**ASSESSING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD: A CASE STUDY OF IJEBU ODE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OGUN STATE**

**ABSTRACT**

This study was carried out to assess the role of women in child’s social development. Additionally, this project examined the barriers limiting the child’s social development and women’s active role. This study employed the descriptive survey research and the convenience sampling method to enrol 200 women. Two hundred women were randomly selected from Ijebu-ode. The questionnaire was used as the instrument to collect data from the participants. Data analysis was carried out using frequency count and the Pearson correlation statistical tool. The findings of this study revealed that the child’s social development are in stages and a child has to undergo these stages directly or indirectly to achieve optimal social development. This study identified some of the crucial roles of women such as introducing the child to existing society norms and values. This study identified social development limitations such as socio-cultural factors, economic factors and education. This study recommends the campaign awareness by the ministry of women affairs in conjunction with the National Orientation agency. This awareness should be focused on families and child-related institutions.

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **Background of the study**

It is the family that serves as the primary educational institution. In addition to ensuring that their children's physiological and psychological requirements are met, it is intended that families would make every effort to give their children the care and education they require. It is expected that a family will be able to bring up children who will mature into adults and be able to contribute to society. In addition to being able to accept all aspects of life and culture and to transmit them to future generations. Due to the fact that families are the first naturally existing educational society, they are considered to be the core group. Over the course of their childhood, children go through various stages of development in order to get ready for entering the adult world. In order to ensure the continuation of family life, it is imperative that communities and families collectively take responsibility for maintaining language, customs, and all other components of culture.

Women make up the majority of the members of a family who are responsible for important obligations. It is possible for women to perform a wide range of duties and jobs, including managing the household, teaching, cooking, and raising children. Women are also capable of performing a number of jobs. Because they have played such a wide variety of roles, it is impossible to adequately portray the grandeur of these ladies. It is also the women who contribute to the equilibrium of a household. In order for women to be able to make the most significant possible contribution to the development of the nation by respecting nature, the heart, and dignity, it is necessary to uphold and strengthen their status within the family and society (Ridgeway et al., 2024). Women are able to exert control over everything that takes place within the family because of the positions that they play in households. Managing all of the planning requirements, addressing any financial concerns, bringing families together, and performing other activities are all responsibilities that fall on the shoulders of women in this scenario. Dealing with the issue of money coming in and going out is a responsibility that falls on the shoulders of women. Therefore, it is necessary for women to be competent to handle the financial matters of the household. Instructors are also women who work in the field. The level of education that a woman provides to her family is a contentious issue. Due to the fact that education begins at home, parents are the first teachers that their children interact with. That is the source of knowledge that a child acquires about all the new things that occur in his life.

In accordance with Mukeshimana (2024), the child begins to acquire the skills necessary to communicate, consume food and drink, and engage in social interactions. Furthermore, despite the fact that women appear to play a substantial role in the decision-making process inside the family, the decisions that women make are intricately related to the roles that they have traditionally played. This is evidenced by the fact that women are substantially more likely to participate in decision-making processes when it comes to the utilisation of household budgets to pay for day-to-day necessities, including the utilisation of funds from public assistance programmes. According to Bates and John (2023), women are often the ones who make decisions regarding their personal health as well as those concerning whether or not they will have children. In the meanwhile, the decision is something that pertains to education and marriages between minors. In the meantime, the head of the family is often the one who makes decisions on the use of credit and loans, the marriage of children, and the education of children. In spite of this, the primary objective of this research will be to assess the ways in which women contribute to the social development of children.

* 1. **Statement of the problem**

Children's social development can significantly influence several aspects of their overall growth. Social competency is the term used to describe a child's ability to engage in positive interactions with the people in their environment. It has the potential to impact various areas, such as a child's ability to acquire new vocabulary, a high school student's ability to resist peer influence, and an adult's ability to effectively handle life's obstacles. Adeyinka and Muhajarine (2023) found that effective social development can greatly enhance a child's ability to comprehend and participate in social interactions with their classmates. When considering demographic groups, it is crucial to prioritise children as the primary population group for the implementation of social development. The current educational style employed in schools adopts a universal approach towards all pupils, disregarding their individual and distinctive traits.

Furthermore, students are obligated to acquire knowledge without being afforded the chance to fully comprehend the significance of the subject matter. When formulating theories of social development, it is important to examine several aspects. These components encompass emotional state, social behaviour, social interactions, social relationships, peers, and collaboration, among other factors. To ensure the development of a responsible adult who can effectively adapt to modern society, it is crucial to consider and incorporate all of these traits throughout a child's educational journey (Com et al., 2023). A child's social development progresses through several pivotal stages, starting from early childhood and continuing until they reach school age. Although there is variation among children, most of them achieve the same developmental milestones at approximately the same time as their peers. Tracking the social development of a kid may provide challenges compared to monitoring their physical growth. However, it is equally crucial as it influences their interpersonal relationships and self-identity throughout their entire lifespan. For society to reach its highest potential progress, the responsibilities women play are crucial. This is due to the fact that women play a major role in every phase of a child's social development. This is the cause behind this situation. Hence, the objective of this investigation is to acquire comprehension about the manner in which women assist to the social advancement of youngsters.

* 1. **Objectives of the study**

The primary objective of this study is to examine the role of women in the social development of a child. Specifically, this study will to

Determine the various role women play in a child’s social development in Ijebu Ode.

Appraise the factors affecting the role of women in child’s social development in Ijebu ode.

Appraise the factors influencing child social development in Ijebu Ode.

* 1. **Research questions**

What are the various role women play in a child’s social development in Ijebu Ode?

What are the factors affecting the role of women in child’s social development in Ijebu ode?

What are the factors influencing child social development in Ijebu Ode?

* 1. **Research Hypothesis**

Ho: There is no significant relationship between active role of women and child social development.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between active role of women and child social development.

* 1. **Significance of the study**

The findings of this study will be useful to various stakeholders such as mothers, and child educators. It will provide them with insight on the current perception of Ijebu Ode women on children social development. This insight will thereafter serve as a personal reassessment tool for these stakeholders. Also, policy makers may find the result of this study useful when considering data sources that may inform their decisions regarding children social development in Ijebu Ode. Broadly, the findings of this study contributes to scare literature on child’s social development.

* 1. **Scope and limitations**

This study is limited to child’s social development. There are other aspects of children’s development ranging from biological, to psychological and even cultural. However, to ensure precision of findings, this study is limited to social development. Also, the population considered in this project is the Ijebu Ode women. Ijebu Ode has been chosen to ensure the applicability of results. While, the ability to apply the findings of this result in a particular location is an advantage, the location serves also as a limitation in this study. This implies that the findings of this study may not be applied in locations outside Ijebu-ode. However, despite these limitations, the results of this project remained genuine.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Conceptual Framework**

**Socialization**

From a young age, children become aware of the clear and specific societal expectations that exist for boys and girls. Research conducted in cross-cultural settings indicates that youngsters develop an understanding of gender roles by the time they reach the age of two or three. By the age of four or five, the majority of youngsters have fully embraced the gender roles that are considered socially acceptable within their culture (Lo, 2023). Children assume these roles through socialisation, a process in which individuals learn to conform to specific behavioural norms established by societal values, beliefs, and attitudes. For instance, society commonly perceives motorbike riding as a macho pursuit and, hence, associates it with the male gender role. Such attitudes are commonly rooted in stereotypes, which are simplistic beliefs about individuals belonging to a particular group. Gender stereotyping refers to the act of making broad generalisations about the attitudes, characteristics, or behavioural patterns of women or men. Women may be perceived as too cautious or lacking in physical strength to engage in motorbike riding (Cai, 2023).

Imitating the behaviours of important individuals is the initial stage in the formation of an independent identity (Uddin & Azam, 2020). According to Mead's theory of development, children undergo three stages: the preparatory stage, the play stage, and the game stage. In the preparatory stage, which lasts until the age of 2, children imitate the actions of those around them. In the play stage, which occurs between the ages of 2 and 6, children engage in pretend play and struggle to follow established rules. Finally, in the game stage, children can play according to a set of rules and comprehend various roles (Waal et al., 2023). Similar to adults, children also behave as agents by actively promoting and implementing societal gender norms onto others. Nonconforming youngsters may encounter adverse consequences, such as peer criticism or marginalisation, when they deviate from the expected gender role. While a significant number of these fines are not officially imposed, they can nonetheless have a substantial impact. For instance, a lady who desires to enrol in karate classes rather than dance lessons may be labelled as a "tomboy" and encounter challenges in being accepted by both male and female peer groups (Adeyinka et al., 2008). Male individuals, in particular, are prone to experiencing severe mockery and criticism for not conforming to traditional gender expectations (Adeyinka et al., 2008).

Children acquire knowledge about gender roles through play. Parents commonly provide males with trucks, toy guns, and superhero paraphernalia, which are dynamic toys that encourage the development of motor skills, aggression, and independent play. Daughters are frequently provided with dolls and dress-up clothing that promote caring, social closeness, and role-playing. Research has indicated that children tend to prefer playing with toys that are considered appropriate for their gender, even when toys that are typically associated with the opposite gender are also available. This preference is influenced by the positive feedback that parents provide to children when they engage in behaviour that aligns with traditional gender norms. Such feedback can take the form of praise, active participation, and physical proximity (Akinyemi, 2015). Charles Cooley's theory of the looking-glass self is relevant to gender socialisation as it explains how individuals form their gender identity through their interactions and interpretations of the social environment.

Gender socialisation is facilitated by four primary agents of socialisation: family, schools, peer groups, and mass media. Every agent perpetuates gender roles by establishing and upholding standard expectations for behaviour based on gender. Exposure can also arise from secondary sources, such as religion and the workplace. Continual contact with these substances over a period of time causes individuals, whether male and female, to develop a mistaken belief that their behaviour is innate rather than influenced by societal expectations.

The family serves as the primary institution for socialisation. There is much data indicating that parents engage in distinct socialisation practices with their sons and girls. In general, girls are granted more freedom to deviate from their assigned gender role (Akombi-Inyang, 2021). Nevertheless, unequal socialisation generally leads to sons being granted more privileges. For example, sons are granted greater autonomy and independence at a younger age compared to daughters. They may be granted more lenient regulations on attire, dating practices, or curfew. Furthermore, sons are frequently exempted from engaging in domestic responsibilities like as cleaning, cooking, and other household jobs that are traditionally associated with femininity. Daughters are constrained by societal expectations to exhibit passivity and maternal qualities, display general obedience, and assume domestic duties.

Despite parents' aspirations for gender equality, there may still be subtle signs of inequity. For instance, boys may be assigned to remove the rubbish or carry out other activities that demand physical strength or resilience, whereas girls may be assigned to fold clothes or fulfil responsibilities that necessitate tidiness and attentiveness. Research has revealed that men tend to have stricter expectations regarding adherence to traditional gender roles compared to mothers. Furthermore, these expectations are more pronounced for their sons than for their daughters (Antai, 2011). This holds true across various domains, encompassing toy preferences, play patterns, disciplinary approaches, household responsibilities, and individual accomplishments. Consequently, males have a heightened sensitivity to their father's rejection while participating in activities that are traditionally seen as feminine, such as dancing or singing (Asante et al., 2018). Parental socialisation and normative expectations differ based on social class, race, and ethnicity. Research conducted by Biradar et al. (2019) indicates that African American households are more inclined than Caucasians to demonstrate an egalitarian role structure as an example for their children.

Gender roles and prejudices are further strengthened as a child enters school. Until recently, schools made deliberate and clear attempts to separate and categorise boys and girls. Segregation was the initial stage in the process of stratification. Female students were urged to enrol in home economics or humanities studies, while male students were encouraged to pursue maths and science. Research indicates that gender socialisation continues to take place in schools at present, but in more subtle manifestations (Boco, 2014). Teachers may be unaware that their actions inadvertently perpetuate gender-specific behavioural patterns. Whenever teachers request pupils to organise their seats or form a queue based on gender, they may be implying that boys and girls should be treated in distinct ways (Caldwell, 1990).

Schools quietly communicate messages to girls that imply their intellectual abilities or significance are inferior to those of boys. For instance, in a research examining how teachers reacted to male and female students, the data revealed that teachers bestowed significantly more praise upon male students compared to female students. According to DeWalt et al. (2004), teachers shown a tendency to interrupt girls more frequently and provided guys with greater chances to elaborate on their thoughts. In both social and intellectual contexts, teachers have historically approached boys and girls differently, promoting competition rather than collaboration (EQUATOR Network, 2023). Boys are afforded more leeway to violate rules or engage in tiny acts of deviance, whereas girls are expected to adhere to regulations diligently and assume a compliant role (EQUATOR Network, 2023).

Mass media has a crucial role in shaping gender socialisation. Women in television and films often have less prominent roles and are frequently depicted as spouses or moms. When women are cast in a leading position, they are typically portrayed as either a virtuous and pure character or as a malicious and overly sexualized character (Ezeh et al., 2015). Gender disparities are also widespread in children's films (Ezeh et al., 2015). According to a study conducted by Ezeh et al. (2015), research shows that in the ten highest-earning G-rated films released from 1991 to 2013, nine out of ten characters were male.

Television ads and other promotional methods further perpetuate inequality and reinforce gender-based stereotypes. Ads primarily feature women in the promotion of products linked to cooking, cleaning, and childcare (Grant & Hallman, 2008). Reflect over the most recent occasion when you witnessed a male individual featured as the main character in an ad for dishwasher or laundry detergent. Typically, women are not adequately represented in positions that require leadership, intelligence, or a well-balanced mind. A matter of particular concern is the portrayal of women in manners that strip them of their humanity, particularly in music videos. Violent and sexual themes are frequently found in popular advertising, as noted by Hudson, Pope, and Gylnn in 2008.

**What is social development?**

Social development encompasses the gradual acquisition of skills and abilities that enable a kid to effectively engage and communicate with individuals in their immediate environment. As individuals grow and become aware of their own uniqueness within their culture, they also acquire the ability to interact with others and analyse their own behaviour (Jeon, 2015). Social development primarily pertains to the formation of friendships and other interpersonal connections, as well as the ability of a kid to navigate and resolve conflicts with their peers. This not only demonstrates progress and advancement in physical, mental, and emotional domains, but also in the social sphere. The socialisation process, which occurs throughout one's life, leads to the development of a child's social activities as they mature.

Generally speaking, the social development process aims to organise human activities in order to enhance the outcomes of human endeavours. It involves enhancing the capacity of individuals to reach their maximum potential. Humanity's evolution is characterised by a lack of pattern or predictability across the world (Kananura et al., 2017). While several nations attain elevated levels of living standards, others continue to grapple with the challenge of attaining satisfactory conditions for survival. In addition, there are still significant disparities in even the so-called industrialised countries. While several individuals succeed in self-improvement, others encounter difficulties in assimilating into the system and hence remain at the bottom echelons of society. In a certain nation, issues arise about the availability of education and the varying methods by which individuals absorb that education (Lapointe-Shaw et al., 2018). The lack of global development can be attributed to inter-country disputes and a lack of cohesion.

**Factors of Social development**

The idea that social development has to do with the social life of a people is connected to the fact that social development includes processes that cause an improvement in the welfare and wellbeing of a people in society. This sort of development includes, but is not limited to: reduced vulnerability; political inclusion; safety and security; accountability; freedom from violence, access to education, healthcare, and jobs; skills acquisition and empowerment for entrepreneurship; and access to basic amenities. As rightly proposed by Filgueira and Filgueira (2001), social development is fundamentally concerned with human rights, formal and informal power relations, education, reduction of unfreedoms such as poverty, unemployment, and insecurity, and increasing possibilities for building greater equality among individuals and groups within societies. The following are thus factors that enable social development:

**Engagement in Human rights**

Human rights generally include formally and universally recognized civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights available to people as humans and members of a society. The International human rights law sets out the obligation of countries to respect and fulfil human rights for all; thus, the true engagement of these rights affects the social life of a people and indicates human development (Mitchell, 1993). Human rights for social development rely on mutual accountability, whereby the government and its citizens, communities, and organisations, are responsible for respecting and fulfilling mutually agreed human rights obligations. In simpler terms, without an active engagement in human rights, a society cannot be said to be on the pathway to actualizing a wholesome social development.

**Education**

Education has been noted to encompass the acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary for better functioning as members of a society and improved ability to work and contribute to productivity and development. Education is also recognized as a human right that should be accessed by without discrimination or exclusion. Education is an important factor of social development, particularly as it improves the options of members of the society, and helps the grow socially and economically, reduces poverty, increases knowledge, and fosters peace; thus, it must be available; accessible (including to the most marginalized); of acceptable quality, relevant, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate; and adaptable to suit local context. As noted by Morakinyo & Fagbamigbe (2017), there it is social development cannot be said to be complete and effective if people do not have access to education, or when education is discriminatory.

**Gender equality**

Scholars have noted that persistent and entrenched gender inequalities mean that men and women will experience lower human development outcomes. Beyond limiting the chances of one gender to enjoy certain privileges, gender inequality results in ill health, lower educational levels and poor access to services; thus, from a gender perspective, social development must include ways of addressing social factors perpetuating gender inequality (Neal, Channon AA, and Chintsanya, 2018).

**Social exclusion**

Another important factor of social development is social inclusion. This because, exclusionary processes create inequitable distribution of resources and unequal access to capabilities and rights necessary for human development (Nguyen & Nguyen). The World Bank in its 2019 world development report defines social inclusion as “the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society”, or more precisely “the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society”. Social inclusion includes increased participation in politics, economics, and social life, and unrestricted access to freedom, legal systems, land and labour market (Onyeka et al., 2011).

**Agents of Social development**

As opined by different scholars, such as Ricci et al (2019), the Government, Education institutions, Traditional institutions, and Civil society, are key agencies of social development.

**Government**

The Government is a major driver of policies and actions for development. The government has the responsibility to make laws, generate policies, and initiate actions that bring about development. It is also the responsibility of the state to ensure that the populace have the capacity to meet their basic needs, while enjoying social amenities and security in all ramifications.

**Education institutions**

Education as earlier mentioned involves exposing people to the right skills and knowledge to lead a better life. The knowledge industry is important for social development as it teaches civic rights and responsibilities, equips people with skills that improve productivity, and also generates knowledge and theories for a better society.

**Traditional institutions**

Traditional institutions also play an important role in driving social development. Omole (2016), identified traditional institutions as those social, economic or political organizations or bodies which derive their power, legitimacy, influence and authority from the traditions of a particular people. Traditional institutions are largely informal institutions formed and guided by cultural beliefs and practices, and are actively involved in resource allocation practices, conflict resolution, judicial

systems, and decision-making practices. They can influence behaviour and can drive social changes; thus, can be used to influence behavioural, cultural and institutional changes.

**Civil society**

The role of civil society in driving has been severally emphasized by different scholars. Rosenberg et al (2015), refer to civil societies as autonomous associations that pursue public good through resistance, protest, and advocacy for change, accountability, human rights and democratization of government. Civil society is regarded as the third sector of the society which helps to deepen governance through vibrant social intermediation between the state, business, and family. For Ingram (2020), civil society are those organizations that are not associated with government, however are involved in the welfare needs of the people. This includes schools and universities, advocacy groups, professional associations, churches, and cultural institutions (business sometimes is covered by the term civil society and sometimes not). Civil society organizations play multiple roles. For instance, they are an important source of information for both citizens and government, they also monitor government policies and actions, and hold government accountable. They equally engage in advocacy and offer alternative policies for government, the private sector, and other institutions. Above all, they deliver services, especially to the poor and underserved and defend citizen rights and work to change and uphold social norms and behaviors (Sanders et al., 2019).

**Critical Issues Related To The Role Of Women In Social Development**

Among the critical issues related to the role of women in social development are poverty, gender division of labour, evolving gender roles, sexuality and procreation, socio-political issues, labour force participation, education, health, legal rights within and outside marriage and laws, and practices related to contraception and abortion. The authors will discuss three central issues related to the role of women in social development: poverty, gender, division of labour, and education.

**Poverty**

Despite extensive international endeavours to adopt development plans that prioritise the needs and rights of women, the majority of women in Africa persistently experience poverty (Sanders, 2009). This statement is reinforced by Grown and Sebstad (1993), who observe that despite the recognition of the women's movement in the 1970s and the efforts of the United Nations World Conference to address the issue of women and poverty since 1980, current data still indicates that half of the population in developing nations, specifically women, are living in poverty. Furthermore, as stated by Rosenberg et al (2015), women are experiencing a decline in their economic status, resulting in a higher prevalence of malnutrition and increased susceptibility to various health-related issues, such as HIV/AIDS. They are facing difficulties in obtaining sufficient accommodation and encountering challenges in accessing enough medical facilities. Ricci et al (2019) argue that international aid and development programmes have not achieved their intended goal of improving the conditions of the poor, particularly women. In fact, these programmes have seen an increase in the number of poor individuals, both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the population (Onyeka, 2011). The failure of such programmes is attributed by the authors, in part, to the world's systematic neglect of what Eisler (1987:179) identifies as "women's issues." As a result, millions of individuals are denied their fundamental right to live healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives. Nguyen and Nguyen (2020) start their research by positing that women globally experience economic disparity and that the phenomenon of "feminisation of poverty" is prevalent across all societies. The term "feminisation of poverty" is used by these authors to describe two aspects. Firstly, it refers to the empirical evidence that shows women, who are responsible for themselves or their families, are increasingly becoming the majority among the poor. Secondly, it acknowledges the existence of female poverty, encompassing women who would be poor if they had to support themselves (1990:2). Goldberg and Kremaen conducted a survey of seven industrial countries, including five capitalist nations: the United States, Canada, Japan, Sweden, and France, as well as two socialist nations: the USSR and Poland. In the cross-national analysis, a four-factor framework was used to examine the issue. One of the key findings suggests that "patriarchy" is a shared characteristic in both capitalist and socialist countries, and it hinders the attainment of economic equality for women globally. The prevalence of extreme poverty among a significant number of women worldwide is a clear indication of enduring structural mechanisms and processes that prevent women, particularly those in developing countries, from fully engaging in the formal sectors of economies. These women are denied access to financial resources and have limited opportunities to own land. Essentially, a large number of women worldwide are excluded from participating in the dominant economic system and are forced to live in poverty.

**Gender division of labour and labour force participation**

Historical research indicates that in pre-colonial South Africa, women had a significant role as economically self-sufficient individuals who were responsible for food production within the family (Neal et al., 2018). Morakinyo and Fagbamigbe (2017) assert that women owned land, animals, and had authority over the fruits of their labour. They argue that women were not more reliant on men than men were on women. Women in traditional African society occupied a more prominent and influential role compared to their current status. This is evident in their economic circumstances, their processes of socialisation, and their engagement in activities related to social development. Historically, African women have served as a steadfast and essential support system for their families and society at large. Currently, African women face a dual disadvantage due to their identity as both African individuals and as women (Mitchell, 1993). Nevertheless, existing research indicates that African women, as a collective that has endured years of subjugation, have had challenges in preserving their resilience and autonomy. The challenges faced by women in South Africa are a consequence of systemic mechanisms and processes. The socioeconomic condition of women is directly influenced by restrictive and repressive policies. According to Winter (1993:44), women from all races and social backgrounds have played significant roles throughout the history of South Africa. However, no other action is as important as the one that women in South Africa can take at this critical moment in the country's political and economic progress. According to Charlton (1984:344), women's studies in the twentieth century examine the discrimination faced by women due to factors such as limited education, economic disparities, flawed development strategies, political inequality, as well as gender, status, and racial issues. Research suggests that women face multiple forms of disadvantage, including discrimination based on their ethnicity, social class, and gender. Additionally, they are constrained by traditional cultural norms, societal expectations on their duties, and political values and structures. Kissman (1998:34) states that characteristics such as income, education, work, leisure, and perceptions of competence are linked to the overall well-being of women worldwide. Women's ecology is characterised by distinct features such as occupational segregation, which leads to lower income, and verbal interaction patterns that affect how competence is perceived. According to Boserup (1984), women face risks that hinder their ability to fully participate in planning and implementing social development plans. Indeed, women across the globe have everyday challenges in their pursuit of the equality envisioned in the 1968 Swedish report presented to the United Nations. South Africa exemplifies the considerable challenges encountered by women today, as well as the potential for women to actively contribute to a progressive social development agenda.

As countries transition from an agrarian to an industrialised base, women seem to experience the negative consequences of development the most. With employment possibilities moving to urban areas, women are left behind by their husbands, who have to relocate to cities for work. From a global perspective, women persistently experience economic and social inequality, irrespective of the level of development in their respective countries (Kayode et al., 2017). Lynch (1998:47) proposes that the shared experience of women, regardless of their level of education or their specific circumstances such as being an abandoned farm wife in rural Minnesota, USA, or an African woman juggling work and home responsibilities, is characterised by economic marginalisation.

**Education**

According to the United Nations, the African woman is responsible for producing 70% of the food cultivated on the continent. She exerts greater effort and dedicates more time to her career, assuming a higher level of obligations compared to her husband. She serves as the economic foundation of the rural community, making important family decisions, driving social change, and harvesting crops. According to Lamb (1987:38), she is the central figure who influences and connects various aspects of society. The literature contains abundant facts that demonstrate the incapacity of a significant portion of women worldwide to engage in reading and writing (Kananura, 2017). Due to the various challenges faced by African women and the traditional limitations that hinder their formal education, it is not surprising that literacy rates and rates of educational enrollment are considerably lower for women compared to men in several African countries (Jeon, 2015). Hudson, Pope, and Glynn (2005) additionally state that in Africa, 50% of girls who register in elementary school do not continue their education beyond Form Four, while just 10% of girls successfully finish secondary education. Grant and Hallman (2008) state that in rural Sudan, 33% of girls enrol in primary school, however only 15% of them continue their education in secondary school. Ezeh et al (2015) establishes a connection between the low educational achievement of females in African countries and two primary factors: a conventional inclination to prioritise the education of male offspring, who have a higher likelihood of earning more than their female counterparts, and early marriage. Additional obstacles to the education of African females include restricted availability of schools in rural areas, where 70% to 90% of the African population resides, as well as insufficient financial resources to cover school fees, uniforms, and books. Ezeh et al (2015) argues that limited education and illiteracy not only hinder women's full participation in development, but also impede their capacity to reap the benefits of such development.

**Review of Strategies Implemented By The World To Eliminate Gender Inequality**

Historically, women have implemented a number of strategies in their struggles to eliminate gender inequality. In their struggles against gender subordination, women have organised themselves in various ways – including women’s organisations, sustained women’s movements, and revolts. Outlined below are two of the primary mechanisms employed by women in their struggles for gender equality: women’s organisations and mass movements. Women’s organisations Women’s organisations have played a vital role in the struggle for gender equality across the centuries and throughout the world. Winter (1993) notes that one of the central achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women was the galvanising of women’s organisations across the African continent. According to Turok (1990:136), these organisations assume five basic forms:

1. Progressive women’s organisations which challenge the subordinate position of women, sometimes working underground;
2. Liberal women’s organisations which concentrate on the achievement of legal equality;
3. Conservative women’s organisations which are opposed to women’s liberation and concerned with the propagation of traditional beliefs and practices;
4. Women’s organisations that have developed spontaneously in response to a crisis or around single issues;
5. Women’s organisations formed in response to international aid agencies or NGO's seeking to promote development, which is inclusive of women. There are numerous examples of women’s organisations across Africa – many of which maintain considerable political power and have made significant achievements toward the reduction of barriers which limit women’s opportunities to be full participants in their communities (Logan, 1998; Winter, 1993; Adeyeri, 1994).

Logan (1998) cites the 31st December Women’s Organisation of Ghana, which was established for the purpose of improving the welfare of women and their children through income-producing activities. The organisation brings together women from across the country to work co-operatively to improve the quality of life for themselves and their children. The organisation is novel in part because it consists of women from a variety of socio-economic strata who work collectively to solve the problems they face as women. Logan (1998) notes two of their most recent initiatives – the building of day-care centres and schools in their local communities, which addresses some of the needs women face in the places in which they live. Winter (1994:44) states that “In recent years, there has been a proliferation of women’s organisations and women’s divisions of political organisations in South Africa. Some are highly political; others avoid political involvement but, by their very existence, are challenging the status quo”. Winter cites a number of women’s organisations, such as Women for Peace, which was very active in the struggle against apartheid, and Women’s Legal Status Committee, which have redirected their attention toward post-apartheid issues which concern women (Winter, 1994).

Adeyeri (1994) describes the National Council of Women’s Societies (NCWS) of Nigeria, which is a grassroots organisation encompassing all of the women's organisations in the country, including the Association of University Women and the Society of Women Accountants. The NCWS acts as an umbrella organisation and provides a vehicle through which women may share their collective struggles. Women’s mass movements At different points in history within specific cultural contexts, women have staged mass movements in opposition to gender inequality. Examples of women’s mass movements abound. For example, the Women’s Suffrage Movement of the United States was an extended campaign lead and organised by women which ultimately led to their gaining the right to vote through constitutional amendment. In India women led a massive campaign against rape. In Chile women united to demand the resignation of former Junta General Pinochet. Across the globe women are mobilising themselves against oppression. The organisation of such large movements is not without its challenges; as Gladys Mutukwa, leader of a current mass movement of South African women, points out: “The strength of the women’s movement to face the challenges of the up coming millennium requires us to be better managed, to network more, to be more democratic, to reassess our commitment and to rebuild our skills” (Mutukwa, 1998:18). Drawing strength from the accomplishments of South African-based organisations, women are moving ahead with a contemporary women’s mass movement. Women are mobilising themselves to prepare for this millennium and rallying themselves against the structural and cultural mechanisms which may limit the ability of South African women to be full participants in the South African economy. Women are mobilising themselves into large networks to examine issues of common importance and strategise ways in they may influence the government and international aid agencies to develop a gender-sensitive approach to development. The number of women’s mass movements and the extent of their success in realising meaningful social change consistent with gender-conscious goals of social development suggest that women will continue to use this mechanism in their struggles against gender inequality in this century.

**Theoretical Framework**

Linear stages theories

The linear stages theory of development is an economic model that conceptualises the process of development as a sequence of consecutive stages of economic progress. Advocates of this ideology contend that in order to attain modernity, all cultures must progress through specific stages that signify development and maturation. Walt Whitman Rostow, sometimes known as W.W Rostow, proposed that industrialised nations have undergone five significant stages that facilitated their attainment of socio-economic stability. Rostow's theory outlines the distinct phases that societies progress through during their development: The stages of societal development are as follows: Traditional Society, Precondition for take-off, Take-off, Drive to Maturity, and the Stage of large-scale mass consumption.

According to Rostow (1960), all cultures first start as Traditional societies. These societies are defined by their reliance on subsistence economic activities, where trade is typically conducted through bartering. Additionally, production in these societies is not very intense and relies on small amounts of capital. Rostow observed that societies must progress from their current stage to a transitional stage, which he termed "preconditions for takeoff." During this phase, there is a notable growth in specialisation, resulting in the production of excess goods that can be used for trade. According to Coccia (2019), at this stage, there is a rise in transport infrastructure to facilitate trade. External trade focuses on primary items, and there is an increase in the number of entrepreneurs as well as savings and investment. During the Take-Off stage, there is a significant increase in industrialization, with investment levels exceeding 10% of Gross National Product (GNP). These investments result in higher incomes, which in turn generate more savings to fund additional investments (Coccia, 2019). During the Drive to Maturity stage, industrial diversification occurs as the country expands its production to include a diverse variety of goods and services. Additionally, there may be a decrease in reliance on exports and imports. The stage of High Mass Consumption is the culmination of economic development in a capitalist system, characterised by extensive output and consumerism, leading to a flourishing economy in a country.

**Application theory to Study**

Societal development can be compared to the developmental stages of a child. This theory emphasises the importance of understanding that a socially responsible matured society does not develop all at once. This is a child's case. A child does not achieve social maturity overnight but goes through stages of social transformation to reach social development. Nevertheless, a consistent element in all of these phases is the assistance provided by women to the child. Throughout various stages of social development, there is typically a female figure who offers emotional, psychological, and social support that plays a crucial role in a child's social development.

**Dependency theories**

Dependency theory is a counter to the Eurocentric modernization theory, and aims to elucidate the underlying causes behind the economic underdevelopment of non-European countries. Proponents of the dependence school of thought contend that the issue of underdevelopment is mostly caused by external factors and is linked to interactions with more sophisticated economies (Crossman, 2017; Gavrov and Klyukanov, 2015). The main premise of this ideology is that the global economic system is characterised by significant disparities in the distribution of power and resources, primarily resulting from historical events such as colonialism and neocolonialism. Consequently, this system leaves less developed nations fragmented and reliant on external economies for their survival and productivity. Andre Gunder Frank (1966) posited in his thesis on 'The Development of Underdevelopment' that developing nations have not advanced socially and economically due to the deliberate actions of the developed West, rather than internal obstacles as suggested by modernization theorists. This systematic underdevelopment has resulted in a state of dependency for these nations. This theory expresses concern over the continual increase in industrialization in developed nations, which has the potential to condemn impoverished countries to underdevelopment. This occurs when the economic surplus of poor countries is exploited by developed ones. Andre Gunder Frank observed that economic and technological inequalities between developed countries and peripheral countries were facilitated by factors such as colonialism, globalisation, neocolonialism, and the exploitation of economic surplus in developing countries (Munro, 2018). Theotonio Dos Santos, a prominent scholar of the dependency school of thought, defines dependency as "a condition in which the economy of certain countries is influenced by the growth and dominance of another economy to which the former is subjected" (Dos Santos 1970:231). Dependency theorists contend that underdeveloped nations are not simply less advanced iterations of developed nations, but possess distinct characteristics and systems of their own. However, they are regrettably disadvantaged participants in a global market economy due to their interactions with the Western world and the detrimental effects of slavery, colonisation, political meddling, and imbalanced trade relationships.

**Application of theory to study**

When applying the dependency theory, it becomes evident how children exhibit weaknesses and rely on others. In order to achieve social maturity, children rely on experienced adults to help shape their thoughts and behaviours based on their understanding of social development. Throughout this process, the unwavering support of women has been remarkable.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a a detailed description of the processes and methods applied in collecting and analysing data for this study.

**3.2 Research design**

The study employed the survey descriptive research design to assess the role of women in a child’s social development.

**3.3 Research settings**

This study was carried out in Ijebu Odde. Ijebu-Ode is the largest city inhabited by the Ijebu, a sub-group of the Yoruba ethnic group who speak the Ijebu dialect of Yoruba. The town has been historically and culturally the headquarters of Ijebuland.

The name “Ijebu-Ode” according to Olusola, is a combination of the names of two persons namely, AJEBU and OLODE who were conspicuous as leaders of the original settlers and founders of the town. OLODE was said to be a relative of OLU-IWA the first ruler of Ijebu.

It is difficult to state with certainty who of the two progenitors preceded the other. But tradition has it that Ajebu, Olode and Ajana met on this land which was uninhabited dense forest and consulted Ifa Oracle to determine the actual spot on which one of them should make his abode. The oracle directed that Ajebu should go and settle on a spot now known as IMEPE, Olode and Ajana to remain together at place known today as Ita-Ajana. The grave of Ajebu is still marked by a Tomb erected by his descendants at Imepe, near Oyingbo market on the Ejinrin road. Olode’s grave is also marked at Olode Street at Ita-Ajana quarters, Ijebu-Ode.

Ijebu-Ode town was divided into two main wards namely; Iwade and Porogun. Iwade ward is further divided into two Iwade Oke (also called Ijasi) and Iwade Isale, that is Upper and lower Iwade (North and South). By this division, there are thus three wards in Ijebu-Ode town: Iwade, Porogun and Ijasi.

Each ward was further divided into “Quarters” known as “ITUN, headed by OLORITUN. What could be described as the town council in those days was the council for the Oloritun known as “Oloritun Medogbon”, that is the twenty-five quarter heads.

The people of each Quarter met regularly in the house of the OLORITUN and deliberated on matters affecting them. The Quarter heads in turn also met to discuss larger issues affecting the town. Each Oloritun represented the people of his quarter.

The Awujale and Paramount ruler of the Ijebuland is the ultimate symbol of the ancestral heritage of a people that have carved a niche for themselves, not only among the renowned Yoruba people, but also across the length and breadth of the nation. Today, the Ijebu people have ever growing reverence for their monarch.

**3.4 Sources of Data**

The data for this study were generated from two main sources; Primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources include questionnaire, interviews and observation. The secondary sources include journals, bulletins, textbooks and the internet.

**3.5 Population of the study**

A study population is a group of elements or individuals as the case may be, who share similar characteristics. These similar features can include location, gender, age, sex or specific interest. The emphasis on study population is that it constitute of individuals or elements that are homogeneous in description (Prince Udoyen: 2019). In this study the study population constitute of all the literate women in Ijebu-ode. However, there are no exact data on the number of this population.

**3.6 Sample size determination**

A study sample is simply a systematic selected part of a population that infers its result on the population. In essence, it is that part of a whole that represents the whole and its members share characteristics in like similitude (Prince Udoyen: 2019). In this study, the researcher used the convenience sampling method to determine the sample size.

**3.7 Sample size technique**

Using the convenince sampling method, a total of two hundred (200) women were enrolled in this study after due consent have been obtained.

**3.8 Instrumentation**

This is a tool or method used in getting data from respondents. In this study, questionnaires and interview are research instruments used. Questionnaire is the main research instrument used for the study to gather necessary data from the sample respondents. The questionnaire is structured type and provides answers to the research questions and hypotheses therein.

This instrument is divided and limited into two sections; Section A and B. Section A deals with the personal data of the respondents while Section B contains research statement postulated in line with the research question and hypothesis in chapter one. Options or alternatives are provided for each respondent to pick or tick one of the options.

**3.9 Reliability**

The researcher initially used peers to check for consistence of results. The researcher also approached senior researchers in the field. The research supervisor played a pivotal role in ensuring that consistency of the results was enhanced. The instrument was also pilot tested.

**3.10 Validity**

Validity here refers to the degree of measurement to which an adopted research instrument or method represents in a reasonable and logical manner the reality of the study (Prince Udoyen: 2019). Questionnaire items were developed from the reviewed literature. The researcher designed a questionnaire with items that were clear and used the language that was understood by all the participants. The questionnaires were given to the supervisor to check for errors and vagueness.

**3.11 Method of Data Collection**

The data for this study was obtained through the use of questionnaires administered to the study participants. Observation was another method through which data was also collected as well as interview. Oral questioning and clarification was made.

**3.12 Method of Data Analysis**

The study employed the simple percentage model in analysing and interpreting the responses from the study participants while the hypothesis was tested using Pearson correlation test.

**3.13 Ethical consideration**

The study was approved by the Project Committee of the Department. Informed consent was obtained from all study participants before they were enrolled in the study. Permission was sought from the relevant authorities to carry out the study. Date to visit the place of study for questionnaire distribution was put in place in advance.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age | 30-40 | 40-50 | Above 50 |
| 32 (16%) | 109 (54.5%) | 59 (29.5%) |
| Gender | Female |  |  |
| 200 (100%) |  |  |
| Educational Qualification | Primary | Secondary | Tertiary |
| 37 (18.5%) | 88 (44%) | 75 (37.5%) |

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. A total of 200 participants were enrolled in this survey. A total of 16% were between 30-40 years old, 54.5% were between 40-50 years old, while 29.5% were above 50 years old. The survey consists of 100% women. The educational qualification of the women are primary (18.5%), secondary (44%) and tertiary (37.5%).

**Research Questions Analysis**

Research one: What are the various role women play in a child’s social development in Ijebu Ode?

Table 4.2: **The role of women**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The role of women** | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** |
| Introducing a child to existing society norms. | 122(61%) | 21(10.5%) | 42 (21%) | 15(7.5%) |
| Educating a child on gender roles. | 122 (61%) | 42 (21%) | 15(7.5%) | 21(10.5%) |
| Educating a child on family and society expectations. | 109(54.5%) | 33(16.5%) | 22 (11%) | 36 (18%) |
| Ensures a child’s discipline at different social developmental phases. | 54 (27%) | 112 (56) | 12 (6%) | 22 (11%) |
| Utilizes available resources to ensures effective transition of a child during social development stages. | 110 (55%) | 16 (8%) | 54 (27%) | 20 (10%) |

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 2 shows the role of women and the extent of acceptance for the participants. A total of 71% agreed that as beginner act, introducing the child to societal norms and values are the done by women. A total of 82% agreed that women educate a child on gender roles as part of the social development curriculum. Also, 71% agreed that women educate a child on the family and societal expectations; they maintain discipline for a child (83%); and utilizes available resources to ensure a smooth child transition of social developmental stages.

Research two: What are the factors affecting the role of women in child’s social development in Ijebu ode?

Table 4.3: **Factors influencing women’s active role**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Factors influencing women’s active role** | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** |
| Some socio-cultural factors affects women’s active in a child’s social development. | 123  (61.5%) | 44  (22%) | 14  (7%) | 19  (9.5%) |
| Infrastructural factors can be a limitation to women’s active role. | 109  (54.5%) | 22  (11%) | 69  (34.5) | 0 |
| Economic factors can also be a limitation to the extent women can discharge their duties in the course of a child’s social development. | 23  (11.5%) | 66  (33%) | 98  (49%) | 13  (65%) |

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.3 describes the various encumbrances hindering effective discharge of women’s role in child social development. Some of these limitations includes socio-cultural factors, infrastructural factors and economic factors.

Research three: What are the factors influencing child social development in Ijebu Ode?

Table 4.5: Influences on child social development

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Influences on child social development | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** |
| Poverty affects the quality of child social development. | 86  (43%) | 66  (33%) | 48  (24%) | 0 |
| Family life and setting can influence the quality of a child’s social development. | 22  (11%) | 62  (31%) | 48  (24%) | 68  (34%) |
| Health and nutrition can affects a child’s social development. | 183  (91.5%) | 12  (6%) | 5  (2.5) | 0 |
| Education can affect the quality of a child’s social development. | 134  (67%) | 22  (11%) | 12  (6%) | 32  (16%) |
| The environment of a child can affect his/her social perception and development. | 11  (5.5%) | 44  (22%) | 48  (24%) | 97  (48.5%) |

Source: Field survey, 2024

For a child to attain optimal social development, certain limitation must be eliminated. Sadly, these limitations are increasing in Ijebu-Ode and Nigeria at large. These limitations impend the successful attainment of a child’s social development. Some of these limitations includes, poverty, family life and setting, health and nutrition, education, and the child’s environment.

**Test of Hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between active role of women and child social development

**Table 4.8: Pearson Correlation Table showing relationship between active role of women and child social development**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | CSD | Women role |
| CSD | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .821\*\* |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 52 | 52 |
| Women role | Pearson Correlation | .824\*\* | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 52 | 52 |

**\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

The Pearson Correlation result in Table 4.5 contains the degree of association between child social development and women’s role. From the result, the Pearson correlation coefficient, r, value of 0.821 was positive and statistically significant at (p< 0.000). This indicates that changes in women’s role culture result in changes in child social development.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

* 1. **Summary**

This study was carried out to assess the role of women in a child’s social development. Additionally, this study assessed the barriers to active women’s role in child’s social development. It also examine the obvious limitation impeding child’s development in Ijebu-ode. This study was anchored on two theories. These theories include, the linear stage theory and the dependency theory. This study employed the survey research design and used the convenience sampling method to enrolled two hundred women from Ijebu-ode. The results of this study showed that a child’s social development occurs in stages. The role of women is evident at different stages of the a child’s social development. While the first stage begins at home with the mother of the child, other stages may have women as teachers and directors for a child to obtain optimal social development. The role of women in this wise cannot be overlooked or overemphasized.

* 1. **Conclusion**

The foundation of social development of a child is formed within strong families and especially the extended family. It exhibits characters like, the culture of service, living for others and living for the greater good. The family was to become the natural learning ground of such a lifestyle and the individuals raised in such families were to carry that culture out to the world. Today we see self-centred individualism fuelling a culture of materialism, consumerism, hedonism, and a selfish mindset that only one’s own happiness matters. This destructive culture has been the crux of the breakdown of family and consequentially the deterioration of even the most basic human relationships. Today we are witnessing an increase in divorce rates, infidelity, out-of-wedlock births and fatherless families, heinous sex crimes, and countless other issues. It is our conviction that a child’s social development formed within the walls of good family values should not be determined by our circumstances nor should be limited due by humanity’s shortcomings or setbacks, but be continually grounded in essential principles expressed in our various societal norms and culture.

Children just every other Human beings are relational, and thus need to love and be loved, and need to feel valued. The love, security, support and education that comes from the family and the vast network of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and relatives of the extended family are the foundations of social values and can never be replaced by a day care or senior care institution. Understanding this fundamental truth is the starting point for creating holistic solutions to reverse the current trends of deteriorating families and societies. However, within all these process is the critical role of women.

Women are the ones who will give birth and be the mothers. They are the caring sisters to siblings and wives to husbands. Women are naturally the doctors, educators and caretakers within the family, and they become the glue that holds the family together and connects it to the larger community to address common needs and concerns. As women take up their essential roles within the family, their role naturally expands to the community, nation, and world, because they are raising the next generation and people who will become contributors to the community, nation and world.

* 1. **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested.

**Family Awareness**

The ministry of women affairs in partnership with the national orientation agency should see the need to raise awareness at the family level concerning the social development and the pertinent role women play in achieving this. This is important as new generation mothers may likely put aside some norms which the consider obsolete or transfer responsibility to carers which do not end up being effectively discharged. A family awareness campaign should be considered to re-orient the minds of women on their roles and responsibility in achieving optimal child’s social development.

**Institutional Awareness**

Institutions such as schools and religious centres are the second place children visits after their homes. Hence, it is pertinent that leaders of this institutions be made to be aware of their roles in helping a child attain social development. Education and religious institutions in the country cannot be overlooked as the remain social agents capable of transforming a child to either a social good or societal threat.

**Government Support**

The government has the role of creating enabling environment for the achievement of social development. This goal can be achieved when they create child-centered development policies and support infrastructures that will aid the social development of a child.

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**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Age**

30-40 ( )

40-50 ( )

Above 50 ( )

**Educational Qualification**

Primary ( )

Secondary ( )

Tertiary ( )

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree on the role of women in a child’s social development** | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** |
| Introducing a child to existing society norms. |  |  |  |  |
| Educating a child on gender roles. |  |  |  |  |
| Educating a child on family and society expectations. |  |  |  |  |
| Ensures a child’s discipline at different social developmental phases. |  |  |  |  |
| Utilizes available resources to ensures effective transition of a child during social development stages. |  |  |  |  |

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| **Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with these statements on factors influencing women’s active role** | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** |
| Some socio-cultural factors affects women’s active in a child’s social development. |  |  |  |  |
| Infrastructural factors can be a limitation to women’s active role. |  |  |  |  |
| Economic factors can also be a limitation to the extent women can discharge their duties in the course of a child’s social development. |  |  |  |  |

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| To what extent do you agree with these statements on factors Influencing on child social development | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** |
| Poverty affects the quality of child social development. |  |  |  |  |
| Family life and setting can influence the quality of a child’s social development. |  |  |  |  |
| Health and nutrition can affects a child’s social development. |  |  |  |  |
| Education can affect the quality of a child’s social development. |  |  |  |  |
| The environment of a child can affect his/her social perception and development. |  |  |  |  |