Chapter Two

<u>Review of literature</u>

- Introduction
- Review of university education in Palestine and India
- Problems and proposed solutions
- Historical background about O.D.L
- Theoretical framework
- Women and education
- A brief over view of woman's education in Palestine and India
- Education and social development
- Role of higher education in development
- The concept of empowerment
- Indicators of empowerment
- The Profile of empowered woman
- Interview literature
- Implication
- References

Introduction

This chapter shows in its first section the historical background of open learning system and its development in developing and developed countries, the theoretical framework, as well as in general, it focused on women's education and especially Palestinian and Indian women education status. Besides this, it also shows relation between education and development as well as empowerment, its indicators and the role of higher education in development and empowerment of women.

Furthermore, in the second section, the researcher presents previous literature and studies which were related to the research topic whether entirely or partly to discuss and follow them up. The researcher divided related studies into the categories like studies related to open learning system, studies related to open learning and human development, empowerment of women, gender and education etc.

Review of University Education in Palestine and India;

The Palestinian individual is considered as an extension for the Palestinian Arabic society development which has been exposed to many effects; political, economic, social through successive civilizations started with Kan'anites and Islamic era to the Automan era which was submitted to British occupation after First World War and is still being controlled by Israeli occupation for sixty years. However, these various effects resulted many variables and facts inside the Palestinian society. These also affected the society in general, and especially education. Since, the education phenomenon is considered as a parameter for political, economical social and cultural, across the previous stages where the Palestinian people lived. (Nashwan,2003)[1]

Through nineties, in the past century, the education sector focused on three major aspects; The equality in attaining education especially for women, the development of education level and raising of educational sector abilities. (Pepers, 2003)

So, education in Palestine is viewed as one of great aspirations and hopes which the Palestinians seek to achieve through generations. Therefore, the academic attainment and university certificate at all levels are most important means which enable them to fulfil self esteem especially in the home absence instability and future murky. As a result, this doesn't only lead in changing to keep on the higher education as a means to guarantee better future but also as one of occupation challenging & endurance methods which enlighten future horizons.

Accordingly, in general, higher education establishments were founded in Palestine under harsh circumstances, in terms of individual and groups initiatives as willing and commitment. Hence, higher education establishments, confronted the Israeli oppressive occupation polices through meeting the increasing demand in education and providing them with educational opportunities in Palestine, after they had been deprived from the educational opportunities abroad by force. (Palestine University, 2006)

Despite the fact that mentioned above and as a result of the bad economic situation because of occupation, that reinforced the desire of the Palestinians that, the higher education constitute a real guarantee for its holder. Neither the trade nor the factory and farm could achieve those which were being confiscated or destroyed at any time.

So, Palestine has been given the priority to establish institute by UN. Actually, that happened in 1953 where in Ramalah has been established as an institute for female teachers which was followed after with others.

These institutes can't meet the needs of Palestinian's society. Therefore, it motivated majority of them to join universities in foreign as well as Arabic higher education establishments as a consequence of, many variables like;

> Rising of education fees to Palestinian students in host countries.

> Imposing the political restriction on joining Palestinian students in these universities.

> The bound number of admitted Palestinian students.

> The increasing difficulties in getting admission in these universities.

> The security risks that the students encounter abroad, in going and return.

> The study abroad widens the students' stability in these countries which Palestinians try to avoid as possible as they can.

In the light of these factors, it led to constitute a ground to establish higher education establishments inside home particularly Universities.

As, Palestinian higher education witnessed a great change in the mid of seventies of past century beyond the beginning of establishing higher education system in Palestine. This led to establish local universities which have full responsibility to introduce higher education for Palestinians, even to meet its needs partly. Therefore, it participated to help them to survive in their home. The first local Palestinian University was founded in 1972 by developing Bir Zeit College into Bir Zeit University and followed by Bethlehem University in 1973 coordinated with Vatican, After that, other universities were founded.

As a consequence, the Palestinian higher education aims, in general to the following;

➢ Supplying people with skills and knowledge to provide the society with qualified competencies in meeting market demand i.e. in other words, preparing quality human capital.

> Role of universities in sustainable development at local and national level.

>The effective participation in society building controlled by democracy, equality and the society enlightenment of social problems.

> Creating more training opportunities for university students through corporation, industrial and economical establishments in order to constitute opportunities to develop workers' skills in various aspects.

➢ The participation in strategic planning for society and to constitute educational systems to achieve better future. (Kamal.S,2004) p;11-12

➢ Participation to meet society needs from qualified human cadres in various aspects.

➢ The Palestinian society empowerment in treating and continuous communication with scientific, technological renascent and development investment of them.

➢ Illustration of scientific corporations with international cohesion agencies and supporting the higher educational establishments, besides scientific research centres.

➢ The participation of academic freedom maintenance and the state building on scientific basis which guarantee the law supremacy rights, respect and public freedoms.

> Free access to all students who are eager to join higher education establishments, in addition, to follow up the scientific competencies and develop them. (Nashwan.Y, 2004)

In India too, the modern higher education system dates back to mid 1850s which was founded by British Colonial Regime. The three earliest universities were established at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857 (Dayanand Dongaonkar:9) . These pioneer universities were affiliating and examining bodies and had little intellectual of their own. They were modelled on the University of London itself which was established in 1836. They were also designed to serve the economical, political and administrative interests of the British as in particular, to consolidate and maintain their dominance in the country.

Post independence history of higher education in India went through phases of a rapid expansion. The number of the universities increased from 20 in 1947 to 355 in 2005. Enrolment of students rose from (0.1) million in 1947 to (10.5) millions in 2005. In present times, the country's higher educational institutions turn out 2.5 million students each year. The sheer numbers may seen enormous but that appears pretty small for a country of Indian size. (Bhariari,1998).

Problems and Proposed Solutions.

However, Palestinian educational system in all stages, has suffered along the occupation era from all types of prejudices and persecutions, for in stance educational establishments closing such as, Schools, Colleges and Universities.

In addition to the effects which were resulted by Israeli occupation and its practices which have increased negative effects, particularly on higher education especially universities.

To sum up these problems, the cost seems to be one of the main problems of higher education especially universities that their budget acts as a burden on government's budgets as well as families' budgets which also act

as the same problem in financing their students. Moreover, the finance problem increased because of population increase which caused educational increase. That led to many problems as university education crises which (Bader, 1999) summarized into;

> The difficulty of assimilation for flow numbers who aspires to join universities.

> The weakness of appropriateness between universities' output and the changeable market labour requirements by the effect of scientific & technology progress.

> The increase of higher education burdens on families and governments (Bader.M.F,1999).[2]

Therefore, it was necessary to find solutions for all problems which encounter the education especially higher education so as to develop Palestinian society. Besides to meet increasing demand in higher education to fail the occupation targets which aim to deprive them from education. In the light of these the Palestinian decision makers found an unconventional solution that was based on supplying education to the students wherever they were.

So, this idea is represented by Al-Quds Open University **QOU** which adopts open learning system to meet the needs of Palestinian people, in spite of the hard and complex economical, social and political conditions of Palestinian people.

In India the World Bank study has identified the following issues related to higher education:

- Over- centralization and lack of autonomy and accountability.
- Resource constraints and wastage.
- Poor quality and repellence in many institutions.

50
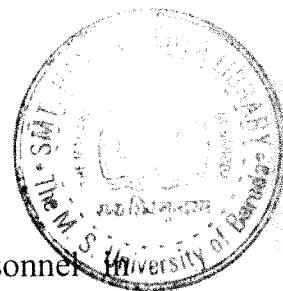
- Difficulties in retention of science and technology personnel in education.

- Poor technology and infrastructure support.

- Limited access and regional disparity. (World Bank Report)

Historical Background about O.D.L

Open and distance universities have widely spread in the beginning of seventies of the 20th century and being large till they became an effective pedagogical with lightened bases style which is expected to play a main role in development in 21st century.

Open distance learning had introduced the best example of the possibility of gathering between the equality of joining higher education and the ability to assimilate huge numbers and the availability of qualitative learning and teaching. Whereof, it made its appearance on one of the most important pedagogical events since the appearance of the universities in the middle centuries. So, its appearance led to radical change in the concept of university. (Kamal.S.2006:6)[3]

Accordingly, among these conditions O.D.L system appeared as one of realistic solutions as a learner can join the university which is near his/her home & consequently these universities that adopted such a system aspired to be in learner's place, by providing him/her with educational materials and aids which were designed specifically to meet such sort of education and the learner shouldn't be confined in one place and faces obstacles. In addition, this type acts to rid learners of the place restrictions. (Dwekat.2003:6)

So, when we talk about O.D.L it must be obvious that, it should correlate between its various types which we can say that it is initial scene and between it's development all over the world. Since, the first beginning sat out in the mid of 19th century, Isaac Pitman in a way planted the seed of the

51

modem correspondence education when he started offering postal tuition on short-hand in 1840 in Britain. Pitman would not have imagined that after, a century his small educational venture would grow into a significant mode of education, spread in many forms in the United States of America, Australia, Western Europe and Canada.(Ramanujam.P.R2001).

Others mention that, the first attempt was in Germany in 1856 which was experimented by the French Charl Tossan who was teaching French Language in Britain and Gastaw Langnshedit who was one of Current Languages Committee in Britain. As they thought about establishment of committee which teaches languages by correspondence. Nevertheless, O.D.L began in 1858,when London University created a system that was able to grant university external certificates for learners without regular attendance in university.(Ibraheem. A,M 2004 : 7)

Many historians suggested that open universities returned to the English Harold Willson who was the Head of Labour Party, in Britain in 1963.The essential emergence of this university preceded by long time before Willson thought. Others mentioned that open university appeared as an idea which was called the University of the Air, since Stopard talked about it in 1926.(Khateeb.M,1986)[4]

Therefore, it is an old and international notion which emerged in Britain and was moved to America, Canada and Australia. But, in Arab World it had slow steps, in spite of low costs UNISCO report 2002 accounts in splendid and abridged of O.D.L development. Since, it explains that O.D.L has passed four stages and every one has it's own organized model which includes specific type of communication and they are represented as the following;

➤ Correspondence Systems which appeared in the end of 19th century and still occur in many developing countries. So, this stage depends on printed materials and concomitant instructions which may include audio-visual aids. Therefore the ordinary post being as communicative means between tutor and learner.

➤ Educational T.V and Radio Systems and many techniques are being used such as, satellite, astronautic cable, T.V and radio as means of communication as well as lectures presentation .

➤ Multimedia Systems: which include texts, sounds, video-tapes and computer materials. Open universities often use these systems as teaching is being introduced by various specialized groups.

➤ Internet-Based Systems: the instructional materials are endowed with electronic means which is transmitted to the learners by the computer with access to electronic libraries and data based. As a result, it could be possible through these systems to create interaction between the tutor and learner on the one hand and learners together on the other hand whether, synchronous through conversation programs and video conferences or synchronous through the email or conversation forums. (Al-Fraih,2004) [5]

Accordingly, the chronology of O.D.L refers to various stages of times. As a result, there was an emergence of the first generation of O.D.L types such correspondence and joining. The emergence of the second generation of instructional types which function with multimedia means like printed and T.V materials, while the third generation had recent technologies.

So, the following systems are considered the most common types in O.D.L;

➢ Correspondence Learning.

➢ Joining Learning.

➢ Open and Distance Learning.

A brief overview of the prominent features of distance and open learning scenario in some of the advanced countries would give us a better understanding of the situation in those countries. For example, in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Norway, Sweden, Spain, the United States of America, Canada, Japan and Australia distance/open learning system operate so effectively for the following reasons:

* Adult learners with an appreciable degree of Basic/Primary/Secondary Education.

* Medium of instruction is mostly by the mother tongue of the learner.

* Technology and communication facilities.

* Availability and accessibility of well-equipped & advanced institutions with clear vision and mission statements.

* Adequate resource mobilization.

* Thoughtful and committed academic leadership.

* Flexible and need based curriculum.

* Committed and or trained qualified staff.

* Thorough planning and implementation of educational programs.

* Adequate and efficient student support services.

* Continuous and systematic monitoring, review and evaluation.

* Political will which is crucial to back up the projects and institutions. (Ramanujam.P.R2001)

An analysis of the socio-cultural contexts in which the terms 'Distance' and 'Open' education were originally coined and used, would show that the advanced western countries conceived distance education concepts on the

54

basis of their technological growth, cultural heritage and academic traditions. Not that, there are no conflicts among the educational philosophies of western countries with regard to distance education. The ongoing debates in the developed world on the sociological and pedagogic implications of technology based teaching-learning, the philosophies of western countries with regard to distance learning curricula, the ideological biases in course contents, the cost factor, marketability to educational enterprises and other issues have much relevance of distance education in the developing world. However, the level of the debates as such shows that the concerns of distance educators in the developing countries are more at the basic level. The concerns are such as the following:

> Can some sort of education reach to people?

> Can the shrinking educational budgets meet the minimum infrastructural requirements?

> Will there be an appreciable degree of success in the course completion rates?

> Are there job opportunities for those who complete their studies through distance mode?

> Are there enough arrangements to provide education to those who want it, irrespective of its use value? Ramanujam(2001)

These and similar issues dominate the thinking of the policy makers and administrators in the developing countries. Surveying the distance education scenario in number of developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, Manjulika and Reddy (1996) observed the following common features:

* Inadequate finance.

* Poor communicational and infrastructural facilities.

* Absence of clear governmental policies.

* Limited use of audio-visual medias.

* Shortage of experts to develop multimedia courses.

* Lack of financial and academic autonomy for distance-teaching institutions.

* Low social and academic status of distance education because of quality issues.

From the above survey and analysis of the current practices of distance education in many parts of the world, it should be possible to draw certain conclusions which would have some lessons for the developing countries.

❖ Distance education will emerge as a major system in the developing world, too, in years to come.

❖ The present practice of adopting the western models will not work in the developing world because of incompatible cultural variations and technological gaps.

❖ Any attempt to transplant western models in the developing countries will hamper the growth of the system by making it permanently dependent on western experts, technology and teaching-learning strategies.

❖ There is an urgency to rethink about the current strategies of course development and delivery in all the countries which for some reason or other, have based their strategies on the western particularly the British model.

❖ The use of technology needs to be decided on the basis of its access to institutions and learners in the developing countries.

❖ It is not always necessary to have sophisticated technology to establish successful distance education models in the developing countries.

❖ Instead of competing with the western models which need heavy investment and high technology, the developing countries should make use of their available resources to meet their specific educational demands.

❖ To make use of the available resources, the developing countries must develop self-confidence and acquire the ability to think independently when they plan and execute their distance education programs.

❖ In order to acquire self-confidence and independent thinking, distance educators and policy makers must first study the history of distance education in the advanced countries and then relate it to the social and political history of the relevant countries.

❖ The fixation about the successful western models and the obsession about the inevitability of sophisticated technology must be overcome and a fresh look must be taken at the need and feasibility aspects of large scale use of technology for educational purposes.

❖ If and when sophisticated technology is acquired by institutions in the developing countries use of it must be considered on the basis of its usability and accessibility from the institutional and students points of view.

❖ Once indigenous model takes firm roots in the native soils of the developing countries, they would gradually emerge as competitors to the western models. Ramanujam(2001)

Theoretical Framework

In an awake of distance education, due to less attention to this system, not many theories have been developed regarding distance education which interfered with the visibility of it's identity. However, a set of reliable distance learning theories have begun to emerge recently. Different theories explain distance education in different ways. Keegan (1986) proposed an initial classification for some of the distance education theories as follows:

Classes of Theories	Main theme	Key words
Theories of independence and autonomy	DE is the independence of the students	Learner's autonomy, distance between teacher and learner
Theories of industrialization of teaching	DE is the industrialised form of teaching and learning	Mechanization, assembly line, mass production, and standardization
Theories of interaction and communication	Distance teaching supports student motivation, promote learning pleasure, creates feelings of rapport between learner and the distance education institution.	Motivation, learning pleasure, rapport between learner and the distance education institution.

Keegan (1986)[6] also provided elements which composed emerging definitions of distance education. Those included:

- Separation of learners and teachers geographically and, in time.

58

- Input of educational organisations in the planning and development of learning materials and student support infrastructure.

- Technical media joins learners, teachers and content.

- Two-way communication so learners may engage in dialogue with the teachers and / or other learners.

- Individual learning due to an absence of a learning group with occasional face- to -face meetings.

Pedagogical planners performed to make changes in education, according to its quality and quantity through strategic plan which predicates what will happen at least along the whole century (Hamiliton, 1989:1)

So that, a new educational character has its effects on current time characteristics, it's velocity, inventions, requirements and output. These are represented in open learning that occupied an important position in pedagogical life (Burt, 1997:93).[7]

Open and distance learning establishments are different from other educational establishments in various aspects according to many variables. Though learners in O.L are very often older people (M.Cintosh.1974).

Moreover, O.L has transparency of what is related to training and educational programs so the materials are written and it means that the materials should be easy and suitable for auto- learning (Wedemeyer, 1973). O.D.L requires educational medias to be accessed by students so that it is a model which introduces education and conveys the knowledge to the learners, besides developing their skill in all specializations through approaches and methods which are different from those in traditional learning (Meacham.1984).

In addition, O.L is a popular learning it depends on philosophy which ascertain individuals, their rights to access to available educational

opportunities. It implies that O.L is available for all people, it is not confine to time or specific learners and isn't exclusive on one learning level.

However, Burt 1997: listed six advantages for D.L:

1) Open entry.

2) Individualized.

3) Self assessment.

4) Learner support.

5 Pacing self.

6) Many start days.

Researchers (Chute et al., 1999; Davy, 1998; Prime learning, Inc, 2001) noted variety of benefits reported by organizations that have successfully implemented distance learning programs: Those included:

• A fast & effective way to train global employees.

• An opportunity to use best instructors and provide high-quality courses.

• High rate of course completion and knowledge retention.

• Information for training is always to up date.

• Learners have more responsibility for their personal success.

• An increase in the impact and productivity of money invested in training and education programs.

• Reduction in travel costs and more productive use of time which was previously spent in travel.

• Training of more people, more often in short learning sessions which were easier to schedule and coordinate.

• Ability to add trainees and instructors as needed, without incurring significant additional costs.

• The delivery of a consistent companywide messages to all trainees or employees.

• Provision for real-time updates and just-in-time information access.

• Delivery at work or home sites convenient to trainees.

• Offering live interactive programs delivered to multiple networked sites for group learning.

• Use of learner-centred programs such that trainees were in more control of the pacing, sequencing, and style of interaction of the learning experiences.

• Easy access to learning resources and experts.

The advantages of O.L appeared in Electronic American Brochure (American O.L .2005:1) and those were:

1- The flexibility of a learning system which gives students an opportunity of selecting syllabus.

2- Syllabuses preparation in an attractive way which suits D.L requirements and facilitates for learners, under tutors' supervision.

3- Free time for specific appointments which entails from learner to attend in turn it facilitates on learners and gives them an opportunity to gather between learning and working.

4- To make use of technically advanced approaches and make the accessible learning.

These advantages were more obvious in Palestine because of special conditions-Occupation- since it was noticed addition advantages of open learning. Whereas Al-Quds Open University is considered the first successful Arabic experience in O.L which has its traits, even though the various challenges which Al-Quds Open University has encountered and the distinctive role it has illustrated, gave it many advantages which must be explained through capabilities and achievement analysis were as following;

Technology convoying:

The recent inventions, especially, communication media, have a great impact on O.L emergence and its development. This is because, the dependence on media is compensation for the learner of the teacher absence that became the main advantage of O.L than traditional one which depends on the meeting of learners and instructor (Blundel, 1997). So, with the continuing technological development O.L developed various approaches and methods.

Speed convoying:

It is an intuitive thing that each progress should be concomitant with the need for acceleration, owing to the greatest development advantage especially technology, the velocity of working and accomplishing(Sharaf Ad-Deen, 1992:27).

So, the Palestinian O.L which is represented in QOU is an example of this acceleration and able to assimilate the requirements (Abdel-Hadi, 1993:29). Therefore, the students, numbers, education quality and its approaches surpassed challenges by this type of education, besides its ability to go on this aspect (Rell, 2000Ch.5)

The solving of contemporary problems:

The contemporary problems are formed by a group of needs and requirements which are a result of changes caused by political, scientific, economical and social revolution and those gave the need for education to meet these demands (Lowis, 1995:52)

Educational patterns which were known in the past were not able to deal with educational problems like an increasing demand that implies to the importance of education for all classes. So the D.L was an ideal solution not only to meet the increasing demands but also as a method and strategy to

face the increasing number of population, scientific progress, and the acceptance of deprived individuals to ask for their rights for education (Burt, 1997:93)

No doubt, there were other problems which faced the D.L and were able to encounter them. They were such as:

1) Political problems:

This problem acts as a boundary between the student and educational resource, whether inside the country or out side the country. Accordingly, D.L introduced an effective solution since students were able to get grades and scientific certificates from other countries without travelling (Salah, 1992).

Therefore, the role of QOU, in the Palestinian case, was an emphasis on the D.L, role in solving complicated political problems. As, Palestinian has such problems that mentioned in previous section which is related to closure, siege of educational establishments; in addition, Preventing students to reach them.

2) Economical problems:

Technological progress has brought many economical problems and the recent technology, being boon and disfavour at the same time which needs change and encountering. As a result, it created a difficulty in meeting the increasing demand. In return, it requires infrastructure that costs so much, so O.L solved the problem through it's ability to assimilate increasing demand by lower cost building (Nashwan, 1997:25).

On an individual level, the cost in D.L for student is lower than traditional one for many considerations such as;

1) University fees cost

2) Regular attendance

3) Commitment in studying without working

4) Personal needs resulted by their commitment of attendance and residence. (Kamal,2000)

3) <u>Social problems:</u>

Open learning participates in achieving university education's democratization. Hence, O.L is able to supply higher education for all sectors including those who are less fortunate economically, socially and culturally. (Qumhawi, 1986:37).

Basically, there are problems which emerge by civilized progress inability to adapt between the old and the modern and that include also what is inherited from father by the sons. (Kirschner, 1989:9)

O.L operates to enable disabled people and who are with special requirements to learn along with all international appealing, in order not to deprive them from their human rights. Meanwhile, to give them safety that guarantees to avoid them negative bias (Lee, 1991:18).

In addition, O.L enables who are in duty to learn along with their daily professions and that enables them to live in a decent manner besides much share in national production without losing their productivity in study years. (Neil, 2000:8)

Oxford electronic brochure in Arabic language showed that its colleges avoided strict examination attendance and it was a ware of giving suitable appointments which suit emergency conditions (O.L colleges in Oxford, 2005:2)

O.L surpasses the differentiation between classes through its flexible in nature and popularity. Moreover, enabling all classes to learn with low and easier cost than other universities not only that but also the curriculum has been designed to meet individual learning purposes and self evaluation,

besides feed back from learner to tutor and conversely. (AL_Mansouri, 1986:98)

Furthermore, O.L operates on solving a prominent problem that is woman's learning, So she is able to learn under these circumstances, without leaving her house for long times and it will be adequate for her to check with educational establishment in little short times, besides studying in her own house.

So, it should be necessary for various medias which don't entail her attendance in educational establishment and that's available through O.L (Haque & Batool, 1999:35).

These advantages to learners and employees are also important features from the perspective of government. Traditionally, governments have introduced distance education provision in order to:

> Increase access to learning and training opportunity.

> Provide increased opportunities for updating, retraining and personal enrichment.

> Improve cost-effectiveness of educational resources.

> Support the quality and variety of existing educational structures.

> Enhance and consolidate capacity.

In light of the experiences of the past twenty or more years, today there are recognition of other related, benefits. Some of those are:

> Balancing inequalities between age groups extending geographical access to education.

> Delivering educational campaigns and other education for large audiences.

> Providing speedy and efficient training for key target groups.

> Offering the combination of education with work and family life.

> Developing multiple competencies through recurrent and continuing education.

> Enhancing the international dimension of educational experience.

> Improving the quality of existing educational services.

Galbraith, referred that the best education must be related to those who have worst social conditions, to realize social prejudice which leads to social upset.(Nada.2005)

Women and Education

Education is the single best development investment, a country can make. It contributes to people's better health, higher incomes, and increased participation in community life. These social and economic returns have been proved to be particularly high, when girls are educated.

In most developing countries, women have subsequently less access to education, to jobs, to income and to power than men. Women generally account for the largest proportion of deprived people. (Saleem.1998)[8]

The benefits of education are well understood for women but its role for promoting gender equality and empowering women differs from society to society and from country to country.

Jejeebhoy (2001) reviewed the considerable evidence about women's education and fertility in the developing world that has emerged over the last twenty years and passed beyond the limits of provision studies to address major questions. How does improvement in education empower women in other areas of life? such as improving their exposure to information, decision-making, control of resources and confidence in dealing with family and out side world.

Education among women opens the possibility of unlimited exposure to new information and more importantly to new ways of thinking. Educated

women are, also able to constructively express their talents and give direction to their aptitudes. This enables them to lead a life which is more fulfilling and satisfying.

Education among women leads to better hygiene, improved nutrition practice and greater effectiveness in caring for family health and seeking timely medical intervention. This not only leads to better health status for woman herself but improved maternal competence & lowers infant mortality. Better health status of woman makes her more productive worker at home and outside, leading the way to her equality and empowerment.

Educated women also make better use of their time. A study in urban South India found that, higher education among women leads to a reduction in the time they spend in non-market household activities which often go unrecognized. Thus, education of women moves them from the non-monetized to the monetized sector, invisible to the visible and unpaid to the paid activities. Thus allowing them to participate directly in household economy. This in turn, enhances their status decision-making power within the family, which is a major step towards their equality and empowerment. (Safyollah. 2008)[9]

Education of women gives them authority and power in decision-making in the political field too. Empowerment of women through education would lead to their greater participation in government and community institutions and better participation opportunities.

A recent literature review by the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), entitled" Impact of Investments in Female Education on Gender Equality," showed that education is a necessary but not sufficient investment to achieve gender equality or improve women's well-being. In most cases, only secondary or higher level of schooling led to improved

options, opportunities, and outcomes for women. It is said, for secondary and higher level of education to have the greatest payoff, investments also was needed which addressed the social and economic constraints which can impede education's benefits.

Recent research in India, showed that women with higher levels of education were more likely to reject a strong societal preference for a son and found ways to compensate for the lost support and discrimination they might experience whether they should give birth to a daughter (Pande and Astone 2001).

The effects of education, in general, were greatly influenced by the social context in which women lived. In situations of domestic violence, for example, the degree to which education could have a positive impact differed, depending on the social rules or norms governing a woman's life as well as her economic situation. Studies showed that the benefits of education in reducing domestic violence were greater in the less patriarchal state of Tamil Nadu in Southern India than the more patriarchal state of Uttar Pradesh in the North. In the latter case, only secondary schooling for women led to lower domestic violence rates (Jejeebhoy 1998).

Higher level of education had greater economic returns for women than men. In India, for instance, a recent study found that the wage benefit for women with Secondary Education was double than that for men. This result was consistent with studies in other countries. Women with higher level of education also were more likely to work in the formal employment market where earnings were higher.(ICRW,2005).

A brief Over View of Woman's Education in Palestine and India.

Generally speaking, Palestinians give priority for male education rather than females' education as a source of pride for the family or as an

investment for the future. So, women's higher education faces some obstacles, hence, many families had fear from co- education which might reflect in negative way on family's honour. In regard to that, the woman's right position is marriage and to give birth. Furthermore, the financial profit, which may be gained, would not benefit her family because it will be under her husband's control. On the other hand, higher education was considered as one of the main obstacles for marriage, so that the roles which might be achieved by marriage opportunities were considered to be more important than education in Palestine. (Herburg.M, 1994:145)[10]

Though an educational achievement has developed clearly through past forty years, therefore, men benefited more than women from educational level achievement. So, the gap hadn't reduced except since 20 years. Hence, Palestinians began dramatically changing their attitudes towards females' education; as a result, Palestinian families felt the necessity to send their daughters for education. (Herburg.M, 1994)

First females' school was founded in 1838 in Jerusalem but it didn't act for long time. Later in 1869, another school was also founded in Ramalah, Friends School followed by Romanist School. British Mandate had an important role in Keeping Palestinian society under development. So, in 1935 there were 15 females' schools in Palestine but only 15 female students could complete seventh grade (Draghmeh, 1991:20).[11]

These statistics shows that higher education in Palestine through British Mandate was miserable, and only few females were pursuing their higher education.

In 1948, Palestinian immigration had reflections on women's status; hence, the material base (production means and land) deteriorated. Hence slow change occurred in the upper structure. (thoughts and habits). Meanwhile, it

69

led to develop woman's role and her personality not only that but also her participation in changing the society's attitude toward her. (Jalgoom, 2005:54)[12]

Additionally, the land losing as a productive mean exuded to force families to send their sons to school as a solution to get rid of economical crises which faced these families; for that, this helped to surpass all the strict traditions which surrounded the woman whether to allow her to work or to be free in learning. Hence, female students' number increased at all various stages .(AL-Khaleeli,1977:92)

To conclude, Palestinian people, despite the fact that implies to persecution, prejudice and ignorance policy were culturally developed, even though, there was a huge number of students who have been forced to leave their country, either to less capacity to assimilate them or for harsh financial conditions as well as Israeli occupation obstacles.

Palestinian society, in order to face those challenges and to approach the progress and development aspects, was required to develop woman's role through woman's education (Saber, 2003:61).

If the labour is a means of women's social and economic empowerment, education simultaneously implies social, economical, political and cultural means. So, for its numerous advantages, which surpass women's limits, the family, children and society, it remained as one of the most important means in which woman could improve her social, economical, political and cultural Status. Hence, the woman who had scientific certificate could find better opportunities in her life whether on work or political and social participation. Meanwhile, it was embodied as an aim and as a means in the same time. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics showed to argumentative relation between learning and work. Hence, the rate of educated women being increased in the work as the rate of their education being raised. For

example, the rate of women who were involved in work reached to 42,6% in 2005 for those who passed 13+ from education years.

At the same time, this ratio decreases to 6.7% for those who passed 10-12 educational year in 2005.

It was convenient in this case to refer for Arab woman Progress Report which considered the direct support to learn woman of the means of correcting gender's gap. Agabecian, (1999) referred that the educational aspects should be the most essential sectors to promote equity between men and women. At the same time, Development's Indicator Report addressed loud criticism to the gender's weakness in Palestinian's Curricula which was biased to males.

Generally, women's rate reduces whenever education's rate got raised especially, higher education, Palestinian Central Bureau for statistics report showed that the females rate who have bachelor or more was5.4 %in 2004 in compared with 9.2% for males in the same year.

Palestinian woman encountered negative bias in her life fields. So, in childhood period parents usually were biased to male brother against female sisters, which is considered, within analytic philosophy perspective as a form of indirect violence forms. This was instructed to be accepted as a normal thing and this process continued adolescence and maturity periods. Therefore, woman was often deprived especially in rural areas to pursue her education for many reasons such as;

❖ Parents viewed that resides in marrying her at an early age.

❖ The difficulty of financial conditions; Hence the brother normally had priority on her, by parents' view.

❖ Israeli occupation restrictions which made transportation to and from a difficult process that is surrounded by many risks and it led to force her to abandon school.

To conclude one can say that after all these obstacles, if Palestinian woman acquired adequate level of education, it was not necessary for her to go to the work for several reasons. Cultural & social heritage which dealt with her as a wife and mother. Her role resides in looking after her children and husband.

In India, too, women's education remained nearly absent until the mid of 19th century. Though it is not possible to talk about real changes in women's education, although some progress started during the end of the century, especially at primary stage which was in separate schools for girls, as Reddy mentioned that the first two women graduated in 1883 and the importance of women's education started to grow at all stages for instance, the percentage of girl's education increased four times at primary and secondary stages until the first quarter of 20th century.

In the mid of 20th century, women's education witnessed essential improvements because of the support role of Social Reformers such as Raja Rammohan Roy& Mahatma Gandhi Movements. In that period –until the mid of 20th century, the percentage of women's education increased three times. In spite of that, the percentage of girls enrolment was 2.4% of population. After the mid of 20th century especially post independent women's education has increased significantly e.g. percentage of educated women between 1951-1992 was:

From 28.1% ----- 42.9% at primary stage.

16.1% ------ 39.3% at middle/upper primary stage.

14.3% ------ 34.6% at secondary stage.

Although, the literacy level had shown substantial increase over the four decades and female literacy had gone up five times from 7.93% in 1951 to 39.29% in 1991 but still the literacy differential between female and male is 39.29% and 64.13% .Furthermore, the number of female students in higher education has immensely increased from 12% in 1951 to 33.8% in 1995 (Reddy2002).[13]

It is vital to note that most of women enrolled in higher education were to be found in fields considered to be feminine i.e. arts, education, medicine and pure sciences.

Education and Social Development

Past two decades have witnessed an increasing interest in education as an effective and crucial factor in social and economic development. Among these factors which attributed to this interest, which was due to the interest of economists and educationists. During previous decades, the interest was in the academic aspect only. Therefore, researches have been started to find more important factors beyond economic and social development process and those supported interest in education as an effective factor in social and economical development.

Education attributes to social progress for modern societies in various processes such as:

❖ It aims to know individuals' capabilities and their hobbies. Consequently, it increases the social mobility and flexibility.

❖ It stimulates the desire to progress and prepares individuals' minds to accept the changes.

❖ It is considered as one of stimulating powers of innovation, if it is correlated with social aims.

❖ It helps deprived social sectors to know and develop its abilities, besides discovering its hidden power and that is clear through woman's education and her status improvement as a result of education.

❖ It deepens feeling of freedom in addition to keep her safe. That is clear from liberated groups' history in Asia and Africa, beyond education expeditions.

❖ It helps social and cultural values to be developed and to improve social institutions' performance and that is clear, in the societies' experiences. As who are better intellectuals. To control these establishments in advanced methods.

❖ It supports political loyalty for state and home and keeps the lands' unity.

To deal with education as one of the essential means of culture maintenance this makes it a corner stone for all social change and rules. Moreover, it participates in social development in giving the youngsters their share of national culture and providing them with information, principles and values:

❖ It is considered as one of the best means of achieving social and national coherence as well as its role of developing individual's abilities, about their duties and rights.

❖ Its role emerges clearly in social development in the improvements which have been done and those which still occur in developing countries

as it emerged in participations which aim to change some attitudes and traditional norms related to static societies which represented for long time as a basic obstacle to social and economic development.

In spite of that, many studies dealt with the education's role in social development by analytical research for some societies' situations and it

implied that education can hinder social mobility and progress, if it keeps its traditional style and not being improved in harmony with society's changes.

Role of Higher Education in Development.

In general, universities should not be away from society's social, political and economical life and those challenges it faces. Since, university could be an effective tool in development so there is no way to surpass the economical crises except through increasing the production, services and commodities. By the same taken, the university has the greatest ability among social establishments to modernize the life for developing the society. Hence, there is a correlated relation between education and development requirements, in order to decrease the gap between graduated students and development requirement so that it should be compulsory to care about the educational quality and integral, to rise up personality which has the ability to encounter the changes and adopt with future requirements which need skills and improved abilities (AL-Mhasen,2006)

In regard to, educational functions to develop and improve the society are as under.

1) Education operates to eliminate cultural obstacles which are faced by the society,

2) Eliminating cultural gap between various social classes.

3) It is a stimulus tool, to develop individuals to compete with their - colleagues in their jobs.

4) It is considered as a national struggle tool.

It also has economic functions since it is regarded by developing countries, as one of the most important tools in production. Therefore, many economical thinkers illustrated that "Education is a financial investment in human being."(AL_Q.O.U, 2004)

Accordingly, human power preparation is considered as the most essential university contemporary function. Hence university is seen as productive establishment through its production of trained human power which is responsible for society. It is regarded as an investment in human resources; hence, the human capital is no less important than financial capital. Since, to build factories, schools and establishments is an easy thing while to form trained human cadres is considered as a sophisticated operation which needs long effort and time.

Many studies have been done and showed that there was a correlated relation between education and development like;

> A study in Brazil aimed to study relation of genuine growth rate and human capital growth rate, expressed by education and technological growth rate. So, it showed that education is the second most important element which affects the economical growth after technological progress .(Lee,etal.1994)

> Another study has been conducted on six advanced countries viz, France, Japan, UK, Sweden, Italy and Australia to test causative relation between growth and higher education. It implied that higher education level had a crucial effect on environmental level, in the first four countries .(Meulemeester,1995)

Another study was done in 59 countries showed that the education improvement leads to the income distribution improvement in positive manner for poor classes. (Park.1996)

These results imply that education is an effective means to improve income distribution.

The Concept of Empowerment

The nature of empowerment renders difficult to define. On the one hand, it is often referred to as a goal for many development programs. On the other hand, it can also be conceived as a process through which people undergo eventually leads to changes. Stromquist[14] defines Empowerment as "A process to change the distribution of power in interpersonal relations and in institutions, throughout, the society" Lucy Lazo[15] describes it as "A process of acquiring, providing, bestowing the resources and the means or enabling the access to a control over such means and resources".

Given the above, the term is therefore more relevant to the marginalized groups i.e. the poor, the illiterates, the indigenous communities and of course, cutting across these categories, the women.

Namtip Aksornkool looks at the individual level when she cites, Paz defines empowerment as "The ability to direct and control one's own life". But it is clear from Ms. Aksornkool's presentation that, such an individual empowerment of women is attained in relationship to the larger society. Citing depth news, she wrote that "It is a process in which women gain control over their own lives by knowing and claiming their rights at all levels of society i.e. at an international, local, and household levels. Self-empowerment means that, women gain autonomy, they are able to set their own agenda and are fully involved in the economic, political and social decision-making process ". (Aksornkool.1995)[16]

So, different people use empowerment to mean different things. However there are four aspects which seem to be generally accepted in the literature on women's empowerment.

Firstly, to be empowered one must have been disempowered. It is relevant to speak of empowering women. For example, as a group, they are disempowered, relative to men.

Secondly, empowerment cannot be bestowed by a third party. But those who would become empowered must claim it. Development agencies cannot therefore empower women the most they can achieve is, to facilitate women empowering themselves. They may be able to create conditions favourable to empowerment but they cannot make it happen.

Thirdly, definitions of empowerment usually include, a sense of people making decisions on matters which are important in their lives and being able to carry them out. Reflection, analysis and actions are involved in this process which may happen at an individual or a collective level. There are some evidence, that while women's own struggles for empowerment have tended to be collective efforts, empowerment-orientated development interventions, often focus more at an individual level.

Finally empowerment is an ongoing process rather than a product. There is no final goal. One does not arrive at a stage of being empowered in some absolute sense. People are empowered, or disempowered, relative to others or, importantly, relative to themselves at a previous time. (Mosedale.2003)[17]

Indicators of Empowerment

Understanding that empowerment is a complex issue, with varying interpretations in different societal, national and cultural contexts, the International Seminar on Women, Education and Empowerment which was held at, Hamburg, 1993 came out with a tentative list of indicators.

❖ At the level of the individual woman and her household:

    • Participation in crucial decision-making processes.

    • Extent of sharing of domestic work by men.

• Extent to which a woman takes control of her reproductive functions and decides on family size.

• Extent to which a woman is able to decide where the income she has earned will be channelled to.

• Feeling and expression of pride and value in her work.

• Self-confidence and self-esteem and ability to prevent violence.

❖ At the community and/or organisational level

• Existence of women's organizations.

• Allocation of funds to women and women's projects.

• Increased number of women leaders at village, district, provincial and national levels.

• Involvement of women in the design, development and application of technology.

• Participation in community programs, productive enterprises, politics and arts.

• Involvement of women in non-traditional tasks.

• Increased training programs for women.

• Exercising her legal rights when are necessary.

❖ At the national level:

• Awareness of woman's social and political rights.

• Integration of women in the general national development plan.

• Existence of women's networks and publications.

• Extent to which women are officially visible and recognized.

• The degree to which the media take heed of women's issues. (Bochynek, B & Anonuevo.C.1995)[18]

The Profile of Empowered Woman

Empowered woman appreciates the time she spends on domestic work and outside the home. She is aware that overwork is harmful to her physical and mental health as it is vital. She is able to question her double responsibility and seeks help from others, to have enough leisure to spend on learning and participating in the social and political life of the community. Empowered woman appreciates value of her contribution whether, remunerated or not. She is aware that she has tremendous potential to contribute to the progress of her family, community and nation. With that understanding, she is confident of her worth, is open-minded and can appreciate others.

Aware of her productivity, she seeks to improve her skills and knowledge continuously. She has enough information sources (such as extension services, available and relevant technology) and makes sure that she benefits from them. She appreciates the knowledge gained from reading and reads regularly.

Empowered woman understands that she is a human being and can control her own life. Hence, she could and should question the family and social practices which negatively affects her. She seeks to get scientific insights into superstitions and challenges those which are unjust to them. She has a freedom of movement and expression at par with man. She appreciates her strengths and weaknesses and seeks self-improvement. She can lead and serve as a positive role model for other women.

Empowered woman is aware of her rights as a citizen and protects them actively. She is convinced of her equality with men. She knows which laws and legal processes treat women unfairly and seek to use her legal knowledge to protect her own and other women's rights.

Empowered woman respects herself and dares to take credit and responsibility for her contribution and action, looks for options and makes informed decisions. She dares to be different and creative. She appreciates and supports other women. She is aware that organization means strength and seeks to strengthen her organizational, management and leadership skills.

Empowered woman is aware that her health is related to the number of children she has. She respects the dignity of womanhood and appreciates daughters in the same way as sons, nurtures herself. She wants everybody to understand that, as a human being, entitled to happiness in the same way that others are. She has a zest for life. (Aksornkool.1995pp:55-56)

Review of Literature

In this part, the researcher presented previous literature and studies which are related to the research topic whether entirely or partly to discuss and follow it up. The researcher divided related studies, according to their topics into two categories. Studies related to open learning system and studies related to human development, gender and empowerment of women. They are as follow.

Robinson.B (1999) provided a case study grounded in practice of the first open and distance learning project for non-formal education in Mongolia. The study outlined the project and its context explained rationale for it. It analyzed its achievements, limitations, lessons and also identified the additional problems for open distance education in the context of rapid economic transition.[19]

Frank Elbers (2000) studied the second and updated education of the human rights education organization resource book. It includes directions of

human rights education organizations world wide a listing of human rights, training programs and annotated bibliography which is an overview of human rights & training programmers.[20]

Kanwar and Taplin (2001) have pointed to the greatest advantages which could be achieved by open learning:

- Woman self usefulness through achieving which was aspiring for growth prospects and confidence increasing when she dealt with others.

-The children usefulness when the mother was ideal could be followed in organizing the studying customs.

-Exchange experiences with other women and the use from their similar experiences in the life.

-the open learning experience could be useful for women to get rid of worry as to be student return back to the study seats.

The case studies are from Mainland China, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. The focus was on addressing the issues which are most likely to influence attitude changes in other women and their husbands and families. Some of them are :

- Distance education can benefit the husband, children and other family members, without taking the wife/ mother away from the home too much to do her studies.

- The woman herself can benefit.

- Children can benefit rather than suffer.

- A mother who studies, can still be devoted to her children .

- Distance education can enable a mother to stay at home with the children .

- The wife's participation in distance education can also benefit the husband.[21]

Furst-Bowe, Julie (2002)studied reasons why adult female students were motivated to enrol in distance learning programs, described their perceptions of the courses and identified barriers those women faced as they attempted to progress through their degree programs. Results of focus groups with 40 returning adult women were analyzed. Their needs were grouped into the five general categories: needs involving communication with instructors; needs surrounding interactions with other students; needs involving support services provided by the campus; Personal needs, including support of spouses, family members and employers. Themes from focus groups were then used to develop an online survey that was administered to 400 men and women enrolled in online courses. Findings suggested that women returned to college primarily for job-related reasons and deliberately selected programs delivered via distance education because of the convenience of online courses and other types of distance education courses delivered at sites near their homes. Although, in general, students were satisfied with these programs and the programs appeared to enable women to balance school work and family demands.[22]

Khalaf (2003) In a comparative study for the student affairs administration in the formal university system and the open / distance learning system. It reviewed the historical perspective of the student affairs of the formal system in the context of the Islamic - Arabic, European, and American experiences. It also reviewed the emergence of student affairs in the open and distance learning system. In addition, it illustrated organization, function the influence of information and communication technology on the both systems. The study finally elaborated the role of the student affairs administration in the development of the student character which was

considered to be the chief goal of university education through formal or open / distance learning settings.[23]

Sween, and Singh (2003) outlined how it was important to recognize the different needs of different groups of women and to integrate women into existing systems of adult education. It included active promotion of women's education. It then went on to outline recommendations for what adult learning programs should aim for and what they should provide. Learning materials should challenge gender stereotypes and focus on promoting income-earning and employment. Attention should be paid for raising women's self-esteem and addressing political as well as cultural issues. It then looked at four strategies: Flexible Learning System, Distance Education, Private Education and University Centres of Adult Continuing Education and Extension. The study concluded that literacy didn't automatically lead to empowerment as this view was based on an individual without acknowledging the society in which he/she lived. Empowerment means supporting women, coming together to understand and address gender issues that put them at a disadvantage. In this way they could utilise skills such as literacy. In a way that was long-term and context-specific.[24]

Darwazeh (2004) investigated whether the students of Al-Quds Open University felt distanced, and what were the factors behind their feelings? Were they due to physical factors, or to the psycho-social, academic, and administrative factors?

Random sample of 318 undergraduates was taken. Restrictive and analytic statistics were used to analyze the data. The analysis revealed the following results;

* The general mean of Al-Quds Open University students' feeling of distanced was (x=3.1) out of (5) points.

*The students' feeling of distanced was due to significantly (p}.000) to the academic factors(x=3.4) more than to the physical (x=3.03), psycho-social(x=3.01), or the administrative (x=2.96) factors.[25]

Passi &Mishra (2004) studied the process used for selecting research areas and methodological approaches in distance education in India. Experts from the field of distance education in India were interviewed at length, with the aim of collecting qualitative data on opinions of process-issues for selecting areas for research, research design, and appropriate methodological approaches in distance education. Data collected from these interviews were subjected to content analysis triangulation and peer consultation techniques were used for cross-checking and data verification. While the findings and recommendations of this study had limited application in the sense can only be used in the specific context, outlined in this study. Respondents in this study nonetheless, revealed the pressing need for more process-oriented research, in examining media and technology, learners and learning, and distance learning evaluation processes. The research yielded interesting empirical findings & also determined that a mixed approach which involves both quantitative and qualitative methods is more appropriate, for conducting research in distance education in India. Qualitative evidence from the research also indicated that respondents interviewed, felt that the emphasis should be placed on an interdisciplinary and systemic research, over that of traditional disciplinary research. Research methods such as student self-reporting, extensive and highly targeted interviews, conversation and discourse analysis were determined to as useful for data collection for this study.[26]

Shaheen and Banat (2004) investigated attitude of the learners at Al-Quds Open University towards opening M.A programs at the university

especially with the increase in the number of the university graduates and as the university was the only one in the area that followed the distance learning system. To gather answers for the study questions and to the validity of its hypotheses, the research team developed a questionnaire which would measure the learner's attitudes towards the topic of the study.

The sample of the study was 230 learners, which was chosen through the stratified random. Data was analyzed by using SPSS program. The study revealed that the learner's attitude was high regarding M.A programs at the university. The learners assured that it will be vital if the university starts such program, they expressed strong tendencies to pursue their higher studies by the same system of distance learning. Further more, the study concluded that there were significant differences in the learners' attitude in relation to gender in favour of males.[27]

Makhloof, and Banat,(2005) in their study which aimed at identifying the level of alienation among QOU students and also aimed at identifying the effects of some variables in the level of alienation. The study addressed the issues of alienation as a multi-dimensional phenomena, with theoretical and empirical research has dealt with. Accordingly, alienation is procedurally defined by three dimensions which are: feeling of alien, feeling of social isolation and feeling of meaninglessness. The questionnaire was administered on a sample of 1749 students, which were chosen through the stratified random sample. After collecting the data, it was analyzed by using the statistical package for social science SPSS. The study revealed the following results: There was a moderate feeling of alienation among the students. The study indicated that, there were different dimension of alienation, whereby the meaninglessness represents the dimension which caused the most suffering among the students. Also, the study found that

there were significant differences in the degree of alienation's existence among QOU students related to marital status, academic level, the academic program, the relation to work-power, age and the grade point average.[28]

Nada,(2005) aimed to show the unique characteristics of Al-Quds Open University and to analyze the effects of the following variables (sex, job, place of residence, education level, and area). The researcher selected a random stratified sample of 769 male and female students for the study. The descriptive method was used in the study and a questionnaire consisted of 64 items was designed to collect data which was analyzed by One Way-ANOVA, Balanced Means, Standard Deviation, Variance Analysis of Multi Repeated Measurement, (t) Test, and LSD Test. The study results showed that the highest mean was in the area of the quality of participating students and the methods of teaching used followed by the ability to overcome the political crises and flexibility in terms of time and timing.[29]

Al-Farra(2007) had tried to clarify the meaning of self - learning and its relation with distance learning philosophy. He also, clarified roots of the distance learning system and open learning. The study also clarified the progressive relation of education in the Islamic philosophy with open teaching. It also clarified some of Arabs' experience learning and its various constitutions. The study depended on the historical descriptive method to display knowledge connected with distance learning philosophy and University Open teaching.[30]

Belbeesi (2007) in her study entitled ' The effectiveness of Al-Quds Open University Students in using the techniques and skills of the Open Education'. The study aimed to give an approximate and clear idea about the open education in order to inject the concept of open education in the minds

of the students through the skills, techniques and strategies of open education.

The study consisted of 1890 students, the researcher has taken a random sample from the size of the study society which was near about 5% and related to the gender, academic programs and the level of the study. The researcher used list of forms especially for the study which was dealt with Licart Scale. The following results were issued from the study: An appearance of the study results, that there was a good understanding, which was related to the open education and academic supervisors. The study also indicates that the students have weak ability in using the modern technological methods.[31]

Rabaya (2007) investigated the motives behind enrolling of students at Al-Quds Open University and differences in those motives due to sex, marital status, job status, place of living, academic program and the age of the student. For that a questionnaire was designed, consisted of 44 items. Data was statistically analyzed Results showed that there was statistically significant impact for each motive aspects (personal, social, economic, academic, and political) on enrolment. The academic aspect ranked the first obstruction, the social aspect ranked the second economic aspect ranked the third, political aspect ranked the fourth, and personal was the last. Results also revealed that there were no statistical significant differences due to sex, marital status, place of living and, age of the student. While there were statistically significant differences due to job status and academic program.[32]

Barakat(2008) had a study which aimed to investigate self concept and the level of aspiration among Al-Quds Open University students due to the variables like: sex, specialization, and academic achievement. For this purpose, the researcher constructed two scales to measure the self concept

and level of aspiration, and distributed it to a sample consisted of 378 students (197 females, and 181 males) from five educational regions: Nablus, Tulkarm, Jenin, Qalqilia, and Salffit. Results showed that the level of self concept and aspiration among the study sample was moderate, and there was a positive relationship between self-concept and aspiration among students. Furthermore, results showed that there were statistical significant differences in students' scores on the scales of self-concept and level of aspiration due to academic achievement variable in favour of high achievement students. The study also showed that there were no statistical significant differences in the scores due to sex and specialization of students.[33]

Manikyamba(1989) in her study of Andhra Pradesh found that socio-economic background in general and political background in particular are important determinants of shaping the nature and level of participation of members in political institutions. The study revealed that education and participation were interrelated. In general, women members having secondary educational qualification are more participated well in the meetings. Next, economic status gives a sense of confidence and encouragement to participate. The participation of the poor women members was found mostly insignificant. The middle class and rich members showed greater degree of participation. Then, age has its impact on participation. The extent of participation of the young and the middle age was generally more than that of old age. Next, women members with experience in politics played active roles in the institution under study.[34]

Pem (1989) studied numerous social, cultural and religious factors restraining women from joining politics. The low level of education, gender stereotyping and cultural norms have led to the prevalence of a perception

which sees women only confined to the domestic tasks, incapable of understanding and having the capability to contribute in the political process. The field research was conducted utilizing various methodologies namely reconnaissance survey, key informant interviews, semi structured interviews, focus group and the use of case studies.

The main finding was that women do not have much of role when it comes to making decisions in the gewgaw level. This under representation of women was due to the obstacles women faced and the mind frame of the people. Lack of education, literacy rate, lack of confidence, lack of mobilization amongst women, the doubt on the capability of women and the male dominance of politics were the main findings in this study.[35]

Elizabeth, King & Anne Hill (1993) studied the condition of Women's Education in Developing Countries and in four chapters discussed about condition of women's education, returns to women's education, factors influencing women's educational status factors affecting primary and secondary education.[36]

Association of Indian Universities carried a variety of articles covering different aspects of higher education. A proper appreciation of the role of education in national development was facilitated if different views articulated on a theme were read together in a single volume, education bringing about consistencies which helps individuals to perceive, interpret criticize and finally transform their environment.[37]

May's study (1993) of female students looked at taking a women's studies course by home study or teleconference at Athabasca University in 1991. A feminist theory was used as a framework that included the principles of accessibility, collaboration, feminist processes, and personal empowerment. The results indicate that female students have minimum contact with other

students and tutors, and that involvement of family and friends were limited. Some of the students believed solitary study is not detrimental to the learning process and others endorsed it, believing that dialogue can help them understand course material. Other results of this qualitative research revealed the following: :

1. Women felt studying and family responsibilities often resulted in "double duty", thus making distance education convenient and flexible. These women believe, as do many distance educators, that distance decreases barriers related to time, distance, and social factors.

2. These women believed that delivery modes are not amenable to being modified and resigned themselves to solitary study. This finding contradicts the literature that states distance technology provides flexibility in distance learning.[38]

May (1994) examined women's distance learning experiences. She interviewed nine women from variety of educational backgrounds and circumstances who had studied a women's studies course by home study or teleconferencing who had Athabasca University during 1990-1999. Distance education for the women interviewed succeeded in extending educational opportunities to them and dismantling significant parries that have historically restricted women's access to learning opportunities. These women were grateful that communication technologies, despite their imperfections, allowed them to study from their own homes, at times most convenient for their personal schedules.[39]

Gowda and others (1996) in their study of Karnataka women elected panchayat leader found that women members of developed taluks were found to play a better developmental role than their counterparts in the

backward <u>taluks</u>. The study revealed that among the socio-economic attributes such as age, education, caste, annual household income and land holding of women leaders, only education and annual household income had a highly significant and positive relationship with their developmental role performance. The findings of the study stated that women members of the Panchayat Raj institution could play an effective developmental role if they were given adequate recognition and encouragement.[40]

Rathore, Harish (1997) compared students' perceptions about the quality and cost-effectiveness and satisfaction with feedback they get through: written correspondence; face-to-face sessions; and non-contiguous interaction on electronic media. The survey received responses from 529 of 2,500 active students of the German Fern Universitat (FeU) and 653 of 2,500 active students of the Indian Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Comparative analysis revealed a number of significant differences that supported the hypothesis that material development of a society results in better support to students in distance education. In general, FeU was found to provide its students better feedback than IGNOU. FeU students found feedback from all forms of non-contiguous communication to be significantly more cost effective than IGNOU students. Feedback through computer-marked assignments was better than tutor-marked assignments at FeU and it was least qualitative and cost effective at IGNOU, reflecting the impact of industrialization in Germany on distance education. Another support for this contention was that, although qualitatively the two universities did not differ significantly in tutor-marked assignments to students, FeU students perceived it to be more cost effective. Distance students in both universities viewed face-to-face sessions very positively.[41]

Gillian (1998) in a study entitled "Reaching and Teaching Women on the Web:- The Challenge of barriers and Bottom Lines" describes the experience of a private-sector facilitator in developing and offering an on-line course through the women's International electronic University. In highlights the challenges that many women face in overcoming barriers to participation in continuing education. In particular the difficulties of balancing the demands of work, family, and educational responsibilities are noted. The study also considers the difficulties the provider encounters when trying to balance the demands of cost-recovery with pedagogical goals. The study explores the potential of web-based instruction for overcoming gender-specific barriers to learning about technology. It also proposes that a single-gender educational web environment provides better learning opportunities than mixed-gender environment for women who want to acquire internet skills.[42]

Manvel (1998) Studied relation between women and development and explained that human development, without paying attention towards women's education is impossible and described, if we want to get development, we must improve women education.[43]

Bhandari (1998) in his study, attempt was made by the author, to compile all factual information and derive selective indicators for depicting the progress of women education in India, during the course of the last century and to analyze the gap that still remains to be bridged towards equalization of educational opportunities between boys and girls in the country.[44]

Demiray and Emine (2000) investigated that level of knowledge and skills of women in many aspects of everyday life is generally lower than that of men, and this is even more so in developing countries including Turkey. One of the best ways to educate women is by distance education. Distance

education provides opportunities that enhance the educational qualifications of women and raise their occupational bargaining power.

Such as advantage is discussed in this empirical study that involves women enrolled in the two-year Home Economy Pre-License Program of the Anadolu University Open Education Faculty, Turkey.

The study evaluates the program in terms of women's development which includes their preference towards courses they enrol in, the suitability of the program to enhance knowledge and skills, and the subsequent prospect of job opportunities.[45]

Gaba,A(2000) studied the individual learners' goals to pursue the program, their perception of the value of the distance education degree, their program completion; and perception of employability of their respective distance education program. The study found that most of the respondents joined distance education system because of its flexible characteristics and with the purpose of manly getting a job and using ICT in ODL will help update the existing skills of learners and also generate new skills among them. Further education can raise the employment opportunities in many ways, as it helps develop the necessary skills, attitude and motivation to match opportunity-wage-employment as well as self-employment. In the study, most of the students perceived that they will utilise their degree in pursuing higher education, and will also eventually get a job.[46]

Bhalalusesa (2001) examined the kind of support women need to pursue distance learning successfully in a developing country context such as Tanzania. The study shows that there are factors that make studying more difficult for women than for men. While the distance teaching institutions has an important role to play in promoting learning, both the learner and the immediate social environment have a part to play in the student's success. A

holistic approach is therefore necessary if effective support is to be realized. The study ends with recommendations for improved practice.[47]

Jejeebhoy (2001) reviewed the considerable evidence about women's education and fertility in the developing world that has emerged over the last twenty years, and the passes beyond the limits of provisions. It addressed major question, like how did improvement in education empower women in other areas of life such as improving their exposure to information, decision-making, control of resources and confidence in dealing with family and the out side world?[48]

Palanthurai (2001) in his study of Tamil Nadu observed that women have come to positions in the local bodies as provisions have been made in the constitution. The outlook of the society towards the women has started changing. Author from his experience suggests that women need orientation, sensitization, capacity building, information and counselling continuously through organizations. The ongoing experiments and experiences suggest that periodical training; orientation and sensitization can help the women leaders to perform the assigned role in a better way. He argued that the Govt. will respond to the needs of these women leaders only when social organization and groups support them.[49]

Miller,(2002) showed the importance of open learning system in developing and supporting women to benefit from developed technological means which were used in ideal means in this sort of learning .The results declared that open learning system offered many opportunities which enabled women to develop their social, economic and cultural status.[50]

Papademetriou, D (2003) the research was designed to answer a very important, in terms of study, current question: does the quality of learning experience, in which the students of Open and Distance Education (ODE)

are involved, differ from that of the students of conventional education? The answer to the question above included two objectives: (1) to develop a valid, reliable and comprehensive means for the measurement of the variable "quality of the learning experience", and (2) to put to test this means of measurement in two different teaching and learning systems, the conventional and the ODE, collecting and comparing the respective data. The preliminary data on the quality of the learning experience were provided by 60 postgraduate students: 30 students of the conventional and 30 of the ODE, by means of a specially designed questionnaire on a five-point scale. The results of the research were grouped in six comprehensive indicators of the quality of the learning experience under the following headings: interaction of learning material, the course structure, assignments, support provided by the Tutor counsellor, administrative support, and quality of the tutor counsellor. The average values obtained for these indicators varied between 2, 25 and 3, 97 in the conventional education, and 3,38 to 4,60 in ODE. With slight deviations, the preliminary results of the research did not show any significant differences in the quality of the learning experience between these two educational systems.[51]

Ibraheem, Y. K (2003) analyzed the educational properties of gender in Gaza Strip and West Bank Universities. The study dealt with demographic properties of Palestinians, the population growth, age structure as well as the gender structure of people of Gaza Strip and West Bank. Also dealt with the educational properties in terms of enrolment in higher education.

The study discussed the geographical distribution of universities and male-female distribution of students per the different majors in addition graduates distribution. Also disclosed the outcome of education re-graduates

enrolment, specialization, demand for work the employed and unemployed according to their majors.[52]

Reddi (2003) investigated the significant roles and participation of women in home and farm in Andhra Pradesh which are studied with certain specific objectives: To asses the importance of agriculture and the role of women in agriculture. Identify the participation of women in domestic sphere. To asses the socio-economic conditions of the rural women with agriculture.

The analysis revealed that the respondents who participate in agriculture ranged from 10-70 years and women have very little access to education particularly in rural areas, hence most of them suffer from illiteracy. Analysis showed that socio-economic conditions under which those women live are traditional and exploitative their development and go on lowering their socio-economic status day by day.[53]

Al-Aileh (2004) studied participation of Al-Quds Open University in preparing and developing human resources, to what extent it catered for the needs of Palestinian society and also the relationship between higher education and development .An analytic descriptive method was used and a sample was chosen from graduated students from several specializations from Gaza Strip during (1998-2003).

It was found that QOU participated in rehabilitation of the administrative and technical cadres who work in public and private sectors. It contributed in the process of development and participated in cultural and social changes in Palestinian society.[54]

Aluwihare-Samaranayake, D (2004) undertook a study to identify distance learning programs supporting rural development education in Sri Lanka. Specifically the study sought to assess the current distance learning programs for their curricular content and their ability to meet the gender

differentiated learning needs of rural households seeking to improve their livelihood and quality of life.

Across-section from the government and non government sectors, including universities, which implement distance education programs were reviewed for their course content, target groups, problems encountered and number of beneficiaries. A descriptive survey was conducted in eight districts with participants from different socio-economic backgrounds using participatory methods to identify the training needs of rural household, with special emphasis on access to information among women and girl children.

The findings revealed that the participants showed an interest in vocational training, education, health, and employment opportunities. The majority preferred the afternoon for learning activities.[55]

Hamdan (2004) investigated an importance of open and distance education in social, political and cultural development. He inspired to apply new technical methods in IT to bestow new educational services which suit many sectors of people such as households, youth, elders, handicaps and all of them looked for achieving their educational inspirations. Since they lost their opportunities in conventional education. The results showed that open education could distribute in many aspects social and human development such as flexibility in admission and registration, gather between work and study, development of skills, democratization of education through various educational programs.[56]

Kishor, Kamla (2004) studied variation in indicators of women's empowerment across India. 'This paper used data from the NFHS-2 to document women's empowerment as a whole and in each of 26 states with 1999 boundaries. In general, it found that an average woman in India was disempowered absolutely as well as relative to men and there had been little

change in her empowerment over time. This result was obvious no matter how empowerment was measured, be in terms of the indicators of the evidence, sources or setting for empowerment. However, there was great variation in level of women's empowerment across the different states and across indicators.[57]

Krishnan, (2004) studied assessments of Distance Higher Education by its students who are the direct beneficiaries of the system. It aimed to analyse the socio-economic and academic background of the distance education learners, to evaluate the participation of the weaker sections and women in the distance education mode of learning and motivations of distance learners.

The study found that the success of Distance Education Institutes lies in their ability to extend educational opportunities to all including disadvantaged sectors. The study identified that professional and work related motives have been of great significance for distance learners in the sample.[58]

Moody, J(2004) examined issues that affect women in online learning, and discussed four women's particular experiences in the university of Central Florida's Distance Learning Program. Online education involves aspects of support and communication that may affect women's learning experiences either positively or negatively. Distance Learning may also allow women to pursue their education while still taking care of families and outside work. For this purpose the researcher identified three areas: Social support, technical support and awareness of differences in discussion style. He talk with four women about how they perceived their online discussions and relate these to existing literature in order to come up with areas that may need further exploration or improvement.[59]

Sultana & Kamal (2004) aimed at explaining the scope of using ODL materials for women empowerment in the rural areas through enhancing literacy, business skill and social awareness. The study also identified possible barriers in using ODL tools to enhance women literacy and business skill and recommended some possible corrective measures. In this case, the possibility of partnership with Non Conventional Organizations (NGOs), role of technologies has been verified Experience of Bangladesh Open University (BOU) Secondary School Certificate (SSC) program. As the first step for the women empowerment is to enhance their literacy level and uplift their skills. SSC program of BOU certainly serves the purpose of enhancing literacy as well as the general level of education for the rural women.[60]

Akhter (2005) states that girls and women are often invisible in curriculum both within the content itself as well as the images. Gender stereotypes and inequalities are reinforced and perpetuated in a wide social context due to this invisibility. Within the curriculum most of the examples or illustrations in the textbooks used by the Bangladesh Open University's Open School at the secondary level are male. Since the introduction of free secondary education for girls, the Government of Bangladesh has been making changes to the curriculum. Textbooks are being redesigned to be more gender-sensitive.

The main objective of the study is to review the textbooks of the Open School at the BOU for Class 5 to Class 6 to identify gender bias and the reflection on males and females. It is expected that the findings of this study will help BOU produce more effective and gender-sensitive textbooks. It also suggests some alternative approaches to producing gender-sensitive materials that do not reinforce gender stereotypes.[61]
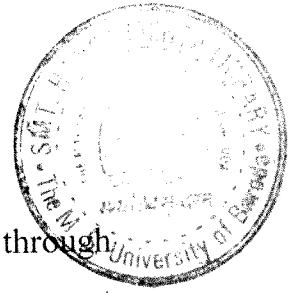
Green (2005) examined the notion of women's empowerment through ICTs. The first section of the thesis used development and empowerment literature to define, explain and critique women's empowerment and the conditions under which it is supposed to operate. The second section, presented analyses, and discussion. The data collected from questionnaire answered by some Western Australian Women on their experiences of ICTs courses offered by the Western Australian Government and their subsequent life changes. The questionnaire was designed to establish whether or not women are empowered to create social change and challenge patriarchy, as suggested in literature.[62]

Ramdoo (2005) examined how online distance education acted to democratize access to and suit the anthologies of Mauritian women who seek to empower themselves for development. Data from semi-structured interviews of 30 middle class couples were presented in that study. Interview analyse was premised on a feminist perspective and conducted within the social relations analysis framework. The objective of this research was to understand that what types of supportive environments (social spaces) enable Mauritian women to engage in educational endeavours which promote their personal potentials and creativities. The study concluded that online learning can enhance and democratize women's access to education for personal development but only if the power relationships in the two 'social spaces' were well understood and well negotiated by these women. The findings in this study threw light on the importance of understanding 'learner spaces' when establishing and setting-up open learning organizations.[63]

Rochdi (2005) in her study "Promoting Women's Rights and Children through Access to Information" which was produced to The Arab Human

Development Report showed that disempowerment of women is the main cause for human poverty and underdevelopment within the Arab region. Disempowerment is due to the ignorance of women of their legal rights and entitlements. The Gender Equality Task Force Plan, as part of the UN Millennium Project, which was set to help developing countries meet their developing goals, states that improving the rights of women would help reduce poverty and empower women in developing societies. The Task Force Plan includes creating education and employment opportunities for women and promoting their legal literacy. These goals would be achieved through UNDP's Regional Program ICTDAR (Information and Communication Technologies for Development in the Arab Region).[64]

Tikkanen (2005) studied the impact of distance learning in human development as one of his objectives. Sample of 122 tutors was chosen as the study was through tutors' point of view. The results showed that the utilization of distance learning is an effective system to develop students socially, pedagogally and economically. Also showed no significant differences to the impact of distance learning due to gender.[65]

Janaki (2006) reviewed aspects of Gender and Distance Learning, participatory trends of women in distance learning in India, barriers affecting women's advancement in academia, impact of distance learning on women learners, gender technology and distance learning, technologies for improving distance learning, limitations of distance education technologies & Indian experience of distance learning. It also related the success story of distance learning programs for women run by the School of Distance Education of Mother Teresa Women's University Kodaikanal, South India. It also outlined few important issues for policy action to increase participation of women in distance learning for their empowerment.[66]

Mitra.S (2006) investigated the effect of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system at school levels through National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in India to overcome the gender gap in traditional schools.

This study highlights the gender profile of learners who enrol in NIOS from the different states of India and examines gender equality with respect to enrolment at the secondary level. Since one of the unique features in NIOS is the provision for 'choice of subjects', the study also highlights the distribution of females in different major subjects. An examination of these gender distribution trends in NIOS centres across the country leads towards answering questions of NIOS effectiveness in addressing this issue. The analysis would assist in determining future course of action so as to increase access to school education.[67]

Olakulehin and Ojo (2006) studied women emancipation through empowerment all over the world was at its peak and Africans generally were no exception. It was an attempt to make sure that women's voices were heard and were given their right place in the scheme of things. Nonetheless, the issue of educational attainment of women considering the low level of girl's education, in Africa was at a negative variance in attaining legitimate position. This was essentially because certain educational attainments were required to function effectively in different organs such as work place, group or committees of local or international standing. This study discusses the use of open learning and distance education in Nigeria as an avenue to attain knowledge and education that would put women in a better stead towards achieving their aspirations.[68]

Siddiqui(2006) aimed to quantify the socioeconomic gap in relation to availing of maternal health care services during pregnancy and delivery. Statistical analyses were done to test the significances existed in availing of

delivery care services among various segments of the population. Women in residing in rural areas were less likely than urban women to use the health care services. Economic and educational status of women were positively associated with use of medical facilities.[69]

Sukati (2006) focused on the Millennium Development Goal on gender parity and gender equality in education as the Human Development Report for 1995 declared that 'If human development is not engendered, it is endangered.' The paper set out to critically examine the university distance education reforms in relation to the complex and multidimensional concept of gender. The Institute of Distance Education at the University of Swaziland will be used as a case study to make an analysis of whether or not the introduction of Distance Education at the University had increased access to university education to men and particularly women. Gender patterns would be assessed to draw conclusions and make recommendations.[70]

Varghese (2006) studied implementation of National Literacy Campaign in Faridabad district and evaluated level of empowerment of women literacy workers in the district. It also studied impact of National Literacy Campaign work on personality, life, and aspiration of the women literacy workers. The study found that the literacy workers were 100% literate and had reached at least higher school level of education. Further the literacy workers were voluntary workers and had taken up the task of imparting literacy to the adult illiterate women without expecting any remuneration from the government and the literacy workers had a higher level of empowerment before taking up the voluntary literacy work.[71]

Bukhsh (2007) aimed to highlight the gender disparities of Pakistan regional and international level. The study measured the comparative

outcome of formal and non-formal system of education in Pakistan. To achieve the desired goal, survey research was considered appropriate, the number of schools and enrolment during the years 2001- 2004 of the formal system for primary and middle and high level was considered and the enrolment during the years 2004 for secondary school certificate to PhD level of non- formal system of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Islamabad – Pakistan - was considered. Data was analyzed in term of percentage and average. It was found that enrolment of female is less than male in formal system while enrolment of female is higher than male in non-formal system of education in Pakistan.[72]

Gaba (2007) analyzed role of open / distance learning system in women empowerment. The study examined the post certification achievement of the female learners from individual and social perspectives .The learners from Professional MBA program and from the Technical MCA program were sampled to analyse the changes in the achieved social and academic aspects of female learners at IGNOU. The findings of the study were based on surveys and interviews with (308) respondents 38% of the total numbers involved) and the findings demonstrated that the IGNOU open distance learning system had indeed benefited those women who engaged and completed the MBA or the MCA programs at IGNOU.[73]

Talwar (2007) studied gender discrimination in education and employment intensively. The study revealed that higher and professional education was necessary for new emerging jobs but women were not getting equal opportunity as men in higher education. The situation of lower income groups and rural areas is worse than urban areas and higher income groups.[74]

Akhter (2008) in her study entitled: Get a second chance to make a first impression: Eradicate the poverty level of the women farmer in Bangladesh"

argued that efforts to promote women's participation in farming are fraught with challenges including poverty, misconception regarding education, training etc. The study also stated that the development and use of distance education materials would effectively address a number of the challenges currently faced by rural women seeking to access education and training.[75]

Safiollah. (2008) investigated the role of NGOs in the socioeconomic development of Women in Iran by enhancing education and empowerment opportunities to Iranian women. Therefore, the study was descriptive in nature, which aimed particularly to:- Study the contemporary development problems of women in Iran, selected role of NGOs regarding the education and empowerment of women in Iran and to study the impact of the educational programs on the target group for development and empowerment, identify the obstacles for implementing the innovative educational program and restructure the innovative educational programs also to record the opinions of women and NGOs to the development of women.

Respondents showed very strong determination to the education development of women. They are in opinion that there should be equality in education of both girls and boys. Similarly, when women were asked that educating a girl should not be encouraged because a girl has to marry and move to another house, only one woman was agree to this. None of the women strongly agreed.

Most of women believe that after good education male domination may not be continued. Iranian women are very positive towards their education which can help them to become self confident and to improve self image. It is a positive indication towards education and empowerment of women in Iran.

It is observed that Iranian women are having very positive attitudes and perception to other factors of women's empowerment like employment, access to healthcare facilities, legal protection to women and political participation for decision making.

The study found that NGOs are playing a crucial role for women's development. However, this trend is recently taking place in Iranian society. Opposition from traditional persons, insufficient finance and staff, non supportive background of candidates and traditional mind set of the society are the problems faced by various NGOs in Hamadan province. Despite of various hurdles in the way of NGOs, they continue in educating and empowering women in Hamadan province.[76]

Sebeeni. (2008) studied the role of Q.O.U in developing administrative skills of graduate working persons in Palestinian establishments as viewed by their managers as well as to determine if this role varied through the variance of establishment type, specialization, scientific qualification and an experience period of the manager.

The researcher depended on the descriptive approach in dealing with data, to design questionnaire which contained two parts, the first part personal data and the second part contained the questionnaire items which reflected the development of the administrative skills for graduated persons as viewed by their managers. In addition those items were distributed into four aspects; technical skills, interactive skills, analytic skills and administrative operational skills. the statistical package for social science was used to analyze the data hence the most important result that the study showed was that the participation rate of Q.O.U in developing administrative skills of the graduated workers in Palestinian establishment, generally was moderate and in natural situation .

Thus, the results showed that there were no statistical differences at the level (0.05=a) in the role of (QOU) in developing administrative skills for the graduated workers in Palestine establishments due to the type of establishment variable, specialization, scientific qualification, the experience period of the manager.[77]

Barakat (2009) had a study which aimed at the estimations of Al-Quds Open University's (QOU) strategies for human development in viewpoint of its teaching staff members in light of variables such as gender, qualification, types of employments and specialization. To achieve this purpose, a questionnaire for measuring the human development strategies applied for a sample consisted of 192 teachers from QOU. Results showed the following :

- The teachers' estimates for human strategies development in social, economical, and political domains were high, while it was very high in the cultural domain.

- There were no significant differences in teachers' staff members estimating for the strategies for human development (social, cultural, economical, and political) due to gender variable.

- There were significant differences in teachers' staff members estimating for the strategies for human development (social, and cultural) due to qualification variable in favour of PhD degree teachers. Whereas there were no significant differences in economical, and political strategies due to this variable.

- There were significant differences in teachers' staff members estimating for the strategies of human development(social, cultural , and economic) due to specialization variable in favour of educational and computer specialization whereas there were no significant differences in political & strategy due to this variable.78

In his book "Indian Social System **Ram Ahuja (1993)** studied social organization through Hindu philosophy, focused on the nature of diversities such as, languages, religions, castes, tribes, races and ethnicity.

The author explain the family system: concept of family forms of traditional family in India and the changing pattern, marriage system in Hindu, Muslim and Christian marriages. Also he investigated the main problems of marriage such as, age at marriage, dowry, divorce and caste marriage.

An important topic which is more related to this study was the status of women in Indian society. The author studied the status of women in Indian society from ancient India, Vedic period, post Vedic, pauranic, Buddhist and medieval period. The changes in the British period affecting women's status such as industrialization, spread of education, weakening the caste system, social movements initiated by some enlightened leaders, growth of women's organizations, and enactment of social legislation. The author also studied the status of women in post- independence, since many factors kept women in low status such as illiteracy, economic dependence, religious prohibitions, caste restrictions lack of female leadership, and apathetic and callous attitude of males.

To investigate the status of women in India today, how to analyze the change in their status, five methods have been mainly used in assessing the status of women:- Historical Method, Non empirical Case Study Method, Empirical Method of Assessing Interpersonal Power, Feminist Quantitative Research Method and Empirical Quantitative and Qualitative Questionnaire Method.

These methods used to study status of women through education of women, employment of women, rights of women and consciousness of social, economic, and political rights.[79]

The book of **Kothai (1995),** " Women and Empowerment" undertook a systematic analysis of the position of women in two modernizing societies, i.e. India and Turkey which shows many historical similarities in the position of women to the level of structural modernization. Education and employment of women bring forth a change in the attitudes and belief of women in terms of equality, independence and individuality. The author has also examined the question of multi linearity of the modernization process of comparative social research.[80]

Champa (1999) book on women's power and progress mainly focused on a collection of articles dealing with women's participation. It has covered India's various struggles, straggle for equality in South India and Goa liberation movement. There the author also discussed delicate problems pertaining to the other aspects of women's life like unmarried motherhood, mother's lineage and the tradition of Sati. There were articles on women's organizations in solving women's problems some articles threw light on customs of some nomadic tribes and among the former untouchable. The second part contained sketches of few women who had contributed in various fields. Women played a role in the freedom struggle; some have tried to rehabilitate abducted women during the traumatic period of partition. Some women are working for development of tribal or trying to educate children of prostitutes. Some articles were about women artists who have combated to solve different types of problems of development. The book gave glimpse of various facets of Indian womanhood.[81]

The book of **Bhatia, (2000)** analyzed the existing status of females in terms of their rights, and their socio-economic education development, highlighting the profiles of some rural women and discussed the strategies of empowerment especially the new roles for education. The author examined how empowered the highly educated career women were, having the women professional make a success of their careers. The author collected information on women professionals the world over and made a comparison with that of Indian findings.[82]

Implication

It is clear from the related studies that they had concentrated on different related to Open and Distance Learning system, its nature, concept etc. on the other hand other studies focused on the relationship between open learning and human development, gender and empowerment especially of women.

The first part of related studies concentrated in the attitudes towards open learning like Shaheen and Banat (2004), Makhloof (2005) and Darwazeh (2004) Frank(2000). Other studies concentrated on the advantages of open and distance learning such as Nada (2005), Kanwar (2001) and Sween (2003). Some concentrated in reasons for joining open learning system like Rabayaa (2008) and Furst (2002) others which studied open learning and conventional education as comparative studies in specific aspects like Khalaf (2003).

In the second part of the related studies, the concentration was on the relationship between open learning and human development like Barakat(2009),Hamdan (2004), Tikkanen (2005) Sebeeni (2008), Al-Eleh (2004). Other studies concentrated on the relationship between gender and open learning like Janaki (2006) Sukati (2006) Talwar (2007)and Bandhari(1998). Some other studies concentrated on the relationship

111

between open learning and empowerment specially of women such as Miller (2002), Gaba (2007), Olakulehen(2006), Varghese (2006) Manvel (1998), Jejeebhoy (2001) and Kishor and Kamla(2004).

The researcher has benefited from related literature to use the suitable methodology and developing an interview schedule. In addition, the related literature has provided the researcher with better knowledge about his subject.

The researcher noticed that although there are many studies dealing with open learning and its relationship with human development and empowerment. But here is a shortage of studies in Palestine dealing with the role of open learning in socio-development and empowerment of women.

This gives the present study an importance and as it is a comparative study between India and Palestine with exposure to several variables adds more importance to this study.

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