burden of race and sex discrimination, keeping them disadvantaged with regard to income and employment.

The traditional view of Black women and their families as "deviant" from norms based on White middle-class ideals has thwarted effective solutions to the problems Black women face, and more appropriate methods are needed to assess female-headed Black families.

These are some conclusions of a major new report released last month by the Women's Education & Research Institute (WREI), a nonprofit re-

• A study of the broadcasting industry found that stories filed by women correspondents accounted for less than 15% of all on-air stories at all three networks during March, 1986. Stories filed by women of color accounted for just 0.9%. While women staffed only 14% of technical broadcasting jobs (not traditionally held by women) in 1985, minorities were rather well-represented—in television, 14% were Black and in radio, 23%.

At a press breakfast held at the National Press Club to release the report, WREI President, actress Jean Stapleton, said, "This report should be required reading for every man and woman of voting age. Its sound research should form the basis of enlightened public policy designed to eliminate the last barriers that prevent American women from achieving equality in this century."

THE AMERICAN WOMAN includes extensive statistical charts, highlights of the major chapters and a review of 1986 events related to women. Review chapters are available upon request. THE AMERICAN WOMAN

was made possible by grants from the Ford Foundation, AT&T Foundation, Sears, Roebuck and Co., Chevron Corporation, the George Gund Foundation, and RJR Nabisco, Inc.

Softcover copies of the book can be ordered directly from WREI for \$9.50 each, including postage and handling. Orders must be prepaid. Check or money order should be sent to: WREI/THE AMERICAN WOMAN, The Women's Research & Education Institute, 1700 18th Street, N.W., No. 400, Washington, D.C. 20009. Copies are also available for \$7.95 in bookstores nationwide.



HEALTH WATCH

BY Steven Bailey, N.D.

To the Teen "Parent-To-Be"

For what ever reason, you're going to have a baby. Teen mothers are considered one of the "highest risks" for a problem birth. Why?

There are many reasons, some of which include: poor pre-natal health care, poor pre-natal habits, the stress of birth and hospital.

Pre-natal Care: It is very important to see a doctor, nurse, or midwife at least once a month. Many problems can be caught and corrected while they are still small.

Pre-natal Habits: "You are what you eat" can be extended to "as you eat, so your baby grows" (Nikki Goldbeck). Smoking, drinking, large amounts of coffee or Coke, taking drugs, lack of exercise can all lead to problem births. Eat whole foods (veggies, grains, beans, whole wheat bread, etc.), and limit the amount of sugar you consume (Twinkies, doughnuts, sugar, honey, ice cream, etc.).

Stress of Birth: Attending "pre-natal" classes can help you be more educated and relaxed with the birth process. These classes are generally free to expectant mothers and fathers.

Play: "Daughters of Eden"

THIS IS A TRUE STORY. The history books were never like this! In 1903 a preacher came to a small rural town in Oregon and started a holy roller NUDIST CULT. The men hated him. The women loved him. It tore the town apart. We dare to present the true story, in "Daughters of Eden" an original play by Jan Baross and Victoria Parker. This is a NEW WORK, hot off the word processor and straight into the psyche of an unsuspecting public. If playgoers are game, they may participate in feedback for the new work after the performance.

The performance is scheduled for September 28, 29, and 30, 1987, 8:00 p.m. at Storefront Theater, 6 S.W. 3rd. The price of admission is \$7.

Jan Baross is an award winning Film/Video writer/director/producer who has turned her hand to playwriting. She found the story of the preacher ten years ago and plans to turn the play into a feature film.

Victoria Parker is an award winning stage actress/director/writer who recently wrote a successfully produced play with Jim Blashfield, called "Bird of Paradise".

search group that channels research on women into the policymaking process. Top scholars contributed essays on women and the family, women in the economy and the recent women's movement to "THE AMERICAN WOMAN 1987-88: A REPORT IN DEPTH," the first in a series of annual reports on the status of American women. The status of Black women is addressed throughout the 350-page report, which also includes a chapter on "Images of Black Women" projected in recent social science studies.

Extensive statistical data document American society's resistance to full equality for all women. Despite advances in educational attainment and job opportunities, women remain concentrated in low-paying occupations. "THE AMERICAN WOMAN" documents an increase in the poverty rate among children in household headed by minority women, continuing inequities in wages paid to women of all educational levels, a significant increase in the numbers of mothers of young children who work outside the home, and the fact that women in paid jobs still bear most of the responsibility for housework and family care. It also suggests that changes in family structure—divorce, desertion or teen pregnancy—may be as much a response to poverty as a cause.

"I welcome this book that updates our information and understanding," said Dr. Dorothy Height, President of The National Council of Negro Women, after reviewing an advance copy. "It is a valuable resource for everyone who works to eliminate sexism and racism in order to achieve equality for all women in our society."

Highlights of the report include:

- Blacks of both sexes have lower life expectancies than their White counterparts. A Black woman born in 1984 could expect to live 73.7 years; a White woman, 78.8.
- Until 1950, Black women married at a younger age than White women; now they marry considerably later and many forgo marriage all together. Black women are less likely to remarry after divorce than White women.
- Contrary to popular belief, the rate of teenage pregnancy in the U.S. has declined sharply since 1960, but pregnant teens today are much less likely to marry. By the time they reach 18, four percent of unmarried White women and 27% of unmarried Black women have borne children.
- Poverty among women and children in female-headed families is exceptionally high. Nearly one-half of the women who raise their children alone are poor; among Blacks, the figure is over one-half. As of 1985, three in four (78%) children in Black female-headed families were living below the poverty level.
- Among Black women in 1985, 35% had completed four years of high school and 25% had completed one or more years of college.
- In 1974, women were just 46% of college students; ten years later, they were 52%—equal to their proportion of the general population. In 1982, of the 6.4 million college women, 15% were members of minority groups. Among Blacks, American Indians and Hispanics, women's enrollment exceeded that of men.
- The proportion of Black women participating in college athletics and receiving scholarships is increasing. Only 9% of all freshman women receiving athletic financial aid in 1977 were Black, but by 1982, the figure had increased to 15%.
- In April, 1986 Black women had the highest labor participation rate (56.9%) among women, compared to 54.3% for White women and 49.6% for Hispanics.
- Women of all races remain heavily concentrated in a few low-paying, traditionally female occupations. In April, 1986, more than half (54.7%) of all Black women were either service or administrative support (includes clerical) workers. The percentage of all employed women in such jobs was 48%, of all men, 15.3%.
- For all families, a second pay check significantly improves the standard of living. For Black married couples, median income in 1984 was \$14,502 when the wife was full-time homemaker, compared with \$28,775 when she was in the labor force. The poverty rate among Black families with two earners was only 5.4% compared to 27.1% for Black couples with a single worker.

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