



GALVANIZING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH INTERNATIONALIZED TERTIARY EDUCATION: WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The internationalization of education plays progressive role in higher education system by promoting global collaborative and inclusive environment which advances women empowerment and equity. The present study put the spotlight on Indian women's perspective about internationalization of higher education, with special references to women's level of awareness, perception of global benefits, major challenges and key roles in women empowerment. Online survey via Google form was administered and responses from 86 female students was recorded which are enrolled at various teacher education programs viz., Undergraduate, Post-graduate, and Doctoral respectively. An inventory of 18 items based on four variables- awareness, benefits, challenges and role in women empowerment in addition to demographic variables was developed and administered by researcher. Data was analyzed by using statistical measures like frequency and percentage. Results shows that despite of challenges almost all women are very keen to be a part of internationalized higher education system and strongly willing to accept modern and global trends in education. This study helps to understand the expectations of learner from educational institutions. Providing global collaborative and inclusive environment, resources and funding, faculty & student exchange programs, global market/service oriented programs, fusion of all modes of learning, international internships, gender equity in academic opportunities, life skills development through global curricula, controlled models of governance are some of the reforms needed by Indian higher education institutions to fulfill the needs of learner of today and tomorrow.

Keywords: *Global Education, Academic Mobility, Gender-parity in Tertiary Education, Equity; Equality and Inclusion in Education, Internationalized Education, Women Empowerment, etc.*

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Introduction:

*JUSTICE, social, economic and political;
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;
and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual.....*

-The preamble of the Constitution of India

As stated above in the preamble, the Constitution of India guarantees fundamental rights of justice, liberty and equality to all by promoting fraternity and assuring the dignity of every individual of the Nation. This resonates

with the goal of education and hence, cannot be implemented at fullest without providing equal educational opportunities to each and every individual of the country including women.

As Martin Luther King Jr. said "*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.*"

To accomplish this goal, education system must undergo periodic reforms. Embracing international trends and adaption of global standards is pivotal to strengthen the education system, enabling it to effectively contribute in achieving ideals enshrined in the Constitution of India.

According to Lunel, (2023), ‘internationalization’ is the most widely used term in higher education, which refers to knowledge transfer across boundaries in a intensified targeted way. The internationalization of education can be defined as is the process of integration of international, intercultural, pedagogical, and policy adaptations made by an educational institute for implementing reforms to provide education of global standards while aligning with international trends. This involves deliberate and structural changes in education system right from pedagogy, skill enhancement of various stakeholders, faculty training, updating resources, to policy modifications in governance, leadership and autonomy of the institution. The aim on internationalization of education is to build a future-ready cosmopolitan student who is confident, skillful, technology advanced, innovative, multifaceted, capable of accepting global challenges and play various roles, provide leadership very well. At the same time inculcation of human values and ethical principles among students is the ultimate objective of internationalization of higher education.

Literature Review:

Lunel, (2023) explores the internationalization of higher education has gained significant attention globally, particularly since the 1980s. This focus includes the mobility of students and academics, which has become a central aspect of educational policies and strategies. He spotted that there is a need for strategic approaches, curriculum development, cautious assessment of impact, and careful consideration of diverse contexts and potential challenges.

Dedej & Medici, (2024) examines roles and importance of internationalization of education. It highlights need of optimal balance between skill development and methodologies to address challenges in internationalization of education successfully.

Suntharalingam, (2024) observed that the complexity of integration plays a pivotal role in equipping students for a globalized society, enriching their academic journey, and boosting their career prospects.

Kraja et al., (2024) plays a crucial role in deepening the comprehension of internationalization within higher education by offering a detailed examination of its dynamics, effects, and ethical dimensions, with the overarching goal of improving institutional strategies and shaping policy debates.

Research Gap:

Existing scholarly works offer crucial knowledge about various aspects of internationalization of higher education; however, there is a palpable gap in research studies exploring women’s perspective focusing specifically on raising awareness, addressing challenges and redefining role in women empowerment. Most of

the studies are emphasizing upon policy reforms, cost and benefits, strategies and institutional challenges. Hence, present research is needed to understand women's perspective on internationalization of higher education with due stress on challenges and probable solutions for women empowerment and gender-parity in tertiary education.

Methodology:

1. Statement of the Research Problem

Women's perspective about internationalization of education with reference to its awareness, benefits and challenges and role in women empowerment.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate awareness of female students at higher education level regarding international education
2. To understand female students perception about benefits of international education
3. To find out accessibility challenges of female students in international education
4. To examine students perspectives on role of international education to foster empowerment and equity

3. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive and analytical research design in which online survey was administered via Google form to examine female student's perspectives on role of international education to foster empowerment and equity.

4. Population

Female students of Education discipline enrolled at B.Ed., M.Ed, and PhD. Program in various universities of Maharashtra state.

5. Sample

Total 86 Female students of Education discipline enrolled at B.Ed. (35 students), M.Ed (28 students), and PhD. Program (23 research scholars) in various academic institutions of Pune city.

6. Sampling Method

The haphazard sampling method was used to decide sample of the study.

7. Sources of Data

1. Primary Data

Data received from an online survey conducted through Google form and responses were collected from 100 female students of education discipline.

2. Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected through various research papers, books, academic journals and relevant websites

8. Data Collection Method

Data was collected through online survey via Google form by using a researcher made inventory named as "Women's Perspective Inventory on Internationalization of Education (WPIIE)". The link to the Google form was shared via various Whatsapp groups, and participation in the survey was encouraged.

9. Data Collection Tool

WPIIE consists of total 18 items based on four factors related to women's perspective of internationalization of education namely a) awareness (5 items), b) perception of benefits (3 items), c) challenges (5 items), d) role in women empowerment (5 items) and demographic variables (3 items) respectively.

10. Statistical Tool for Analysis of Data

86 fully responded inventories were analyzed out of 100 responses with the help of descriptive statistics to draw significant conclusions by using Microsoft Excel software. Frequency, percentage, and weighted average mean method was used to analyze the primary data. Secondary data was analyzed by systematic thematic analysis.

11. Scope of the study

The study covers 86 female students of B.Ed. (35 students), M.Ed. (28 students), and Ph.D. (23 research scholars) of education discipline from Pune city.

12. Limitations of the study

The findings of the study are limited to 86 female students of education discipline enrolled at B.Ed., M.Ed, and PhD. Program in various academic institutions of Pune city and participated in the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

This section serves as the analytical core of this research paper. Collected data was systematically analyzed which reveals underlying patterns and insights in line with the research objectives.

4.1 Analysis of Demographics

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF THE STUDY SAMPLE

Category		Freq.	%
Educational Level	PhD	23	26.07
	PG	28	32.60
	UG	35	40.70
Age (Years)	18-21	14	16.30
	22 - 25	17	19.80
	26 - 29	13	15.10
	30 +	42	48.80
Annual Family Income	≤ 5 Lakh	51	59.30
	5 -10 Lakh	24	27.90
	10-15 Lakh	08	09.30
	≥15 Lakh	03	03.50
-	Total (N)	86	100 %

The data in table no 1 represents demographic information of the participants of the study. Demographics of total 86 participants was categorized in to three groups on the basis of educational level, age and annual family income. Largest portion of respondents is from undergraduate students which is 40.70 % . whereas 42 respondents (48.80%) are of age group 30 years and above and these are students of PG and PhD program. Almost half of the respondents have annual family income of less than 5 lakh, which predominantly highlights high level of awareness and willingness to pursue internationalized higher education.

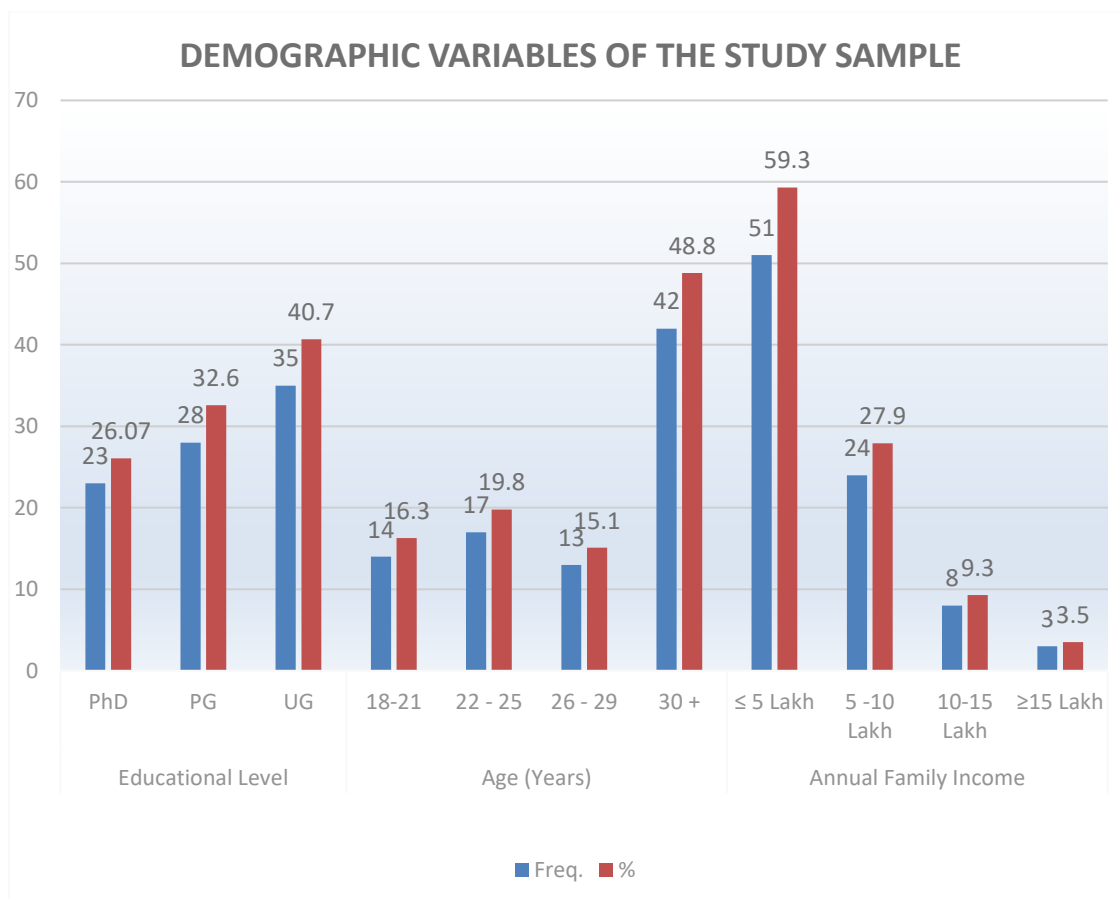


Fig. No. 1: Demographic variables of the study sample (N = 86)

Graphical representation of the demographic variables of study is given in figure no. 1.

2. Factor-wise Analysis of Data

The survey comprises of four major factors to examine women's perspective about internationalized tertiary education. The detailed analysis of it is given in the table no. 2, which summarises overall sentiment about the theme.

TABLE NO. 2: FACTOR-WISE ANALYSIS OF DATA

Sr. No.	Factor	Sub-factors	Positive Response	Negative Response	Neutral Response
1	Awareness Of International Educational Opportunities	Awareness	55 (64.00 %)	31 (36.00 %)	00
		Funding	28 (32.60 %)	58 (67.40 %)	00
		Updates	28 (32.60 %)	58 (67.40 %)	00
		Opportunities	60 (69.80 %)	26 (30.20 %)	00
		Institutional support	32 (37.20 %)	54 (62.80 %)	00
2	Perceptions of Benefits of	Knowledge and skill Enhancement	68 (79.06%)	03 (03.50 %)	15 (17.40 %)

	International Education	Career Advancement	68 (79.06%)	01 (01.20 %)	17 (19.80 %)
		Life skills Enhancement	86 (100%)	00	00
3	Challenges in Accessing International Education	Financial Barrier	61 (70.90 %)	25 (29.10 %)	00
		Societal Pressure	28 (32.60 %)	58 (67.40 %)	00
		Language Barrier	46 (53.50 %)	40 (46.50 %)	00
		Gender Inequality	20 (23.25 %)	47 (54.65 %)	19 (22.10 %)
		Guidance Barrier	43 (50.00 %)	22 (25.60 %)	21 (24.40 %)
4	Role of International Education in Women Empowerment and Equity	Gender Equity	72 (83.70 %)	02 (02.30%)	12 (14.00%)
		Confident Leadership	71 (82.56 %)	05 (05.82 %)	10 (11.62%)
		Financial Empowerment	64 (74.42 %)	06 (06.98%)	16 (18.60%)
		Inclusive Environment	64 (74.42 %)	06 (06.98%)	16 (18.60%)
		Confidence, Equity	63 (73.26 %)	03 (03.49 %)	20 (23.25%)

Fctor 1: Women’s Awareness about International Educational Opportunities

It consists of 5 items which shows 64% students are aware about concept of internationalization of education. 60% students know about international opportunities in their field. 58% students know available scholarships and related information despite of lack of funding to access tertiary education of global standards. 58% says they are notgetting updated information from host instittue whereas 54 % do not get institutional support to access further higher education internationally.

Factor 2: Women’s Perceptions of Benefits of International Education

79.06% know that internationalized education enhances knowledge and skill enhancement which significantly boost their career. Strikingly all students responded positively to like skills development and enhancement through internalized tertiary education. Responses to women empowerment through life skills development by internationalized education is sketched in figure no. 2 as below.

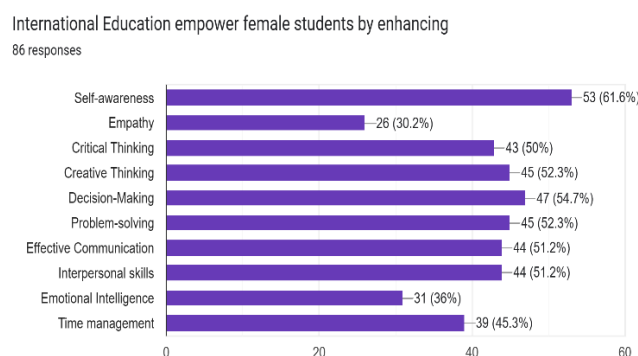


Figure No. 2: Responses to Women Empowerment through Life Skills Development by Internationalized Education

Factor 3: Women's Challenges in Accessing International Education

70.90 % of students face financial barrier and similarly 53.50 % students face English language as a barrier to access internationalized tertiary education. About 67.40 % students do not have any type of societal pressure in pursuing higher education internationally which represents positive change in approach of Indian society towards women education and empowerment. 54.65 % think that there is equal opportunities for each gender in higher education but for 50.00 % students do not have proper guidance to pursue international higher education.

Factor 4: Role of International Education in Women Empowerment and Equity

Responses to this factor clearly indicated women's knowledge and awareness about ways to empower themselves. 83.70 % says equal educational opportunities for females in international education can reduce gender gap in higher education. 82.56 % believe in international exposure to enhance confidence in female students to accept leadership roles. 74.42 % responded that international education provides females a better career, economic stability and financial empowerment. Similarly, 73.26 % know that global exposure empowers female student's confidence and awareness about their human rights. 74.42 % strongly believe in cross-cultural exposure can create inclusive and collaborative environment for female students through international education.

Discussion:

Suntharalingam (2024), Kraja et al., (2024), has discussed benefits of internationalization of education in their studies which strongly align with the results of present study. They also highlighted institutional benefits like increased reputation, economic gain, international collaborations, and increased research opportunities.

Findings of the studies by Dedej & Medici, (2024) and (Li, 2023) shows similar point of view as present study in terms of intercultural interactions, skill enhancement and human value inculcation.

Cocnclusion:

On the basis of major findings of the study, despite of awareness and knowledge of probably opportunities in the field internationally, students are lacking funds, institutional support and guidance. Hence, scholarships, awareness campaign, student exchange program and equal gender opportunities need be provided. Institute should provide adequate support and encouragement to students to participate at global level. Maximum students have positive perception about internationalized higher education which reflects their knowledge about prerequisite of career advancement and ways to procure it. It's a responsibility of higher educational institutes to provide them global standard education by designing high standard curriculum, market oriented skill development and inculcation of research attitude with ethical and human values. Most students do not face any type of societal pressure about pursuing higher education internationally which represents positive change in approach of Indian society towards women education and empowerment. Half of the students still face guidance barrier in accessing higher education, thus it is a great responsibility of HEIs to conduct awareness and training programs for women. Women's perception about role of international education in women empowerment and equity shows highly motivated approach towards internationalization of higher education most of the women want equal educational opportunities to have better career, economic stability and financial empowerment.



Women need international exposure to enhance confidence, advancement in knowledge about their human rights, and to play future leadership role successfully. All women are very well aware that cross-cultural exposure creates inclusive and collaborative environment for female students through international education. Hence, HEIs should provide them budding ground and resources whereas government should formulate new policies for modified internationalized higher education system in the country.

In conclusion, the study reflects women's overwhelmingly positive perception of internationalized education and highlights the pivotal role of institutions and policymakers in fostering opportunities to meet their aspirations. Thus, empowering students through international education is both a responsibility and an opportunity for institutions and policymakers to shape a more inclusive, equitable, and globally aware society.

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