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## THE ROLE OF IGNOU IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



Amol A. Patil

### INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of development of countries all over the world. Even after sixty seven years of Indian independence women are still one of the most power-less and marginalized sections of the Indian society. Women constitute about half of the total population of country but they suffer from many disadvantages as compared to men in terms of literacy rates, labour participation rates earnings. Development is the process of societal transformation from a traditional society to a modern society. The process of women empowerment is conceptualized in terms of personal assertions, self-esteem and confidence, ability to protect themselves as women attaining sociopolitical participation and economic independence, ownership of productive assets and provide leadership in women. Educational attainment

### Abstract

*The aim of the present paper was to examine the role of the IGNOU in women empowerment. This study examined the post-certification achievement of the female learners - from both individual and social perspectives. The respondents for this study have been selected by using accidental method from the female learners who were completed course from Pune Study Centre. The 50 learners from the Pune Center were sampled to analyse the changes in the achieved social and academic aspects of female learners at IGNOU. The findings of the study are based on surveys and interviews with 50 respondents, and the findings confirmed that the IGNOU ODL system has really - though in different ways - benefited these women who have engaged and completed the various programme at IGNOU.*

**Keywords :** *Open and Distance Learning, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Women Empowerment.*

### Short Profile

Amol A. Patil is working as an Assistant Professor at Smt. C. B. Shah Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Sangli (MS). He Has Completed B.A., M.A. and M.Phil. He Has Professional Experience 6 Years.

and economic participation are the key constituents in ensuring the empowerment of women. Education develops the personality and rationality of individuals, qualifies them to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions and thereby improve their socio-economic status. The empowering role of women's education affects not only the lives of the women, but also the lives of their children and other dependents – such as the aged. Education - especially professional and technical education - is also likely to enhance women's economic independence by equipping them with the skills necessary to take up paid employment opportunities. Research evidence also shows that "women with more education or higher qualifications earn more, on an average, than women with minimum level of education" (McIntosh, 1973, p.28). All over the

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world, the movement for improving the status of women has always emphasised education as the most significant instrument for social change.

More than conventional education, distance education plays an important role in ensuring access to higher education to women who are unable to take admission in the formal education system. Hence, women prefer distance learning because of its nature, since studies of this type allow them to fulfill their family and career responsibilities. Furthermore, it enables them to learn at their own pace, while minimizing costs-saving money and time on commuting and childcare.

IGNOU has introduced various programmes which aim to improve the quality of women's life by empowering them to determine and exercise their life options, and influence the direction of change through their own control over crucial material resources. The present research study investigates the achievement of women empowerment after acquiring graduate-studies certification from both individual and social perspectives. For this purpose the social, economic, political, cultural and legal aspects of women empowerment and change in women status has been studied.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

**Aim of the Study:** The main aim of the present study was to examine the role of the IGNOU in women empowerment.

**Research Design:** With regards to the nature of this kind of study descriptive type of research design was used.

**Universe of the Study:** The universe of this study is IGNOU Regional Centre, Pune.

**Sampling:**

The respondents for this study have been selected by using accidental method from the female learners who were completed course from this Study Centre. The 50 learners from the Pune Center were sampled to analyse the changes in the achieved social and academic

aspects of female learners at IGNOU.

**Tools and Techniques of Data Collection:**

The primary data were collected by using interview schedule. The interview schedule consisting of open-ended and structural questions. The secondary data were collected from various secondary sources such as: books, journals, magazines, office documents, internet, etc.

**Analysis of Data:**

The collected data were transferred to code sheets and statistical analysis was carried out. For open-ended questions such data were edited and coding. The whole data was analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) and the out-put was used for interpretation of data.

**Results:**

**1. Social Empowerment of Respondents:**

In this section we will examine the social status of respondents changed after completion of course, in relation to the increase social status and freedom of express opinion.

**Increase the Social Status**

Table no. 1 shows the distribution of respondents by experiences in increase the social status after course.

**Table 1: Increase the Social Status**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	48	96.0
No	02	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

It may be noted from the above table that, majority (48 or 96%) of respondents was experienced their social status has increased after completion of the course.

**Freedom to Express Opinion**

The Table no. 2 shows the distribution of

respondents by freedom to express opinion regarding family affairs.

Table 2: Freedom to Express Opinion

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Sometimes	19	38.0
Always	18	36.0
Often	11	22.0
Never	02	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

It may be noted from the above table that, majority (19 or 38 %) of respondents had sometimes freedom to express their opinion regarding family affairs, 18 (36 %) respondents had always freedom to express their opinion regarding family affairs and 11 (22 %) respondents had often freedom to express their opinion regarding family affairs.

## 2. Economic Empowerment of Respondents:

In this section we will examine the economic status of respondents was changed after completion of course, in relation to the course helps in getting job, salary and economic independence.

### Helpfulness of the Course to getting the Job

The Table no. 3 shows distribution of the respondents by experience about the helpfulness of the course for getting the job.

Table No. 3: Course Helps to Getting employment

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	37	74.0
No	13	26.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It may be noted from the above tables that, majority (37 or 74 %) of respondents had told that the course helps them to getting the employment and remaining 13 (26 %) respondents had told that the course not helps them to getting the employment.

### Distribution of Respondents by Experience in Economic Independence

Economic independence plays a vital role in empowerment of women. Hence, it has been studied. The table no. 4 shows distribution of respondents by their experience in economic independence was helps in taking decisions in family.

Table No. 4: Economic Independence Helps in Taking Decision

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	18	36.0
Often	17	34.0
Sometimes	04	8.0
N.A.	11	22.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above Table no. 4 shows that, majority (18 or 36 %) of respondents had told that economic independence always helps them in taking decision in family, 17 (34 %) respondents had told that economic independence often help them in taking decision and 4 (8 %) of them told that it helps sometimes.

## 3. Cultural and Political Aspects of Empowerment:

In this section we will examine the cultural and political aspects of women empowerment in relation to their participation, increase in level and awareness after completion of course.

### Distribution of Respondents by their Participation in Cultural Activities

The Table no. 5 shows the distribution of the respondents by their participation in cultural activities after completion of course.

**Table No. 5: Participation in Cultural Activities after Course**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	90.0
No	05	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above Table no. 5 shows that, majority (45 or 90%) of respondents had told that they participated in cultural activities after completion of the course and 5 (10 %) respondents had told that they never participated in cultural activities after completion of the course. Hence, from above data it is clear that after completion of the course the degree of participation in cultural activities has increased among majority of the respondents.

Distribution of Respondents by their Participation in Political Activities

The Table no. 6 shows the distribution of the respondents by their participation in political activities after completion of course.

**Table No. 6: Participation in Political Activities after Course**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Never	38	76.0
Sometimes	11	22.0
Always	01	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above Table no. 6 shows that, majority (38 or 76%) of respondents had told that they never participated in political activities after completion of the course and 11 (22 %) respondents had told that they sometimes participated in political activities after completion of the course. Hence, from above data it is clear that after completion of the course the degree of participation in political activities has increased among very few of the respondents. The level of the participation among majority of them is local.

Distribution of Respondents by Experience in Awareness about Health and

Nutrition

The Table no. 7 shows distribution of respondents by their experience in increase the awareness of health and nutrition.

**Table No. 7: Increase in Awareness about Health and Nutrition**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	47	94.0
No	03	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table no. 7 shows majority (47 or 94 %) of respondents were expressed that the education was helps among them in increase the awareness about their health and nutrition.

Helpfulness of IGNOU's ODL System

The Table no. 8 shows distribution of respondents by their experience about ODL helps them in development of self-esteem and self-confidence.

**Table No. 8: ODL Helps in Development of Self-esteem and Self-confidence**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	33	66.0
Sometimes	17	34.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The Table no. 8 shows that, the majority (33 or 66 %) of respondents expressed that ODL always helps them in development of self-esteem and self-confidence, 17 (34 %) of them expressed that ODL sometimes helps them in development of self-esteem and self-confidence.

**CONCLUSION:**

To conclude, the findings of the present research study have demonstrated that the ODL system at IGNOU has benefited women who completed the various programme. It is the duty of higher education institutions to make provision of training, employment and income

generation activities for women. Open learning is a philosophy and Distance Education is the mode used for translating it into reality as the two are complementary to each other. This would help women to take off themselves. The path is clear for women, only strong and positive attitude with assertive efforts on the part of higher education sector and society at large are needed. Then there will no limit for women except sky.

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**Amol A. Patil**

Asst. Prof. (Sociology) Smt. C. B. Shah  
Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Sangli (MS)

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