

**Role of Open Distance Learning (ODL) in Women
Empowerment in Pakistan: Perceptions of Postgraduate
Female Students of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU)**



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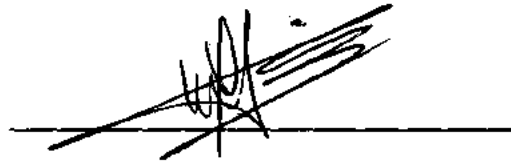
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It is certified that thesis submitted by Ms. Nasim Khan Mahsud, Reg. No.39-FSS/MSSOC/F09 titled "*Role of Open Distance Learning (ODL) in Women Empowerment in Pakistan: Perceptions of Postgraduate Female Students of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU)*" has been evaluated by the following viva voce committee and found that thesis has sufficient material and meets the prescribed standard for the award of Degree of MS in the discipline of Sociology.

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DEDICATION

You do much for me my dear mother
so much more than I expect from any other.

You're always there for me
whenever I need you
you're always there to help
no matter what I do.

You've watched me grow
all through the years
and helped me walk & dried my tears.

You've seen me hurt & my heart cry
you've been my wings and made me fly!
You've seen my dreams & made me strong

you've always supported me
and told me where I'm wrong.

You've never expected too much of me
and loved me anyway

I'm trying, I'll try and that's my promise
I'll be the best daughter one day!

Thank you, I love you **EMMA**

Abstract

Improving and expanding education is considered as a milestone for women empowerment in any society. However, traditional developing countries are facing the challenges to offer education to all sections of people, especially, to women in a society. In this scenario, Open Distance Learning (ODL) system of education is playing an important role to bridge this gap. This study was conducted to assess the role of ODL system in women empowerment in Pakistan. For this purpose, a proportionate random sample of 3000 female students of AIOU from all over Pakistan was selected. A questionnaire was developed, comprising structured and unstructured questions, pretested and finally used in the field survey. In addition to quantitative study, 30 in-depth interviews were also conducted from students during their workshops at main campus, Islamabad. Opinion of the respondents about impact of the open distance learning system of AIOU with respect to its five different aspects i.e. economic, social, political, individual, and family inter-personal levels were asked. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents indicate that the AIOU does provide a chance to majority of women who are in their middle ages, married, working, and belonged to the middle class. Findings presented that a high majority mentioned that AIOU through its distance learning system economically empowered Pakistani women and their access to employment opportunities, contribution towards family economy and control over family resources has been enhanced. Furthermore, because of the education they felt more confident with high self-esteem, especially, participation in decision making, and avoiding conflicts within and outside family. The study found out that most of the respondents were of the opinion that education has developed their positive image in the society and increased the acceptance to their physical mobility. The respondents felt more aware about the politics in Pakistan and their own political rights including the right to vote. It can be concluded that the education from AIOU is significantly empowering Pakistani women at economic, social, individual, political and family levels. The effectiveness of ODL in Pakistan could be further enhanced by taking up initiatives which could attract and encourage the students and reduce the barriers in their education. These include fee waivers for deprived areas/ segments of the society, merit scholarships, maximum facilitation at students' doorstep etc. Moreover, effective monitoring of ODL outreach activities can make it a true source of social change and development in Pakistan.

Key words:

Women Empowerment, Gender, Education, Open and Distance Learning, Economic Empowerment, Social Empowerment, Political Empowerment.

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List of Abbreviations

ODL	Open and Distance Learning
AIOU	Allama Iqbal Open University
RDs	Regional Directors
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
AJK	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
EPM	Educational Planning and Management
AES	Attained Empowerment Status

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The present study is an attempt to assess and analyze the role of “Open and Distance Learning (ODL)” education system in promoting women's empowerment in Pakistan.

According to UN Statistic Division, women constitute almost half (49.5%) of the world population but in more than half of the world they are denied to their basic rights throughout their life. Females are often denied their very basic right to education and other development opportunities. Moreover, UN reports on the status of women suggested that in South Asia, females do not receive equal opportunities of education, health care, and employment in comparison with males. The studies also suggested that these issues can be dealt only if the women in a society are empowered enough to access their rights (OECD-2010, WEF-2011, and UNHDI-2011).

The question arises that how a society may achieve its unconventional target of empowering women? In this process, most crucial is how the empowerment could be enhanced among women in a society like Pakistan. In most of the traditional societies, the historical roles of women are quite limited to household related activities. It is highly required to know about initiative or set of initiatives which will be a sustainable mode of promoting this cause without challenging the prevailing social structure. In today's industrialized world it is imperative to include women in formally economically active roles which is not possible without adequate education and skilled development.

Education not only plays critical role in society's development but in improving skills and knowledge building. Moreover, status of women is also improved due to enhanced focus of such societies on female education and women economic empowerment.

The gender based discrimination is more seen in the societies where there are increased gender disparities in education. The evidence clearly shows a very strong relationship with overall empowerment of an individual, and particularly females with enhanced focus on education.

Since the "UN Declaration of the Decade of Women" in 1975, attention and action on women's concerns has steadily increased. Education, whether it is the form of consciousness-raising or skills acquisition, was one of the areas, women's organizations, government agencies and international donor agencies focused on. This strategy was based on the rationale that women empowerment is critically based on women's improved understanding of her condition and position in a society as well as awareness on rights and skilled development. Women need to be empowered in the social, political and economic spheres. This would not only make them equal partners in the domestic life but in socio-political spheres of life as well (United Nations, 2004).

Women empowerment is a multi-dimensional process involving betterment through transformation of the economic, social, psychological, political and legal circumstances of the powerless. In the specific case of women, empowerment entails not only positive changes in these critical respects but also the dismantling of the cultural norms and traditional practices that devalue, disempowered and dispossess women. The process must necessarily also include the expansion of women's access to educational opportunities, facilities for skills acquisition and positions of authority.

1.2 Empowerment

As a general definition, empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power (that is, the

capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. It is suggested that three components of the definition are basic to any understanding of empowerment. First, it is multi-dimensional in that it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, and other dimensions. Second, empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as individual, group, and community. Third, by definition empowerment is a social process, as it occurs in relationship to others. Empowerment is a process that is similar to a path or a journey, one that develops as we work through it. In addition, one important implication of this definition of empowerment is that the individual and community are fundamentally connected.

The concept of empowerment has been long debated and during last three decades, four ideological approaches have provided the framework of ideas for the discussion of empowerment. The first is an ethnocentric approach; which seeks a solution for difficult social problems of ethnic and other minorities (Solomon, 1976; Gutierrez & Ortega, 1991). The second is a conservative liberal approach; that seeks to revive the community as a social unit which among other things has to care for its weak citizens as well (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977). The third is a socialist approach; which demands equity and social responsibility in the treatment of social problems. Whereas, the fourth approach; wants to see empowerment as a profound and professional implementation of democracy - one that will contain every legitimate social ideological current in the democratic society. This is a progressive democratic world-view which resolves to live in harmony with the other approaches and attempts to create an integration of them (Boyte, 1984).

Most current definitions of empowerment in the development literature draw upon Amartya Sen's articulation of "Development as Freedom" (1999) where development

is about expanding people's choices. For example, Bennett (2002) defines empowerment as "the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them." Kabeer (2001) defines it as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them." Hence, control over resources i.e. physical, human, intellectual, and financial, and ideology i.e. values, beliefs, and attitudes (Batiwala 1994) are the most important dimensions of most definitions. The second dimension shared by most definitions is women's agency, i.e., women themselves have a right to make choices and should be involved in determining which choices make the most sense for them and their families. Third, since empowerment implies a move from being without power to having power, most definitions also imply that it is a process that involves change over time.

In short, empowerment may be defined as a process of removing the factors which cause powerlessness. Empowerment has been used to represent a wide range of concepts and to describe a proliferation of outcomes. The term has been used more often to advocate for certain types of policies and intervention strategies than to analyse them, as demonstrated by a number of documents from the United Nations (UNDAW 2001; UNICEF 1999).

1.3 Women Empowerment

Based on the biological differences, every society imposes certain rules, regulations, responsibilities, and rights to men and women, which are in many ways discriminatory and create difference between men and women, which eventually put women in a lower position in comparison to men socially, culturally, religiously, economically and legally. At the 2005 World Summit, Governments of all nations agreed that "progress for women is progress for all". But the technical terms such as

autonomy, empowerment, status, gender equality etc. through which we indicate the progress of women are sometimes difficult to separate from each other, for example, autonomy from empowerment, and sometimes because of misconception, are used improperly.

According to the framework developed by the Task Force on Education and Gender Equality of the United Nations Millennium Project, resources can be seen as including capabilities (including health, nutrition, and education); access to opportunities (including access to economic assets and resources and political opportunity); and security (safety from violence and conflict). In the Task Force's conceptualization, the term gender equality reflected equality in access of women and men to each of these sets of resources. Such equality, however, is necessary but not sufficient to achieve empowerment. It creates the enabling context for an empowerment process, but does not guarantee empowerment.

1.4 Women Empowerment in Pakistan

In Pakistan, women rights including the right to education are yet to rise to an acceptable level. Women are campaigning for equal rights in education and at the work place. Many women faced enduring attitudes of prejudice, not only from the wider community, but often from within their own communities and families. They need a great deal of support and encouragement in crossing these barriers. It is far more difficult to achieve for women who are disadvantaged, do not have an adequate education, and are lacking family support. For them it is a constant struggle against tradition, prejudice and overt sexism. These women stand to benefit tremendously from support and guidance through government policies and organizations designed to help them.

The status of women in Pakistan varies considerably across classes, regions, and the rural/urban divide due to uneven socioeconomic development and the impact of tribal, feudal, and capitalist social formations on women's lives. Contribution of women in different fields is equally important as of men. So, to make them active participant for development, there is a need of proper initiatives. According to report of UN economic, social affairs, and population division (2009), women constitute 48.6% of the total population in Pakistan. Women in Pakistan need to be empowered in a way that they could play a complementary role, to strengthen the economy and the socio-political problems. Most of the women are unpaid workers in the agricultural settings of the country. Women are silent contributors to the country's economy. According to HomeNet Pakistan (HNP-2009), home based workers (more than 8.5 million) are not recognized by the government as workers/ laborers. Therefore, not only they are not given due recognition in the context of building nation's economy but they are not either able to get any facility including social security and right to make collectives. Very small percentage of women in Pakistan is employed in government sector. Women in Pakistan also have limited political participation. (Naz, 2001; Sayid, 2001).

According to World Economic Forum, on political empowerment, economic participation and economic opportunity, Pakistan rank 37, 53, and 54 respectively in the world. It indicates that women should be put into economic activity for their empowerment (Saadia, 2005). With reference to labor force participation, females are surviving in unhealthy conditions in Pakistan. According to Labor Force Survey (2003-04), percentage of females' employment was 13.7 percent in 1998 and 15.93 percent in 2003-04. Women participation in formal sector is 10 percent which indicates that females have fewer opportunities in formal sector, whereas they were in great number in informal sectors but were unpaid.

Traditionally, it is assumed that women are confined to their homes and men are the breadwinners of the family. Though the constitution of Pakistan (1973) promises equal rights to all citizens, repudiates discrimination on the basis of sex alone and affirms steps to ensure full participation of women in all sphere of life. Since then, the overall participation in education has increased significantly although the pace of change has been slow particularly for women (Qureshi and Rarieya, 2007). Provision of educational opportunities for girls and women has been a part of the national endeavor since independence.

1.5 Women's Education and Empowerment

Education has been of central significance to the development of human society. It can be the beginning, not only of individual knowledge, information and awareness, but also of a holistic strategy for development and change. According to Canadian Center of Science and Education, women's education is so inextricably linked with the other facets of human development and to make it a priority is to also make change on a range of other fronts. That includes the health and status of women to early childhood care, from nutrition, water and sanitation to community empowerment, from the reduction of child labour and other form of exploitation to the peaceful resolution of conflicts (Mishra, 2005).

In Pakistan, particularly, in rural and sub-urban areas, women are situated largely at the bottom end of an educational system in comparison to their male counterparts. According to Haq (2000), "No society has ever liberated itself economically, politically, or socially without a sound base of educated woman." In this situation, education can play a vital role in enhancing the status of women and placing them on an equal footing with their male counterparts. It also increases women's ability to secure employment in the formal sector. Decades of research provide substantial

evidence of a link between the expansion of basic education and economic development and women's education has an even positive effect (Mishra 2005).

Education enables women to perform productive social roles and enhance their mobility in society. Education enabled women to become familiar with problems of home management (Goel, 2004). Globally, education is regarded as the key factor in overcoming the barriers that women face in their lives. Women education can enhance their empowerment level and bring a positive social change in a society by raising their status in the family and society, bringing awareness about their rights, boosting their self-esteem, increasing their self efficacy, reducing their dependency, better upbringing of their children, enhancing their mobility, and opening career opportunities.

1.6 Open and Distance Learning Education

There is no single definition of open and distance learning. Rather, there are many approaches to defining the term. Most definitions, however, pay attention to the following characteristics:

- Separation of teacher and learner in time or place, or in both time and place;
- Institutional accreditation; that is, learning is accredited or certified by some institution or agency. This type of learning is distinct from learning through your own effort without the official recognition of a learning institution;
- Use of mixed-media courseware, including print, radio and television broadcasts, video and audio cassettes, computer-based learning and telecommunications. Courseware tends to be pre-tested and validated before use;

- Two-way communication allows learners and tutors to interact as distinguished from the passive receipt of broadcast signals. Communication can be synchronous or asynchronous;
- Possibility of face-to-face meetings for tutorials, learner-learner interaction, library study and laboratory or practice sessions; and
- Use of industrialized processes; that is, in large-scale open and distance learning operations, labor is divided and tasks are assigned to various staff who works together in course development teams.

1.7 History of Distance Learning

Open distance learning, as a technique, was initially started in mid-19th century in Europe and the United States. The objective of distance education in the minds of its initiators was to use the best technology, and the postal system to open educational opportunities for people, who wanted to learn but were not able to attend conventional schools.

An Englishman, Isaac Pitman in 1840, is credited as an early pioneer. He began teaching shorthand by correspondence in Bath, students were instructed to copy short passages of the Bible and return them for grading via the new penny post system. American university level distance education began in 1874 at Illinois Wesleyan University where bachelor and graduate degrees could be obtained in absentia. The idea of Distance Education was first mooted in UK in late 60s by the British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Wilson. He was of the view that educational opportunities must be provided to those who might have missed better education due to early employment and wish to upgrade, their knowledge and skills, in their spare times in the evenings at home. The UK Open University was thus established in 1969. Since

that, more than sixty Open Universities are operating around the world on the basis of Distance Education (California Distance Learning Project, 2011).

After successful experience of open and distance learning education by the UK Open University, the idea diffuses in other regions of the world. Specifically in Asia, the trends of adopting open and distance learning education started in second half of the 20th century. Now, in almost every country there are open universities catering to the educational needs of a large population. In South Asian region some of the open universities worth mentioning are of India, China, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The research area of the present study, AIOU is national distance learning institute in Pakistan which was second in the world for being established in 1974 (ibid).

Distance education increasingly uses combination of different communication technologies to enhance the abilities of teachers and students to communicate with each other. With the spread of computer-network communications in the 1980s and 1990s, large number of people gained access to computers linked to telephone lines, allowing teachers and students to communicate in conferences via computers. Distance education also makes use of computer conferencing on the World Wide Web, where teachers and students present text, pictures, audio, and video. File sharing and communication tools like email, chats and audio and video conferencing are integral to the Internet model (ibid).

1.8 AIOU – An ODL Institution in Pakistan

Allama Iqbal Open University is one of the mega universities of the world. In terms of students' enrolment, it is truly the largest university of the country. AIOU is perhaps the only University where one can continue education along with the job, business and domestic responsibilities. And especially women are encouraged to get admission to the programs of AIOU. The University with its main campus at Islamabad and

huge network of regional centers spread all over the country is serving its clientele all over Pakistan and in the Middle East. The idea of an "open university" was presented with the enunciation of broad principles in the Education Policy of 1972-80, in these words:

"Open Universities are being used in several countries to provide education and training to people who cannot leave their homes and jobs for full time studies. An open university will, therefore, be established to provide part-time educational facilities through correspondence courses, tutorials, seminars, workshops, laboratories, television and radio broadcasts and other mass communication media..." (Source: www.aiou.edu.pk).

The idea of Distance Education assumed greater relevance and acceptance in Pakistan due to the factors such as poverty and relative deprivation of women. The rate of literacy, incidence of dropouts, and access to higher education is much lower in the poorer classes of Pakistan. Distance education system is flexible in terms of age, and even time. A student can join the university for one or two courses in a semester and can come back when he/ she has further time to study. Thus, the period for completing their certificate/ degree requirements is linked with students' own pace and convenience.

The university develops specialized textbooks and reading materials to enable the students to study on the basis of self learning. To help them study at home, university provides support of radio and television programs. University's institute of Educational Technology produces high quality educational audio and video material, which enable the students to study at home more effectively.

Annually, 1.8 million students get benefits from the educational services of the Open University in Pakistan. About 30 to 60 thousand students have been added each year to the network, especially, in far flung areas. Women participation has reached almost 58% that further indicates the importance of the university in over all development of Pakistan. It has started nearly 40 carrier oriented postgraduate programmes in rural and remote areas providing an opportunity to the poor and deprived sections of the society.

AIOU is producing a large number of skilled and educated human resources. Majority of AIOU students are females enrolled in different level educational programmes. In present study, female students of postgraduate level are focused. The effort is made to assess if there is any role of AIOU in empowering Pakistani women.

1.9 Statement of the Problem

This study is an attempt to examine the role of ODL in women empowerment in terms of perceptions of AIOU female postgraduate students. Empowerment can take place at a hierarchy of different levels – individual, household, community and societal – and is facilitated by providing encouraging factors (e.g. exposure to new activities, which can build capacities) and removing inhibiting factors (e.g. lack of resources and skills). It is recognized that education and particularly ODL system of education plays a very important role in empowering individuals. Allama Iqbal Open University is an institution offering many academic programmes at different levels through ODL. In this connection AIOU with its unique distance learning system plays an effective role in promoting education and consequently the enhancement of women empowerment.

In a society like Pakistan, female access to educational institutions is limited and even restricted in some areas and communities. In such a scenario, importance of ODL increases many folds because it is a convenient and cheaper method of improving

one's education. Many conservative parents under the pressure of old age traditions do not allow their daughters to go out to the schools. The AIOU, through its system of Distance Education has, thus, provided educational opportunities to these house bound girls and women. This explains the reasons why majority of the students enrolled with the University are females.

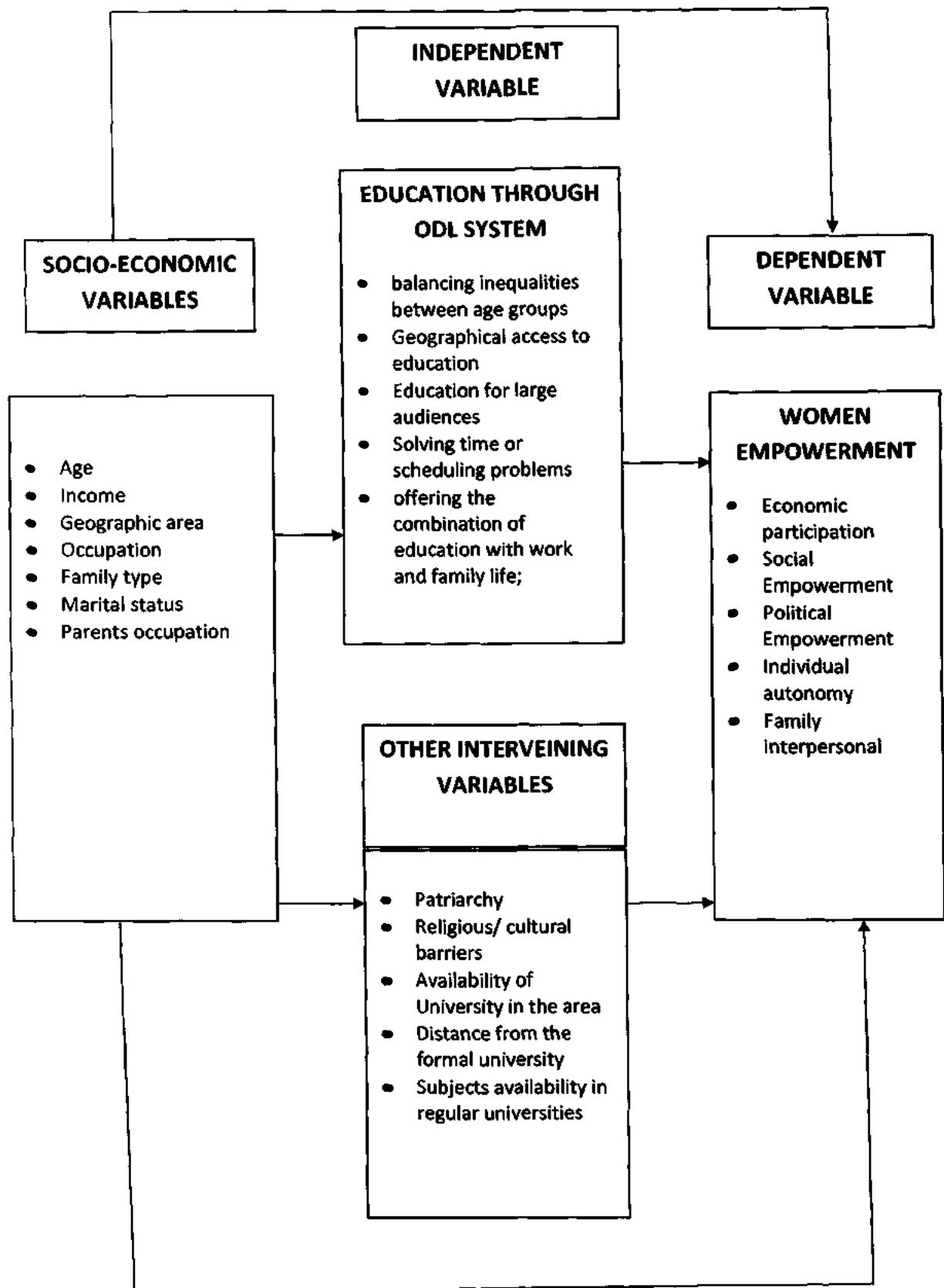
The convenience of time and space is a big promise made by distance learning. Students do not have to physically be with the instructor in space and, depending on the method used, they do not have to be together in time as well. Through this study an effort has been made to explore the role of ODL system of education in empowering its female beneficiaries.

1.10 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the role of ODL system in women's empowerment in Pakistan through AIOU. However, the study has some specific objectives given below;

1. To study the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.
2. To explore the effects of ODL on women empowerment in Pakistan.
3. To suggest suitable measures to improve the ODL system in Pakistan for effective empowerment of female beneficiaries.

1.11 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



1.12 Research Questions

The research study has attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What benefits, ODL system of education has over conventional system of education?
2. How ODL system empowers women at home, in community, and at workplace?
3. Which of the regions/ areas in Pakistan are more accessed by the ODL system of education to enhance women autonomy?
4. How the effectiveness of ODL system and its different components can be improved to enhance its role in women empowerment?

1.13 Hypothesis

Broadly following conceptual hypotheses have been tested.

- There is an association between ODL system of education and economic empowerment of women.
- ODL system of education has effects on social empowerment of women.
- ODL system of education has influence on political empowerment of women.
- There is a relationship between ODL system and individual autonomy.
- There is an association between ODL system of education and improved status of women inside family.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Review of Literature

The chapter includes review of existing body of knowledge related to the present research study. An attempt has been made to describe and explain the concepts used in the study as well as global experiences of ODL system and its effects and presented in the forthcoming sections.

2.2 Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Education

Open Distance Learning (ODL) as a term that encompasses the “open” and “distance”.

“Open” means:

- The removal of constraints of face to face conventional classroom method;
- Flexibility for students who need an alternative to the conventional system;
- Scale with equality;

The term “Distance” means:

- Teacher and student have a space and time division/distance;
- Also involves e-learning, open learning, flexible learning, on-line learning, resource-based learning, technology-mediated learning etc;

By this interpretation, ODL should be:

- Asynchronous (time separation);
- Either correspondence (print) based or self paced learning, but no blend with physical face to face modes;
- At par or better quality than conventional learning;
- Automatically equally accessible;

(Report on Distance Learning in India, 2012)

According to UNESCO's Division of Higher Education report on Open and Distance Learning-Trends, Policy and Strategy Considerations (2002), the terms open learning and distance education represent approaches that focus on opening access to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints of time and place, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners. Open and distance learning is one of the most rapidly growing fields of education, and its potential impact on all education delivery systems has been greatly accentuated through the development of Internet-based information technologies. It is fastly becoming an accepted and indispensable part of the mainstream of educational systems in both developed and developing countries, with particular importance for the latter. (UNESCO, 2000).

One innovation in particular, that is the expansion of the World Wide Web, has contributed to significant shifts in how distance education is perceived by educators and how it is designed, delivered and administered. As Member States and their governments become more aware of the potential of open and distance learning, it is essential for their educational planning that the opportunities offered be realistically examined within the framework of national development plans in general and educational policies in particular (UNESCO, 2001a, p.5).

In the light of experiences of the past twenty or more years, there is today recognition of other related benefits of ODL. Some of these 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;
- Expanding the capacity for education in new and multidisciplinary subjects;

- Offering the combination of education with work and family life;
- Developing competencies through recurrent and continuing education;
- Enhancing the international dimension of educational experience;
- Improving the quality of existing educational services.

Distance education can be used at primary and secondary education levels to provide both in-school and out-of-school programmes. In-school distance education programmes are used to support teaching in schools when learning material is lacking, or where enrichment is thought to be desirable. A variety of approaches are used, including Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI), schools radio, educational television through terrestrial and satellite networks, multimedia schemes delivered through satellite, and Web-based delivery of multimedia schemes. The material may be designed for young children or for adolescents and adults.

The regional overview shows great differences between all regions of the world, although there are also a number of similarities. In highly populated countries of the developing world, open and distance learning has been seen to offer very significant opportunities for education and training. Lack of infrastructure and professional competence in open and distance learning remain important barriers. Nevertheless, these forms of educational delivery have come to stay (UNESCO's Division of Higher Education report, 2002).

When conventional systems and approaches cannot meet the needs, it is necessary to look for new strategies. Confidence seems to be growing that open and distance learning is such a strategy. Examples of this growing confidence can be found in many countries. For example, it has been recommended that distance education efforts in the nine high-population countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan, referred to as the E-9 countries), focus on

expanding work for school equivalence, for teacher education, and for nonformal education, especially in relation to health (UNESCO, 2001a, p.61).

2.3 Regional Trends

2.3.1 Africa

Correspondence education has been the main medium of instruction in the region, with radio also widely used. National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) was established as a supplement and complement to traditional channels of delivering education to Nigerian public. NOUN provides access to tertiary education through ODL (Alaezi, 2006). University of Lagos has established correspondence studies as far back as 1974 (Aderinoye and Ojokheta 2004).

2.3.2 Arab States

Open and distance education in the Arab states is generally more recent and less extensive than in some other regions of the world. In Algeria, the Centre National Enseignement Generalise offers general and technical education to Baccalaureate level, education in preparation for certificates and diplomas of different levels, and specialist professional training. The Sudan Open Learning Organisation (SOLO) has been operating since 1984 to provide a number of educational programmes including basic education to adult refugees in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan (UNESCO, 2001e).

2.3.3 Australia

Australia's open and distance learning dates back to the first decade of the nineteenth century, giving the system long experience from which significant lessons have been drawn by later open and distance learning initiatives (e.g., the UK Open University). Dual mode institutions characterize open and distance learning in Australia, providing similar curriculum for on- and off-campus students. In 2000, 94,000 students (14% of

all university students in Australia) were enrolled in open and distance learning programmes (ibid).

2.3.4 Bangladesh

In 1957 the Education Reform Commission recommended the establishment of a correspondence school. This led to the establishment of the East Pakistan Audiovisual Education Center (AVEC) in 1962 and the School Broadcasting Programme (SBP) in 1980. AVEC and SBP merged into the National Institute of Educational Media and Technology (NIEMT) that later became the Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education (BIDE). BOU has more than 200,000 students enrolled across the country, and offers diploma and degree level certificates and non-formal and informal education programmes (UNESCO,1998).

2.3.5 China

Open and distance learning in China has significantly contributed to broadening access and opportunities especially to higher education and to socioeconomic development more generally. China's open and distance learning focuses on secondary and tertiary education, although programmes for inservice adult education and training are also offered. With the establishment of the Radio and TV University system (RTVU) in 1960, China became the first country to use radio and television to provide single mode distance higher education with unified planning. (Tait, A., 2000).

2.3.6 India

Open and distance learning in India dates back to the 1960s. By the 1980s there were 34 universities offering correspondence education through departments designed for that purpose. First Open University was established in Andhra Pradesh in year 1982, followed by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), and subsequently in Bihar, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, West

Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh (established throughout the 1980s and 1990s). The year 1995 witnessed the enrollment of 200,000 students in open and distance learning, accounting for 3% of total higher education enrollment. (UNESCO, 2001g).

2.3.7 Japan

Japan has recently witnessed the rapid increase of open and distance learning institutions and programmes. Until 1985 there were only a few private correspondence colleges and the University of the Air (UA). By 2000 there were 19 four-year open and distance learning private universities and 10 junior colleges with an enrollment of over 254,000 students. Despite the fact that 99% of higher institutions are wired, only 10% fully utilize ICTs (ibid).

2.3.8 Thailand

Open and distance learning began in Thailand in 1933 with the establishment of the University of Moral and Political Science. Most open and distance learning programmes are in the area of Social Sciences, except for those offered at STOU and the planned technology-based programmes offered at BEP beginning in 2002. (Perraton, H., 2000).

2.3.9 South Pacific

Open and distance learning in these island nations is offered at several institutions including the University of the South Pacific (USP), the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), Fiji School of Medicine, the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education, Pacific Adventist College in Papua New Guinea, and the Community Training Center in Tonga. (H. Ismann, 2000).

2.3.10 Europe

In Europe open and distance learning is a well-established form of education, although the status and tradition varies considerably within the region. The UK Open

University has set the standards for a particular type of university institution, the open universities. Flagship institutions have been established in other European countries including most notably Spain with the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UoC), Germany as well as the Open Universiteit of the Netherlands (Bradley J and Yates C 2000).

2.3.11 Latin America and the Caribbean

There is a rich and varied tradition of distance education in Latin America. Early provision of distance education in Latin America dates from 1946. Radio schools, generally supported by the government and the Roman Catholic Church, were set up in almost all the countries of the region, but notably in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Mexico. (Floor P, 2000).

2.3.12 North America

The history of distance education goes back more than one hundred years in North America, and is now firmly rooted in the education systems of both Canada and the USA. In Canada, there are some strong provincial institutions at the secondary as well as university level, and also educational television services. There are, distance teaching universities in Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia. (UNESCO, 2002).

2.4 Empowerment

The term empowerment covers a vast landscape of meanings, interpretations, definitions and disciplines ranging from psychology and philosophy to the highly commercialized self-help industry and motivational sciences. Sociological empowerment often addresses members of groups that social discrimination processes have excluded them from decision-making processes through - for example - discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender.

There are thousands of examples of empowerment strategies that have been initiated by poor people themselves and by governments, civil society, and the private sector. Successful efforts to empower poor people, increasing their freedom of choice and action in different contexts, often share four elements:

- Access to information;
- Inclusion and participation;
- Accountability;
- Local organizational capacity.

(World Bank, Empowerment and Poverty Reduction Source Book-2002)

Anju et.al. (2002), Empowerment as a methodology is often associated with feminism: The term empowerment has different meanings in different sociocultural and political contexts, and can not be translated easily into all languages. An exploration of local terms associated with empowerment around the world always leads to lively discussion. The definitions are embedded in local value and belief systems. Empowerment is of intrinsic value; it also has instrumental value. Empowerment is relevant at the individual and collective level, and could be economic, social, or political. The term can be used to characterize relations within households or between poor people and other actors at the global level. There are obviously many possible definitions of empowerment, including rights-based definitions.

As Edelman (1977) has noted in relation to language and the politics of human services, sometimes new language is used to describe the same old practices. Others believe that empowerment language can actually lead to raised awareness (Rappaport, 1986). Regardless, a growing number of people are searching to understand the meaning of empowerment and ways that can be used to change their settings and

lives. Empowerment can begin to be understood by examining the concepts of power and powerlessness (Moscovitch and Drover, 1981). Power is defined by the Cornell Empowerment Group as the "capacity of some persons and organizations to produce intended, foreseen and unforeseen effects on others" (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989, p.2). There are many sources of power. Personality, property/wealth, and influential organizations have been identified by Galbraith (1983) as critical sources of power in the last part of this century. At the individual level, powerlessness can be seen as the expectation of a person that his/her own actions will be ineffective in influencing the outcome of life events (Keiffer, 1984).

Lerner (1986) makes a distinction between real and surplus powerlessness. Real powerlessness results from economic inequities and oppressive control exercised by the systems and other people. Surplus powerlessness, on the other hand, is an internalized belief that change cannot occur, a belief which results in apathy and an unwillingness of the person to struggle for more control and influence.

As an illustration of powerlessness, Asch (1986) has indicated that generally people with disabilities; have so internalized the general negative attitudes towards them because of their disabilities that they cannot believe collective action can improve their lives. They have seen the problems as inherent in their medical conditions and have not been urged to join others to demand structural changes that would render the environment useful for them. Most of the literature also associates empowerment with personal control.

Rappaport (1987) points out that "by empowerment I mean our aim should be to enhance the possibilities for people to control their own lives" (p. 119). The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion notes that "people cannot achieve their fullest health potential unless they are able take control of those things which determine their

health" (World Health Organization, Health and Welfare Canada, & Canadian Public Health Organization, 1986, p. 1). Increasingly, empowerment is being understood as a process of change (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989).

McClelland (1975) has suggested that in order for people to take power, they need to gain information about themselves and their environment and be willing to identify and work with others for change. In a similar vein, Whitmore (1988) defines empowerment as: an interactive process through which people experience personal and social change, enabling them to take action to achieve influence over the organizations and institutions which affect their lives and the communities in which they live.

Keiffer's (1984) work on personal empowerment is one of the only major empirical studies which examine personal empowerment as a process. He labels empowerment as a developmental process which includes four stages; entry, advancement, incorporation, and commitment. The entry stage appears to be motivated by the participant's experience of some event or condition threatening to the self or family, what Keiffer refers to as an act of 'provocation'. In the advancement stage, there are three major aspects which are important to continue the empowerment process: a mentoring relationship; supportive peer relationships with a collective organization; and the development of a more critical understanding of social and political relations. The central focus of the third stage appears to be the development of a growing political consciousness. Commitment is the final stage - one in which the participants apply the new participatory competence to ever expanding areas of their lives.

According to Wallerstein (1992), empowerment is a social-action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities towards the goals of

increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of community life, and social justice.

2.5 Women Education

The Commission on the Status of Women in its reports emphasized the need for continued efforts toward gender equality in education and training. In its agreed conclusions on enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia the fields of education, health and work, adopted at its fiftieth session (2006) report, the Commission urged governments to ensure women's and girls' full and equal access to all levels of quality education and training, while ensuring progressively and on the basis of equality that primary education was compulsory, accessible and available free to all. In its agreed conclusions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child adopted at its fifty-first session (2007), the Commission proposed a set of strategic actions to be taken by the governments to further progress in the area of education and training. In 2008, at its fifty-second session, the Commission reiterated the need to ensure women and girls' right to education at all levels in its agreed conclusions on financing for gender equality and the empowerment for women.

According to Library of Congress Report (1994), it can be mentioned on the basis of available data and different research studies conducted in Pakistan that there is quite enough evidence of significant disparity between males and females in the field of educational attainment. By 1992, among people older than fifteen years of age, 22 percent of women were literate, compared to 49 percent of men. It shows that almost double females were not able to study in comparison with males. The comparatively slow rate of improvement for women is reflected in the fact that between 1980 and

1989, among women aged fifteen to twenty-four, 25 percent were literate. United Nations sources say that in 1990 for every 100 girls of primary school age there were only thirty in school; among girls of secondary school age, only thirteen out of 100 were in school; and among girls of the third level, grade nine and ten, only 1.5 out of 100 were in school. Slightly higher estimates by the National Education Council for 1990 stated that 2.5 percent of the students--3 percent of men and 2 percent of women--between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one were enrolled at the degree level.

According to Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2009-10, the literacy rate (age 10 years and above) was 57.7 % (69.5 % for male and 45.2 % for female) in Pakistan. It was 57.4 % (69.3 % for male and 44.7 % for female) for 2008-09. In Pakistan, it can be concluded that literacy rates have ever been higher in urban areas i.e. for 2009-10 Labour Force Survey it was 73.2 % in urban areas and 49.2 % in rural areas, and is more prevalent for men (80.2 %) compared to women (65.5 %) in rural areas.

Throughout the world as well as in Pakistan, a lot of efforts have been made to improve the situation of female education. According to UNESCO's *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008*, over two-thirds of the 175 countries for which data was available, or 118 countries, had achieved gender parity in their intake of first graders by 2005. The ratio of girl to boy first graders increased globally from 0.91 in 1999 to 0.94 in 2005. At the South and West Asia regional level, which had the worst situation in 1999, witnessed the greatest improvement as its ratio rose from 0.83 to 0.92. The number of children not attending school dropped from 96 million in 1999 to 72 million in 2005. While girls still predominate among out-of-school children, their share has fallen slightly from 59 per cent in 1999 to 57 per cent in 2005. Gender disparity at the secondary level narrowed in two-thirds of the 144 countries for which data was available between 1999 and 2005. There were 94 girls per 100 boys enrolled

in secondary education in 2005, compared to 91 girls in 1999. Progress has, however, been uneven across regions. In countries where disparity prevailed, the imbalance was roughly as often in favour of girls as it was in favour of boys. Countries noted for their progress include Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, India, Nepal, the Niger and Yemen. Women have also gained greater access to tertiary education. While in 1999 there were 96 women per 100 men enrolled in higher education institutions, by 2005 women had outnumbered men, bringing the proportion to 105 women per 100 men.

Female education is very important and beneficial for the society. It is quite significant especially for the developing countries to support female education through policies and workable initiatives. It is a quite interesting fact that female education has very positive effects on overall health situation as educated mothers can better take care of their children. For example, a year of schooling for girls reduces infant mortality by 5 to 10 percent (Schultz 1993). Children of mothers with five years of primary education are 40 percent more likely to live beyond age 5 (Summers 1994). According to a study, it is found that when the proportion of women with secondary schooling doubles, the fertility rate is reduced from 5.3 to 3.9 children per woman (Subbarao and Raney 1995). That shows education is highly influential factor as far as fertility behavior of a society is concerned. It has also been shown that educating women has a greater impact on children's schooling than educating men (Filmer 2000). In Brazil women's resources have 20 times more impact than men's resources on child health (Thomas 1990). In India, women with formal schooling are more likely to resist violence (Sen 1999).

Data from around the world shows that increased education is associated with the empowerment of women, with multiplied effects on society at large. Clear and compelling evidence links education particularly maternal education with lower child

mortality, better child health and nutrition, higher life expectancy, and lowered fertility. Education is also a key means of empowering girls against HIV/AIDS, giving them the knowledge and self-confidence needed to protect them in what are often unequal gender relations. Recent research demonstrates the importance of girls' education in preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS and delaying early marriage and sexual activity (Kane, 2004).

2.6 Women Empowerment

Following paras include the literature review of the different aspects of women empowerment.

2.6.1 Political Empowerment

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life. The power relations prevent women from leading their lives at many levels in society, from the most personal to the highly public. Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of a society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning. Equality in political decision-making performs a leverage function without which it is unlikely that a real integration of the equality dimension in government policy-making is feasible. In this respect, women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition

for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.

The issue was discussed in UN World Fourth Conference on Women, Beijing (1995). It was highlighted that despite the widespread movements towards democratization in most countries, women are largely underrepresented at most levels of government, especially in ministerial and other executive bodies, and have made little progress in attaining political power in legislative bodies or in achieving the target endorsed by the Economic and Social Council of having 30 per cent women in positions at decision-making levels by 1995. Globally, only 10 per cent of the members of legislative bodies and a lower percentage of ministerial positions are now held by women. Indeed, some countries, including those that are undergoing fundamental political, economic and social changes, have seen a significant decrease in the number of women represented in legislative bodies. Although women make up at least half of the electorate in almost all countries and have attained the right to vote and hold office in almost all States Members of the United Nations, women continue to be seriously underrepresented as candidates for public office.

Politics and political decision making has ever been a domain of men in most of the human history. After the emergence and strengthening of democratic political structure, female's involvement in politics was formally started. But in many parts of the world, it is still limited to casting of vote in selection of national legislatures or Local political bodies. As far as the issue of female's participation in legislatures is concerned, a lot of difference can be observed in different world regions/ states. The most powerful nation of the world; the United States who claims to be very liberal

and gender sensitive, women constitutes only 17 per cent of legislature. In the whole history, yet no female succeeded in becoming head of the government or state.

Mumtaz (2007), political participation for women was restricted than men in Pakistan. Female low literacy rate was among the reasons that could prevent casting a vote but at the same time female with better literacy rate vote casting was 20 percent lower than illiterate males.

Saiyid (2001) Women vote registration is much lower than men in Pakistan. The gap between men and women vote registration was 20 percent in 1950s, 12 percent before the 1970 election, 8 percent in between 1988, and 10 percent increase in between 1993-1997. This problem is more severe in FATA where male-female ratio of vote registration was 75 and 25 as compared to whole Pakistan ratio, i.e. 55 and 45. The main factor behind this was tradition isolation of women in Pakistani society, distance from polling station, and the tiring procedure of ID card acquiring.

Prof. K. Nageshwar (2010) says that in India, women's representation continues to oscillate around a scanty 10 per cent. Despite of years long leadership of one of the nation's biggest political party "Congress" by females, reasonable political participation of women in India is still a dream to come true. India has seen a consistent struggle for a constitutional amendment to reserve one third of seats for women in parliament and state legislatures. The fourteenth Lok Sabha has also completed its tenure without adopting the historical constitutional amendment. The Common Minimum Programme of United Progressive Alliance government has also promised enactment of legislation to reserve one third of seats to women. In South Africa, the country which was under brutal racist regime, women has more than 30 percent representation.

According to the constitution of Mozambique, there is a pre decided women quota in legislatures. Although it is a nation ravaged and pillaged by unending civil war and unabated famine like conditions, women constitute more than 30 per cent of the legislature. Almost same situation is in Pakistan in which during the ruling period of General Musharaf, female quota through reserved seats was introduced at national, provincial and district level political bodies. Another important fact is that despite being a religious and conservatively traditional society, a female “Benazir Bhutto” remained Prime Minister of the country for two terms. But this does not mean that females in Pakistan enjoy proper participation in political systems. There are many areas where females are not even allowed to cast their vote in elections. These international experiences reveal that industrial development, economic prosperity and scientific progress do not automatically lead to political empowerment of women. But there is some evidence in the world that females’ education could be an agent of their political participation. According to a UNESCO report, education increases female’s level of participation in political activities. As in Bangladesh educated women are three times more likely to participate in political meetings (UNESCO 2000).

According to Asia foundation report, WOMEN IN POLITICS IN INDIA, An Analytical Overview, in 1976 the Committee on the Status of Women in India was established and published a report recommending an increase in elected women at the grassroots level, which led to the introduction of 33.3% reservation at the Panchayat level in 1988. It was only in 1993 that an amendment in the constitution made the proposed reservation at the Panchayat (village level governing councils) a reality. Women’s security, decision-making power, and mobility are three indicators for women’s empowerment. In India, and more so for rural and less educated women, these three indicators are significantly low. Data from the NFHS-3 survey on women’s decision-making power shows that about one third of the women being

interviewed took decisions on their own regarding household issues and their health. Decision-making power among employed urban women was higher than among rural and less educated women. The survey also found that older married women had more decision-making power than the younger married women. Younger women and girls experience an additional layer of discrimination because of their age.

2.6.2 Social Empowerment

Blomkvist, H. (2003) Social empowerment is understood as the process of developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence, and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships and the institutions and discourses that exclude poor people and keep them in poverty. Poor people's empowerment, and their ability to hold others to account, is strongly influenced by their individual assets (such as land, housing, livestock, savings) and capabilities of all types: human (such as good health and education), social (such as social belonging, a sense of identity, leadership relations) and psychological (self-esteem, self-confidence, the ability to imagine and aspire to a better future). Also important are people's collective assets and capabilities, such as voice, organisation, representation and identity.

Poor people's involvement in local associations and inter-community cooperation mechanisms can contribute to social empowerment by improving their skills, knowledge and self-perception. Local associations also act as self-help mechanisms through which poor people organise their economic activities, such as farming cooperatives, or microfinance groups (Ibid).

Alatas V. et al. (2002) authors surveyed the social activities of a sample of village households. This included the frequency with which they visited and were visited by other households and their participation in informal group activities (networks), formal group activities (social organisations) and village government organisations

(such as the legislative council). The main findings include that, households engaged in a higher frequency of visits with other households reported only marginally more participation, voice and information and marginally better responsiveness of the village government to their problems. Households that participate in social networks, such as collective harvesting, reported only marginally more participation, voice and information but significantly better responsiveness of the village government to their problems. It was also mentioned that those who are involved in village government organisations report significantly more participation, voice and information and better responsiveness of the village government to their problems. They live in a village where other households are involved in village government organisations report significantly less participation, voice, information and government responsiveness to their problems.

A research study was conducted to find out the role of Open Distance Learning in Social Empowerment in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU), (2010) by providing access and equal opportunities for higher education in Andhra Pradesh. For this purpose, an attempt was made to find out the role of BRAOU in higher education in the State in terms of access and reach to different equity groups – disadvantaged groups, women, and rural people. The required data and information was collected from secondary sources with regard to the personal particulars of the students. The profile of the enrolled students and trends in enrolment over the years for various programmes are the indicators of fulfillment of the objectives of BRAOU. The patterns of the enrolled students were analysed in terms of sex, marital status, employment, entry channel, social status etc. to study the nature and composition of the students for undergraduate programmes of BRAOU. Results show that BRAOU is very popular as it is evident from the increase in the student enrolment by about 1242% over the last 27 years i.e., 1983-84 to 2009- 10 (Dr. V.Venkaiah, 2010) .

Kapur (2001) in her study tried to discuss, analyse and answer the challenging questions as to why despite all the efforts and progress made, still there continues to be so much of gender discrimination and what strategies, actions and measures to be undertaken to achieve the expected goal of empowerment. She opined that women's empowerment is much more likely to be achieved if women have total control over their own organisations, which they can sustain both financially and managerially without direct dependence on others.

2.6.3 Economic Empowerment

Yeshiareg (2007) stated that the African economy is characterized by the presence of a large segment of people engaged in the informal economy. One of the reasons for the large share of informal employment is the inability of the formal sector (public and private sectors) to absorb the growing labor force. The informal economy is an important source of employment and income for women in Africa and elsewhere. In sub-Saharan Africa 84 percent of women are informally employed, as compared to 63 percent of men. In fact, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest share of women employed informally, compared to the rest of the developing countries and North Africa, each having 60 and 43 percent respectively. Working informally provides women and their families the much needed income to stay on the verge of poverty. In Ghana, for example three-fourth of the households depends on women's small and micro income generating activities for their survival for more than half of the time. Women contribute up to 46 percent of the agricultural GDP.

Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001), the overall condition of women access to and control over economic resources were also unsatisfactory in Pakistan. 59 percent of the women could speak in household spending where as most (70.4%) of the women could spend money by themselves in their homes. But in case of buying the valuable

things women participation was limited. 16 percent of the women could easily buy a small jewelry and only 23.7 percent were free to buy gifts. 61.1 percent of the women could own and control on their valuable things. 33.6 percent of women could speak partially in the matters of their dowry and 28.9 percent could speak in the matters in their husband's homes, which was again limitizing the role of women. Women could limitedly use their saving by themselves.

Mumtaz (2007) Women in Pakistan have limited access to economic resources. Most of the women in Pakistan have very limited ownership of land or property with no power to sell that property. Moreover, very small numbers of women are receiving loans from bank to make them economically strong.

Food and Agriculture Organization (1995) Agriculture was considered as the basis for Pakistan economy. Female role in agriculture has also become an important indicator of their empowerment status in Pakistan. There was a clear and poor condition of women in agriculture and labor force. Near half of the Pakistani labor force was engaged in agriculture because Pakistan is an agriculture-based country. Compared to male, female's labor force participation was nearly 25 percent in 1990-92. 36 percent of the female labor force was in agriculture but mostly were unpaid family workers in agriculture in 1988. While talking about family labor force women were 42 percent of the total family labor, again mostly not getting proper payments. Only 25 percent of the household were headed by female in 1995 i.e. woman had least control and access to resources in rural areas. Women access to credit in Pakistan was also not satisfying. In Pakistan, very small number of women were receiving loans from the Agriculture Development Bank of Pakistan. The First Women Bank was the first bank established in 1989 for providing easy access to loans for women but it was only providing 5 % of the total amount of loans to rural women.

2.6.4 Individual Empowerment

When the individual empowerment process occurs in a man's or a woman's life, they begin to believe that they are capable of having better control over their lives; they understand their situation, and begin to act to improve their lives and their environment. All this and much more can be enabled in group frameworks. In a group people are accepted as equals; they express feelings and aspirations, learn about themselves and their environment, plan solutions, and act for their own good and for the good of the environment.

In general terms, individual autonomy can be defined as "the individual's capacity for (self-directed, independent) action", which includes control over one's own lifestyle and independence from external constraints (Ullrich 2004).

In the socialisation theory the term "social bond" is used to describe the relationship between the individual and society (Geulen 1977; Geulen 1999). Socialisation processes take place within the framework of constant interaction between the individual and their social, i.e. concrete material, cultural and social environment. These processes do not function as limitations on the subject, but represent a constitutive condition of being a subject: "We are subjects not although, but because we have been socialised and our state of being a subject is realised particularly through our social action." (Geulen 1999:37). For this reason, a personality model that from the outset considers the existence of a personality component created through socialisation to be heteronomous and assumes there was an original subject that was not first created through socialisation (ibid. 41) is to be rejected. According to this perspective, there is no more a universal subject character than the construction of an "independent choice of action".

The development of identity occurs in a reciprocal process of identity assimilation and identity accommodation. It means that new social experiences are either “sorted out” or adjusted to the personality or effect a change in the identity that confronts them. As such, the development of identity rests on personal experience, which can confirm or negate prior experience. Accordingly, the development of identity is not an irreversible process during the course of which the subject’s sense of coherency and perception of meaning continually increase. In this perspective, the development of an “authentic” identity with a high degree of “individual aspects” takes place on the basis of “the experience of one’s own identity” i.e. “identity narrative” (Anderson, 2003)

2.7 Education, ODL and Women Empowerment

"Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process" (UNFPA, 2010).

A research “Open and Distance Learning to Empower Rural Women”, conducted by Sadia Afroze Sultana and Mostafa Azad Kamal (2002), explains the scope of using ODL materials for women empowerment in the rural areas through enhancing literacy, business skill and social awareness. Education is important for everyone, but it is especially significant for girls and women. This is true not only because education is an entry point to other opportunities, but also because the educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family and across generations. Girls who have been educated are likely to marry later and to have smaller and healthier families. Educated women can recognize the importance of health care and know how to seek it for themselves and their children. Education helps girls and women to know their rights and to gain confidence to claim them.

The result of the surveys shows that the attitude, skill and knowledge level of the rural women was enhanced after the training. Bangladesh Open University launched its Secondary School Certificate (SSC) programme in 1995. Around 50% students of the programme are female. Most of them are from the rural area. Since the students don't have much access to other educational media, printed textbooks have become the main vehicle of knowledge transmission in the programme.

Avoseh, M B. M. (1999) in *Opening up adult education: Women's empowerment in Namibia* said that the government has given priority to adult education in the context of national development. However, contributions and discussion at the recently concluded Namibia follow-up conference to Confintea V reveal a wide gap between women's access to education and women's empowerment. The paper examines the present status of adult education for women in Namibia. While admitting a commendable degree of access and openness of adult education for women, the paper concludes that for women's access to adult education in Namibia to be really relevant and useful it must incorporate the empowering elements that recent perspectives in adult education offer.

Pandit, Vijayalakshmi, (1997) *Empowerment of women through distance education: A case of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University*, research on the role of distance education in women's empowerment which reflects the contemporary trends in education system in India and abroad. It affords the readers an insight into the need, origin, concept, scope and nature of distance education. Education is a helping hand for the poor, disadvantaged as well as socially marginalized. In its 25 years history the University has lifted thousands of people from their historical backwardness, suppression and isolation. The institution is providing a second chance to those who could not continue their formal education.

Monazza Aslam, Geeta Kingdon, and Mans Söderbom, in the World Bank Report (2008) tried to find out the relationship between female education with her socio-economic achievement. The main question asked was, Can education be a path to gender equality in the labor market? The labor market benefits of education accrue both by increasing a person's knowledge and skills needed for entry into the more lucrative occupations. In Pakistan, girls lag behind boys in education access, in the quality of schooling available, and in the outcomes of education. Although Pakistan's gender gap in gross primary enrollment fell from 27 percent to 24 percent between 2000 and 2005, it remains stubbornly high. Given the magnitude of educational disparities, it is unsurprising to find stark gender differences in adult labor market outcomes too: Pakistani women who lag far behind men in labor force participation, are concentrated in a much narrower set of occupations, perform mostly unskilled jobs, and have substantially lower earnings in employment than men, as we will show later.

Krishnan Narayanan in his study "Socio-Economic Empowerment Through Ict Education: A Comparative Analysis of Maharashtra and Rajasthan in India" visited the beneficiaries of the four months' Diploma in Computer Application (DCA) programme in 34 Satellite Training Institutes (STI), 17 each in Maharashtra and Rajasthan. The study has attempted to carry out a socio economic impact assessment of the subsidized computer training facilities provided by a non-governmental charitable organization.

The results of the analysis point out that the students pursuing a short-term course are enrolled in Higher Secondary or a graduation course and they believe that its completion would definitely give them an edge when they apply for a job. Some of

the beneficiaries [educated unemployed] have started their own computer centres where they impart training in hardware and software courses.

Janaki, D. (2006), in “Empowering women through distance learning in India” reviewed aspects of gender and distance learning, participatory trends of women in distance learning in India and barriers affecting women’s advancement in academia. It also relates the success story of distance learning programmes for women run by the School of Distance Education of Mother Teresa Women’s University in Kodaikanal South India. It also outlines a few important issues for policy action to increase the participation of women in distance learning for their empowerment.

Adam Isen (2011) examines in Nigeria, how marital and fertility patterns have changed along racial and educational lines for men and women. Historically, women with more education have been least likely to marry and have children, but this marriage gap has eroded as the returns to marriage have changed. Marriage and remarriage rates have risen for women with a college degree relative to women with fewer years of education. However, the patterns of, and reasons for, marriage have changed. College educated women marry later, have fewer children, are less likely to view marriage as “financial security”, are happier in their marriages and with their family life, and are not only least likely to divorce, but have had the biggest decrease in divorce since the 1970s as compared to women without a college degree. In contrast, there have been fewer changes in marital patterns by education for men.

Nigeria government has taken ODL as an instrument to achieve its educational goal. It was stated in Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) National Policy in Education that, the goal of ODL shall be to provide access to quality education and equity in educational opportunities for those who otherwise would have been denied. Women have participated in myriads of ODL programmes. It has been instrumental in

lowering illiteracy rate, dropout rate, and furthermore creating accessibility and immense opportunities for the Nigerian Women. Many Nigerian women from all walks of life have continued to seize the opportunities of ODL programmes to improve their education, get better job, and improve their standard of living. Many full time house-wives were able to enroll in these programmes thereby improving their education.

A study on “Open and Distance Education: A Contribution to Poverty Alleviation and Empowerment of Women” states, in Nigeria, as elsewhere in the world, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is used as a major vehicle to break the three vectors - access, quality and cost – that has constrained education time immemorial in order to improve women’s wellbeing, reduce their vulnerability and act as a starting point in their empowerment. Using findings from two single-mode ODL institutions in Nigeria, - National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) and National Teachers Institute (NTI) - this study explores the issues of poverty and women’s empowerment. First, it considers poverty from gender and economic sustainability perspectives, second, it evaluates the impacts of ODL on women empowerment and poverty alleviation, and third, it highlights the role of ODL in enhancing accessible education for women.

Women have since independence in Nigeria, remained marginal beneficiaries of educational programmes. Not surprisingly, their high poverty status has deepened, especially, with the introduction of structural adjustments in the 1980s. Despite its free education policy at all levels of schooling, access to education for all remained unattainable, more so for girls and women (UNICEF, 2002). In some Nigerian administrative states like Sokoto and Zamfara, the female literacy rate is as low as 12 percent when compared to 59% for boys (UNESCO, 2003). Educated women have

demonstrated a better ability to keep control of their husband's expenditures and to maintain their own economic independence, to improve household management, and be more able to save money and generally contribute more to the family income pool (Chaudry, 1995).

The impact of gender disparity underlies the UNDP statement that, for too long, it was assumed that development was a process that lifted all boats, that its benefits trickled down to all income classes- and that it was gender neutral in its impact. Experience teaches otherwise (Akubue, 2001). Open and Distance Learning, evidence shows, seems a better approach in Nigeria in democratising education, poverty alleviation and the empowerment of the marginalised groups, especially women. Many of the difficulties and concerns experienced by women, particularly those in rural or low-income areas, point to the fact that distance education may be an ideal way for them to access education, since it potentially enables them to do most of their studying from home if they wish to do so, thus reducing the need to conflict with social or cultural requirements (Kanwar and Taplin, 2001:7).

Dr. Zobaida Akhter (2004), In this article the role that open and distance learning plays in providing access to secondary education for women in Bangladesh was examined. Bangladeshi societies often impose physical restrictions on women's mobility. The impact of cultural norms on women's education is clearly visible. Through education, a woman can become self-reliant, more aware of the changes in the surroundings, and have better self-esteem. In this situation, women must have wider access to education, which can be made possible through distance education. Distance education overcomes many of the obstacles faced by the Muslim girls and women in Bangladesh because, in distance education time, needs and places of the students are regulated according to their convenience.

The level of education of women is low in Nigeria most especially in Northern parts of Nigeria. The National literacy rate for female is only 56% compared to 72% for male, and in certain states the female literacy, enrolment and achievement rates are much lower, for example, girls net enrolment in Sokoto is 15% compared to 59% for boys. (UNICEF 2002). However, in Nigeria today, there is progress in women education with the exception of northern Nigeria (Uduigwomen, 2004). Although Nigerian women still have a long way from achieving equality with their male counterparts, a good number of Nigerian women are now found in all sorts of enterprising occupations such as Law, Teaching, Medicine, Business, and the Armed Forces.

Political empowerment of women has been enhanced by the level of education. In Nigeria today, women are gradually occupying their rightful positions. Awareness is being created that women should participate in partisan politics. Women are discriminated against in occupying as many positions in comparison with their numerical strength. However, Nigerian women have been occupying various positions such as: ministerial positions, senate, house of representative, state Houses of Assembly, as Deputy Governors, commissioners and various important political positions. During president Obasanjo first term in office (1999 - 2003), he appointed about seven women as ministers while during the second term (2003 - to date), he appointed more than seven women in his cabinet. He also appointed women as some of his advisers.

Usher and Cervenak (2005) explain, there are worldwide problems in ensuring equality of educational opportunity and the distribution of benefits that are associated with different levels of education that people with different socio-economic conditions may be able to achieve. These benefits apply to the life experiences of

individuals and groups, and thus, are not limited to simple monetary returns. There are positive correlations between female educational attainments and capacity to make informed decisions about various aspects of life including health, marriage, and reproduction. Although the relationship is not simply linear, there is a positive correlation between educational attainment and economic productivity.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is the description of all the procedure as well as methods adopted during the course of this study at different stages. Following paras will describe the universe, methods, population, sampling technique, tools of data collection and data analysis techniques adopted for the research.

3.2 Area of the Study

This study is based on the perceptions of postgraduate students of AIOU, Islamabad. Since the university covers all the areas of Pakistan so the universe of research is all the areas of Pakistan which comes under the studentship of AIOU. In this study, postgraduate female students of AIOU were focused. It tried to cover students from all the different areas/ Pakistani regions and backgrounds. The AIOU has a very large number of students enrolled under its postgraduate programmes and majority of these are working class. A detailed introduction of AIOU and its components are enclosed as **Annexure-I & II**.

3.3 Population

The population of the present study was the females enrolled in postgraduate programmes of AIOU. Female postgraduate students of AIOU from different regional offices had been selected to collect the data.

3.4 Sample

For the present research, proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the units of the study. This method was adopted to ensure the representation of students enrolled under different faculties and academic programmes as well as the students belonging from different areas of the country (details of faculties in AIOU

and academic programmes is given as **Annexure-III**). A proportionate random sample of **3000** female postgraduate students studying in their 3rd and 4th semester was selected. The students of 3rd and 4th semester were focused for getting more reliable data because of their longer relationship with the AIOU. The researcher would like to mention that out of total sample size i.e. 3000, response was received from **2508** respondents which is 84% of the sample size. Following procedure was adopted to draw the sample:

1. Lists of all the students enrolled under different Masters programmes was prepared with help of Admissions Department and Computer Center of AIOU.
2. Proportion of different faculties was identified according to the enrolment of students in different programmes and their proportion in the sample was calculated (Detail is given in table 3.1).
3. Representative number of units of study was selected randomly from each faculty (Department/ academic program). The process of random selection of study subjects was facilitated through computer draw by a professional.

Table No. 3.1 Faculty Breakup of Respondents

S.No	Faculty	Population (Postgraduate Female Enrolment)*	Sample Selected
01.	Education	36508 (81.6%)	2440 (81.3%)
02.	Social Sciences and Humanities	5013 (11.2%)	330 (11%)
03.	Arabic, Sharia, and Islamic Studies	3033 (6.7%)	210 (7%)
04.	Sciences	183 (0.4 %)	20 (0.6%)
	Total	44737 (100 %)	3000 (100%)

*Data is based on the enrolment of Spring-2011 semester.

3.4.1 Region Wise Breakup of Sample

It was tried that the data should be collected from almost every area of the country so the results could be confidently generalized for the whole Pakistan. Therefore, on the basis of enrolment the data was collected from different regions. Details of the filled-in questionnaire received from 20 regions of AIOU are given in following table:

Table 3.2 Region Wise Breakup of the sample

S.No	Regional Office	Frequency	Percent
01.	Abbotabad	16	0.6
02.	Bhawalpur	111	4.4
03.	Dera Gazi Khan	123	4.9
04.	Dera Ismail Khan	18	0.7
05.	Dera Murad Jamali	15	0.6
06.	Faisalabad	231	9.2
07.	Gilget-Baltistan	20	0.8
08.	Gujranwala	171	6.8
09.	Hyderabad	21	0.8
10.	Islamabad	294	11.7
11.	Lahore	380	15.2
12.	Larkana City	20	0.8
13.	Multan	162	6.5
14.	Muzffarabad AJK	31	1.2
15.	Peshawar	77	3.1
16.	Quetta	23	0.9
17.	Sahiwal	93	3.7
18.	Sialkot	122	4.9
19.	Sukker	16	0.6
20.	Rawalpindi	564	22.5
	Total	2508	100.0

3.5 Tools of Data Collection

For the proposed research, to assess the role of ODL in women empowerment, two different tools were designed and used to collect the quantitative & qualitative data. The tools were:

1. Structured questionnaire (sent through mail) enclosed as **Annexure-IV**.
2. In-depth Interview Guide enclosed as **Annexure-V**.

The questionnaire was developed in dual languages (English and Urdu) to get maximum input from the respondents. The information gathered through questionnaire includes socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, effect of ODL on women empowerment in Pakistan, issues/ challenges faced by the female students of AIOU, and suitable measures for improvement of ODL system, for the effective empowerment of female beneficiaries.

3.6 Data Collection

The present study is based on triangulation of methods in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted to develop the synthesis related to research question. Initially the data was collected on a detailed and structured questionnaire and the findings were further verified through qualitative enquiry. Following is the procedure adopted during the course of data collection:

1. After selection of the sample and development of the questionnaire, the required number of copies of the tool (Questionnaire) were mailed through postal services to the respective AIOU Regional Directors (RDs)/ Heads in different cities of Pakistan. Along with tools, list of randomly selected students and a detailed note regarding the procedure of data collection was also forwarded to the RDs. Through email and telephonic conversations the purpose of the study and the forwarded instructions were explained.
2. RDs and their staff got the tools duly filled in by the respondents during their workshop classes. Every tool contained an informed consent form and instructions for the respondents.
3. Filled questionnaires were mailed to the researcher by AIOU regional offices.
4. 30 postgraduate students randomly selected from the lists of the students from different regions who came to attend their centralized workshops in Islamabad, were interviewed in the university premises (Mostly in the office

of the researcher). It was tried to get the detailed opinions and in-depth answers related to findings of the quantitative data.

For maximum reach of the questionnaire to the students in almost any part of the country, the tool (Questionnaire) was also uploaded on AIOU website and it was displayed at front so that any person visiting AIOU website could easily access. Eligible students (Postgraduate female students) were requested to down load the questionnaire, and return duly filled to the researcher.

3.7 Data Analysis

Collected data was analyzed using appropriate statistical tools and techniques. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 16 and to understand the trends and meanings, the data was presented in the forms of tables, and percentages. To measure the level of different types of empowerment attained through AIOU's education a linkert's scale was used and numeric value was assigned to different response categories with reference to the strength of their response. Detailed procedure is mentioned in chapter four of the study. The data collected through in-depth interviews was analyzed through both; quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative analysis was done manually with the help of different colour highlighters on notebook. Analysis and interpretation was done through linking the findings of both the tools. It was tried to develop logical links between different variables, especially, qualitative and quantitative data. A scoring scheme/ scale was developed to measure the impact of ODL system education from AIOU on the attainment of different types of empowerment by women (details given in chapter 4). It is expected that the findings of the present study shall be helpful in analyzing the role of education behind women empowerment in Pakistan and it will also provide us with the existing gaps and suggestions for improvement.

3.8 Response Rate and Quality of data

For any research study, response rate and the quality and authenticity of collected data is very important. Therefore, the researcher tried to ensure the maximum level of response by regular follow up to sampled respondents and regional offices. They also cooperated fully and a good response rate (84%) was managed by the end. It was tried to construct questions in a simple and clear language to avoid misunderstanding. For accurate and genuine responses, the tool was translated from English to Urdu language. Tool/ questionnaire was printed in both languages so the respondent could not feel any difficulty in understanding different terms. Furthermore, the detailed instructions to fill in the questionnaire and orientation of data collecting personnel with study objectives; given by the researcher lead to collection of a good quality data. So, it is worth mentioning that the data represents true opinions of the respondents and its generalization could be made with confidence.

3.9 Conceptualization/ Operationalization

Conceptualization and operationalization of the major concepts included women empowerment, economic participation/ opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment, individual autonomy, social empowerment, and family/interpersonal was properly done.

a) Women empowerment

For the purpose of this study women empowerment indicators includes:

- To be able to contribute towards income generation,
- Participating in family decision making, Mobility outside home,
- At social level having good relationships, prestige and respect, honor & say,
- Awareness of the political rights,
- Access to educational opportunities,

- Decrease dependency and passivity,

b) Educational attainment

Educational attainment means the number of years studied by an individual as well as the level of certification achieved i.e. Matriculation, Graduation etc.

c) Political empowerment

Political empowerment includes:

Immediate

- Women's interest in politics
- Women's participation in formal political processes
- Women's perception of politics

Underlying

- Male domination of political parties
- Availability of financial resources among women who want to enter politics
- Political skills and Level of mobility and participation in political activities

d) Social empowerment

Women become prestigious and receive attention and respect, honor from others, and experience the increased social network and good relationship.

e) Family/interpersonal

The family starts to treat them as better women, more voices heard, more often having decision-making power, got the courage.

f) Balancing inequalities between age groups

In ODL system, there is no age limit for getting enrolled in any of the programmes. It is an important factor behind attraction towards ODL.

g) Geographical access to education

Open and distance learning can overcome problems of physical distance for learners in remote locations who are unable or unwilling to physically attend a campus; and learners and teachers geographically separated in that teachers in urban settings instruct learners in rural settings.

h) Education for large audiences

Open and distance learning can expand the limited number of places available for campus-based institutions few in number; and stringent entrance requirements.

i) Solving time or scheduling problems

Open and distance learning can solve time or scheduling for client groups unwilling or unable to assemble together frequently learners engaged in full-time or part-time work, both waged and volunteer; and family and community commitments.

j) Offering the combination of education with work and family life

ODL system is very accommodative. Students are provided with the books and other study material right at their doorsteps irrespective of where they live. No strict system of regular classes gives an opportunity to continue education with the routine office as well as family life.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS)

This chapter on results and discussions comprised tabular presentation of analyzed data and its interpretation. This chapter contains a number of variables presented and various sections have been made for better understanding of discussion.

4.2 Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

The following part of the chapter is based on the analysis of demographic variables related to the sample. It is tried to cover detailed background and socio-economic status of the study respondents.

Table-4.1: Distribution of the Respondents by Province, Area, and Regional Office of Enrolment

	Province of Residence	Frequency	Percent
i	Punjab	2244	89.5
ii	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK)	111	4.4
iii	Sindh	57	2.3
iv	Balochistan	38	1.5
v	Azad Kashmir (AJK)	31	1.2
vi	Others	27	1.1
	Area of Residence		
i	Rural	654	26.1
ii	Urban	1854	73.9
	Regional Office		
i	Abbotabad	16	0.6
ii	Bhawalpur	111	4.4
iii	Dera Gazi Khan	123	4.9
iv	Dera Ismail Khan	18	0.7
v	Dera Murad Jamali	15	0.6
vi	Faisalabad	231	9.2
vii	Gilget-Baltistan	20	0.8
viii	Gujranwala	171	6.8
ix	Hyderabad	21	0.8
x	Islamabad	294	11.7
xi	Lahore	380	15.2
xii	Larkana City	20	0.8
xiii	Multan	162	6.5
xiv	Muzffarabad AJK	31	1.2
xv	Peshawar	77	3.1
xvi	Quetta	23	0.9
xvii	Sahiwal	93	3.7
xviii	Sialkot	122	4.9
xix	Sukker	16	0.6
xx	Rawalpindi	564	22.5

❖ n = 2508 (100 %)

Table 4.1 indicates the respondent's province, area of the residence, and regional office of enrolment. ODL system of education is like of diaspora in development. Diaspora means scattering of seeds, we can say that at larger scale ODL initiatives such as AIOU in Pakistan appears as the scattered seeds from which creation of knowledge, evolution of mindsets, and progress of the nation is in process. For promotion of the knowledge from center to the far flung areas of the country, AIOU has the nationwide setup of its regional offices in all provinces. To insure the representation from all over Pakistan, female students of AIOU as the study sample was drawn according to regionwise postgraduate student's enrollment during Spring-2011 semester. For the purpose of true representation, data was collected from different regions of AIOU all over Pakistan. According to the sample, most of the respondents, 90% were from the Punjab province because of its high proportion in postgraduate level enrollment. Moreover, Punjab is the largest populated province in Pakistan. It constitutes 56% (Govt of Pakistan, 1998) of total population of Pakistan and more students from this province get benefits from AIOU's programmes. Remaining 10% of the respondents were from KP, Sindh, Balochistan, AJK, and of Gilgit Baltistan.

AIOU is one of the mega universities of the world in terms of student's enrollment and it is truly the largest university of Pakistan as well. Because of AIOU unique nature, female student's enrollment form 61% of the total enrollment at postgraduate level in Spring-2011 semester. The respondents of the current study belong to both; rural and urban settings of the country. Among respondents, a vast majority of 74% were from urban areas and respondents from rural areas were of 26% of the total sample.

Respondents of the study were included from 20 regions of AIOU across Pakistan. The regional breakup in table 4.1 indicates that for present study 9 regions were selected from Punjab, 3 each from KP and Sindh, 2 regions from Balochistan, along with AJK, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Islamabad regions. According to the table 4.1, majority of the respondents were from Rawalpindi, Lahore, Islamabad, and from Faisalabad having percentage of 23%, 15%, 12%, and 9% respectively. The table also indicates low participation rate as of 0.6% from these regions; Abbotabad, Dera Murad Jamali, and Sukker among the selected regions for the study due to low enrollment of females at postgraduate level.

Table-4.2: Distribution of the Respondents by Faculty, and Subject of Enrolment

	Faculty	Frequency	Percent
i	Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies	210	8.3
ii	Faculty of Education	1922	76.6
iii	Faculty of Sciences	25	0.9
iv	Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities	351	13.9
	Subject/ Academic Programme		
	Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies		
i	Arabic	8	0.3
ii	Islamic Studies	202	8.1
	Faculty of Education		
i	Distance and Non-formal Education	281	11.2
ii	Education	369	14.7
iii	Educational Planning & Management	218	8.7
iv	Science Education	207	8.3
v	Special Education	206	8.2
vi	Teacher Education	641	25.6
	Faculty of Sciences		
i	Chemistry	7	0.3
ii	Community Health and Nutrition	5	0.2
iii	Mathematics	5	0.2
iv	Physics	8	0.3
	Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities		
i	Business Administration	73	3.0
ii	Commonwealth International MBA/MPA	29	1.1
iii	Economics	58	2.3
iv	Gender & Women Studies	25	1.0
v	History	22	0.9
vi	Mass Communication	26	1.0
vii	Pakistan Studies	49	2.0
viii	Sociology	24	1.0
ix	Teaching of English as a Foreign Language	22	0.9
x	Urdu	23	0.9

❖ n = 2508 (100 %)

Table 4.2 shows the faculty and subject/ programme wise distribution of the respondents. AIOU has introduced a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, Masters, M.Phil and Doctoral programs. The University also offers basic functional courses for illiterates and semi-literates. These programs have given distinction to the University in relation to other educational institutions of Pakistan as it caters the needs of all age groups and levels of education. The university is having four faculties and currently offering over thirty eight different academic programmes at postgraduate level. For the current study, proportionate random sampling technique was adopted to ensure the maximum participation of the respondents from different faculties and the postgraduate programmes offered by these faculties. Faculty wise proportions of the respondents in sample indicate their proportion in total population. According to the Table 4.2, majority of the respondents (77%) were from Faculty of Education. This is due to high enrollment in the faculty, followed by 14% from Faculty of Social Sciences, 8% from Faculty of Arabic & Islamic Studies, and because of low enrollment 1% from Faculty of Natural Sciences.

The table under discussion also indicates the subject/ academic programme wise breakup of the respondents. AIOU offers 40 programmes at post graduate level however, the study included respondents from 22 academic programmes. These includes 2 programmes from Faculty of Arabic, 6 programmes from Faculty of Education, 4 programmes from Faculty of Natural Sciences, and 10 programmes were selected from Faculty of Social Sciences. Majority of the respondents were pursuing Masters in “Teacher Education” as of 26% of the total sample, followed by “Education” 15%, “Distance and Non-formal Education” 11%. Respondents from “Islamic Studies”, “Educational Planning & Management”, “Science Education”, and “Special Education” were little more than 8% each, respectively. Rest of the

respondents (23%) was having subjects from Faculty of Arabic, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences.

Table 4.3: Distribution of the Respondents by Age, Occupation and Income Status

	Age of the Respondents (in complete years)	Frequency	Percent
i	Less than 20	27	1.1
ii	21 to 30	1813	72.3
iii	31 to 40	529	21.1
iv	41 to 50	122	4.9
iv	Above 50	17	0.7
Occupation			
i	Govt. Service	714	28.5
ii	Private Service	539	21.5
iii	Business	23	0.9
iv	Self Employed	42	1.7
v	Student	807	32.2
vi	House Wife	365	14.6
vii	Any Other (specify)	18	0.7
Respondents Monthly Income (Rs.)			
i	Less than 20,000	1025	40.9
ii	20,000 to 30,000	249	9.9
iii	30,001 to 40,000	53	2.1
iv	40,001 to 50,000	20	0.8
v	Above 50,000	13	0.5
vi	None	1148	45.8
Respondents Family Monthly Income (Rs.)			
i	Less than 20,000	700	27.9
ii	20,000 to 30,000	828	33.0
iii	30,001 to 40,000	412	16.4
iv	40,001 to 50,000	209	8.3
v	50,001 to 60,000	165	6.6
vi	Above 60,000	194	7.7

❖ n = 2508 (100 %)

Table 4.3 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the study respondents including age, occupation, and respondent's monthly and family income. Majority of the respondents which were 72% of the total sample lies in the age category of 21 - 30 years, followed by 21% of them in 31 - 40 years. The table further illustrates that 5% of the respondents fall under age category of 41 - 50 years. And there were only 2% of the respondents who were either under the category of less than 20 years or of 50 years and above. The age analysis of the respondents shows that majority of the

respondents were middle aged as between 20-40 years and almost student from all age groups were found which support that there is no age limit for enrollment at AIOU programmes.

The table under discussion also indicates occupation of the respondents. Half of the respondents (50%) were in govt. and private services, fulfills AIOU's one of the main objectives of providing educational opportunities to those who cannot leave their homes and jobs. It has opened up educational opportunities for the serving people as well as easy access to the females at their door steps. Although 32% of the respondents were only students with no employment status, followed by 15% who were housewives. Remaining 03% of the respondents were either self-employed or engaged in businesses or other part time income generating activities e.g. tutoring children. The occupational analysis of the data shows that majority of the respondents were serving people who continued education from AIOU with their other responsibilities.

The information related to respondent's monthly income reveals that among working people about 41% were earning less than Rs.20,000 per month. This shows, due to economic constraints people come into workforce without completing their proper education and without being properly skilled and equipped and the scenario for female education is more worst which in returns affects their income level. About 10% of the respondents were under the income category of Rs.20,000 to Rs.30,000 while those having income Rs.30,001 to Rs.60,000 were only about 3% of the total working respondents' sample. And respondents who were not employed e.g. students and housewives and having no personal monthly income were about 46% of the total study sample.

Further table indicates the respondent's family income per month. About 28% of the respondent's family income falls in the income category of less than Rs.20,000, 33% were having income between Rs.20,000 - Rs.30,000, while 16% belongs to the income category of Rs.30,001 - Rs.40,000, further about 15% of the respondents fall in income category of Rs.40,001 - Rs.60,000. Among respondents there were only about 8% having family monthly income more than Rs.60,000. The income analysis of the respondents and their families shows that a vast majority of the respondents belonged to middle working class, whose successful survival in the society is only possible if they equipped themselves with the educational skills to come out from the vicious circle of poverty.

Table 4.4: Distribution of the Respondents by Type of Family, Marital Status and Age of Children

	Type of Family	Frequency	Percent
i	Nuclear	861	34.3
ii	Joint	1374	54.8
iii	Extended	273	10.9
	Marital Status		
i	Single	1365	54.4
ii	Married	1076	42.9
iii	Divorced	35	1.4
iv	Widowed	21	0.8
v	Separated	11	0.4
	Ages of Male Children (in complete years)		
i	No Male Child	466	18.6
ii	Up to 5 years	321	12.8
iii	6 to 10 years	220	8.8
iv	11 to 15 years	91	3.6
v	More than 15years	49	2.0
vi	Unmarried	1361	54.3
	Ages of Female Children (in complete years)		
i	No Female Child	493	19.7
ii	Up to 5 years	301	12.0
iii	6 to 10 years	201	8.0
iv	11 to 15 years	87	3.5
v	More than 15years	59	2.4
vi	Unmarried	1367	54.5

❖ n = 2508 (100 %)

Table 4.4 indicates the respondent's family type, marital status, and ages of the respondents' children. Data shows that 55% of the total respondents were living in joint family system, whereas 34% of them were having nuclear family system and only about 11% were members of extended family. The analysis of respondent's family type shows that although majority of the respondents were having joint family structure but respondents who were having nuclear family system were the second major group which indicates the changing social setup of the society. Due to globalization and modernization, world has now become a global village but in societies like Pakistan the pace of social change is relatively slow and still there are strong ties with the traditional social normative systems particularly related to the family and religious institutions.

Data in the table also indicates that 54% of the respondents were unmarried, although 43% of total respondents were married females. The figure indicates that due to early marriages in our society females could not complete their education. And afterwards share the economic burden of the family by working at marginal levels. Further, to accelerate their income levels and professional standings, with continuation of jobs they resume their education. AIOU is the institution which provides such facility of distance education. There is a low percentage about 3% of the respondents fall in the categories of Divorced, Widowed, and Separated. The study analysis indicates traditional strong family ties as majority of the respondents were from joint family system and in such a family structure the situations sometimes got fired up but more emphasis is given to live up with the relations even though.

The table further illustrates the ages of male children of the respondents. Among married women 19% of the respondents were having no male child, followed by 13% who were having up to 5 years male children, and 9% of them were having male children between the ages of 6 - 10 years. However, respondents having male children

between ages of 11 years - more than 15 years were 6% of the total number of married respondents.

In addition to that information about male children's ages, the table reveals ages of the female children of the respondents. 20% of the respondents among married women were having no female child, 12% were having female children up to 5 years, while 8% of them were having female children between the ages of 6 -10 years. Among married respondents who were having female children between ages of 11 years - more than 15 years were of about 6% of the total study sample. The analysis of the ages of respondent's children shows that majority of the married respondents were having children up to 10 years of ages because current study has a comparatively young population of respondents between the ages of 20 to 40 years who are in the process of family building and may have more children in future.

Table-4.5: Distribution of Respondents by Year of 1st Time Registration

	Year of 1st Registration	Frequency	Percent
i	Before 2003	244	9.7
ii	2003 to 2005	229	9.1
iii	2006 to 2008	613	24.4
iv	2009 onwards	1422	56.7
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.5 shows the information about respondent's 1st time registration with AIOU. For the present study female postgraduate students studying in their 3rd or 4th semester were selected. The purpose of 3rd and 4th semester student's selection was many folded, as they were towards completion of their degrees and also having their longer relationship with the AIOU so it was considered to get more focused and reliable data for the aforementioned study. The table under discussion shows that more than half of the respondents, 57% were registered with AIOU since 2009 onwards, 24% of the respondents were affiliated with AIOU since 2006, while 9% of them were registered since 2003. Another 10% of the study respondent's were enrolled with AIOU before

2003. The analysis of the table shows that the respondents maximum years of affiliation with AIOU is about 8 years and minimum time period of affiliation with the institution is about 1 ½ years. As shared by a respondent, a success story of an AIOU female student of her area supports the data given above.

“A female who was due to some internal family crisis left her studies and restarted after 7 years from AIOU, and completed her graduation as well as master’s degree education. She was still with the high aim to further continue her higher studies from AIOU even after she got married now.”

4.3 Factors behind joining AIOU

This part of the chapter presents the analysis of different factors which instigate people to seek admission in AIOU. Discussion is made in the following paragraphs:

Table-4.6: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinion about Reasons of Seeking Admission in AIOU

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Uncertain (UNC), Disagree (DA), Strongly Disagree (SDA)

	Why females seek admission at AIOU?	SA (%)	A (%)	UNC (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)	Total (%)
I	Difficult to seek admission in any other university	161 (6.4)	327 (13.0)	173 (6.9)	932 (37.2)	915 (36.5)	2508 (100.0)
ii	AIOU offers the opportunity of education while staying at home	1164 (46.4)	1139 (45.4)	72 (2.9)	48 (1.9)	85 (3.4)	2508 (100.0)
iii	AIOU charges lesser fee than other Universities	383 (15.3)	878 (35.0)	359 (14.3)	612 (24.4)	276 (11.0)	2508 (100.0)
iv	It provides an opportunity to study while in service	1455 (58.0)	817 (32.6)	50 (2.0)	71 (2.8)	115 (4.6)	2508 (100.0)
v	AIOU educational system allows continuing education after a certain period of time	1166 (46.5)	1097 (43.7)	113 (4.5)	55 (2.2)	77 (3.1)	2508 (100.0)
vi	It is comparatively easy to pass AIOU Examination	376 (15.0)	711 (28.3)	336 (13.4)	751 (29.9)	334 (13.3)	2508 (100.0)
vii	AIOU permits one to extend the completion period of a program	392 (15.6)	1271 (50.7)	382 (15.2)	306 (12.2)	157 (6.3)	2508 (100.0)
viii	The material provided in AIOU is self sufficient for their studies	460 (18.3)	1224 (48.8)	231 (9.2)	402 (16.0)	191 (7.6)	2508 (100.0)
vix	Choices of conventional universities are limited	444 (17.7)	1077 (42.9)	331 (13.2)	478 (19.1)	178 (7.1)	2508 (100.0)
x	AIOU offers education with no age restrictions	1279 (51.0)	1035 (41.3)	83 (3.3)	43 (1.7)	68 (2.7)	2508 (100.0)
xi	To get promotion/improve their employment status	1059 (42.2)	1160 (46.3)	123 (4.9)	84 (3.3)	82 (3.3)	2508 (100.0)
xii	AIOU offers a wide range of courses/ discipline	760 (30.3)	1242 (49.5)	231 (9.2)	213 (8.5)	62 (2.5)	2508 (100.0)
xiii	They are unable or unwilling to physically attend the classes	1008 (40.2)	1184 (47.2)	107 (4.3)	125 (5.0)	84 (3.3)	2508 (100.0)

Table 4.6 illustrates the respondent's opinion about 'why females seek admission at AIOU.' The respondents were asked thirteen statements regarding different aspects of AIOU system of education. Education is considered as a significant instrument for the socio-economic development of any society. All over the world millions of children do not have access to basic education and those who have access left education without completion of their primary schooling, the situation get more worst when we talk about third world countries especially African and Asian.

The situation of access to education, especially with reference to females in Pakistan is very low. The reasons are manifold including poverty, gender inequality, conservatism, agrarian economy, patriarchal social structure, lack of resources, and no importance of female education due to non-productivity of females in traditional societies. AIOU is like a hope of prosperity for millions of Pakistanis who could not complete their education due to certain reasons. It provides a chance to get education to females especially who are at the bottom lines of education in the society. The table demonstrates the opinions of the respondents about those options which become a reason for females to get admission at AIOU. Among these options the first was "Difficult to seek admission in any other university", in response to this statement 37% of the respondents were having the opinion "strongly disagree", another 37% were of the opinion "disagree" however 7% of the respondents were having the response "uncertain". Although 13% of the respondents were agree and only 6% of them were strongly agree with this statement. The analysis of the data shows that a vast majority about 74% of the respondents were not agree with this reason that females only come to open university because they don't have any other option or it's difficult to get admission in other universities for them.

Second statement of the table was "AIOU offers the opportunity of education while staying at home." The table indicates that 46% of the respondents were having the opinion "strongly agree," another 45% were of the opinion "agree" however, only 3% of them responded as "uncertain." Although just 2% of the respondents were disagree and only 3% of them were strongly disagree with this statement. Analysis of the data shows that an immense majority of almost 92% of the respondents were agree with this statement as because of this salient feature majority females get enrolled with AIOU. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A female who belongs to a very conservative family where there was no concept of sending their sisters/ daughters outside homes for studies, AIOU comes as an angel to her life which provides her an opportunity to complete her education from intermediate to masters level and to fulfill her dreams while staying at home."
- "A female who belongs to a poor family and after completing her middle school education was not able to continue her further studies because higher school and college were at a long distance and her family could not afford the cost of transportation. So, she decided to continue her studies from AIOU and now tutoring children at home and financially supporting her family."
- "A female living in a remote area where no facility of educational institutions for females available and also it was quite difficult for females to left their homes and move to cities for education, she got admission at AIOU and completed her education without leaving her home station."

Third statement of the table under discussion was "AIOU charges less fee than other universities." Table shows that overall 35% of the respondents were agree with the statement followed by 15% of the respondents who were strongly agree. Another 24%

were of the opinion “disagree” along with 11% of them who were having opinion “strongly disagree.” However, about 14% of the respondents responded as “uncertain” to the statement. ODL is an educational model which is cost-effective without sacrificing quality and AIOU is fulfilling this objective of ODL. The analysis of the data reveals that half of the respondents 50% were having the opinion that females get admission at AIOU because of its lesser fee than other universities. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU’s female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- “A female who was living in a rural area and belongs to a middle class family, it was not possible for her family to bear the expenses of her higher education from any conventional university so she decided to carry on her higher education from AIOU. Because it is quite expensive for a middle class female to get higher education from conventional institutions, in such a scenario AIOU with its lesser fee structure is a blessing for middle class people and especially for women.”
- “A daughter of a peon from a very poor family having six sisters and no brother, due to meager salary, it was not possible for her father to send his daughters to regular colleges and universities so her father decided to give his daughters education from AIOU. Now she has done masters from AIOU and doing job in her father’s office and sharing the burden of her father. There are three other sisters of her now students of AIOU.”

For the fourth statement of the matrix question was “it provides an opportunity to study while in service,” the table indicates that 58% of the respondents were having the opinion “strongly agree,” another 33% were of the opinion “agree” however only 2% of the respondents responded as “uncertain.” Although just 3% of the respondents were disagree and only 5% of them were strongly disagree with this statement. AIOU

enables its students to get benefits by education anytime and anywhere to implement positive changes in their lives. Analysis of the data shows that a vast majority of 91% of the respondents were agree with this statement as because of this distinguishing feature of AIOU, majority females get enrolled. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

"A lady who discontinued her studies due to her family's financial crisis and started with a peripheral job as she was simple graduate. When after ten years of her job she was able to study further, she got helpless with the rules and regulations of formal/ conventional universities, and finally found AIOU as a hope where she can come true with her aspirations. She continued her studies along with her job and bears all the expenses of her studies by her own without asking for any finances from anyone, and completed master's degree programme from AIOU."

Fifth statement of the table was, "AIOU educational system allows continuing of education after a certain period of time", and data in the table shows that 47% of the respondents were "strongly agreed" with the statement while about 44% were "agreed". There were 2% and 3% of the respondents having the opinion, "disagree" and "strongly disagree" respectively. However, only about 5% of the respondents were "uncertain" about the aforementioned statement. The educational system of AIOU offers its students with the opportunity to resume their studies from where they left off due to any reason. The analysis of the statement shows that a vast majority of almost 90% of the respondents were agree with this statement that this significant aspect of AIOU's education makes it possible for those especially, women to continue their studies after a certain time. As shared by the respondents of the current study,

success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above:

"A female who was doing graduation from AIOU discontinued her studies due to her mother's sudden death. Being an elder daughter her responsibilities got many folds at home. Even after her marriage, due to younger children, she was not able to complete her graduation. Then after seven years she has again started her studies from 3rd semester and not only completed her graduation but also done B.ed from AIOU."

Sixth statement was "it is comparatively easy to pass AIOU exams." The table shows that overall 28% of the respondents were agree with the statement followed by 15% of the respondents who were strongly agree. Among the respondents, 30% were of the opinion "disagree" along with 13% of them who were having opinion of "strongly disagree." Another 13% of the respondents responded as "uncertain" to the statement. The analysis of the data reveals that among the respondents who responded to this statement, about half (43%) were agree with the statement, so, it can be assumed that because of the flexible duration of degree completion and ease of studying at home further accelerates the convenience of exams for students. Therefore, it becomes one of the reasons to get enrolled at AIOU. While about another half (43%) of them having the opinion that it's not the reason to come and join AIOU just because it's easy to get through the examination and acquire a degree.

The seventh statement was "AIOU permits one to extend the completion period of a program," and data about the statement indicates that 51% of the respondents were "agreed" with the statement while 16% were "strongly agreed." There were 12% of the respondents having the opinion "disagree" and only 06% of them "strongly disagreed." However, about 15% of the respondents were "uncertain" about the statement. AIOU provides an opportunity for those who could not continue their

higher studies in formal/ conventional universities. The analysis of the statement shows that more than half (66%) of the respondents were agree with this statement because this significant feature of distance learning makes it possible for those who due to certain reasons could not complete their education in one go. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

“A girl who was heavily burdened with domestic responsibilities (due to her step mother) and was not able to manage her regular studies at right time in life, got admission at AIOU with the hope that she might fulfill her desire of higher studies. Now she has completed her masters and having the opinion that it's the charisma of AIOU that this institution does not burdened its students with respect to length of degree completion period.”

The eighth statement was “the material provided in AIOU is self-sufficient for their studies.” Table shows that 49% of the respondents “agreed” with the statement and 18% of them “strongly agreed.” While 16% of the respondents were “disagree” with this reason for females to get admission at AIOU, and only 8% of them were having opinion “strongly disagree” for the statement. Further 9% of the study subjects were “uncertain” about the statement. The analysis of the statement shows in the table that majority (67%) of the respondents were agree that it's the reason to join the university because then they do not need to be worried for purchasing books as well as they get comprehensive instructions based study material to study by their own.

The ninth statement included was “choices of conventional universities are limited.” Data shows that 43% of the respondents were having the opinion “agree,” 18% were of the opinion “strongly agree” however 19% of the respondents “disagreed” and only 7% of them “strongly disagreed” with this statement. However, 13% of the study subjects responded “uncertain.” The analysis shows that more than half (60%) of

them agreed that because of living in rural areas or in small towns/ cities there were limited colleges/universities. Further, especially for women it is more difficult to find higher educational institutions in such areas as well as female access to these institutions. That's why majority of the women get enrolled with AIOU from all over Pakistan. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU female students of their areas support the statement given above.

“A lady whose husband was in forces, and living on border areas along with family where there was no university available in the area. So she decided to join AIOU, completed her master's degree and just because of AIOU now she is serving as seventeenth grade officer and living a prosperous life with her husband and children.”

The tenth statement of the table under discussion was “AIOU offers education with no age restrictions.” Table shows that overall 51% of the respondents “strongly agreed” with the statement followed by 41% of the respondents who “agreed.” Among the respondents about 2% were of the opinion “disagree” along with 3% of them who were having opinion of “strongly disagree.” Only 3% of the respondents responded as “uncertain” to the statement. The analysis of the data reveals that an immense majority (92%) of the respondents were agree with the statement that those who could not receive or complete formal education due to any reason can join any AIOU educational Programme at any time in their lives. The effectiveness of ODL reveals that anyone can any time with no age limitations become a student and improve his/her competencies. Age of the present study respondents also strengthens this statement and shows that majority of them were between age category of 21 - 40 years, whereas in conventional institutions there is an age limit to do any level programme. Thus, it becomes one of the major reasons to get enrolled in AIOU. As

shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A lady whose daughter was a student of AIOU was doing job in a factory. Her daughter insisted her and she got admission in AIOU. She felt easy to join such an institution where she found students of her age around herself because of no age limit to be a student of AIOU. And now after completion of her studies she is feeling proud to be a part of AIOU."
- "There is a lady school teacher who has restarted education at the age of fifty years by encouragement of her students from AIOU and completed her M.Ed. At this age she was very happy that there is an institution to facilitate such people like her through which people can enhance/ improve their ducation and draw benefits afterward."

Eleventh statement of the table was "to get promotion/improve their employment status." The table indicates that 46% of the respondents were having the opinion "agree," 42% were of the opinion "strongly agree" however, just 5% of the respondents responded as "uncertain." Only 3% of the respondents "disagreed" while another, 3% of them "strongly disagreed" with the statement. Education from AIOU facilitates students to get knowledge by the open distance learning system and to implement this in both of their personal and professional life. This in returns will bring positive social changes in overall society. The analysis of the data shows that a vast majority (89%) of the respondents were agree with this statement that no doubt education enhances one's skills and definitely brings progression in professional existence. It's a prominent feature of AIOU that majority of its students are working. The continuation of studies along with jobs brings improvements e.g. promotions in their employment position/ career. The present study also highlights this fact and shows that more than half (53%) of the study subjects were employed and to change

and improve their job status, they joined AIOU for further studies. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

“There are many females who studied from AIOU and got promotions in their jobs e.g. in the field of teaching, nursing, welfare, managerial, and developmental sector etc., which increased not only their income but also enabled them to take better care of their families. And because of such successful educated women, we got motivated to get admission at AIOU.”

Twelfth statement of the table was, “AIOU offers a wide range of courses/discipline in contrary with other educational institutions.” The table shows that 50% of the respondents were having the opinion “agree,” 30% were of the opinion “strongly agree” however, 9% of the study respondents responded as “uncertain.” Though, 9% of the respondents “disagreed” and only 3% of them “strongly disagreed” with this statement. AIOU is offering more than (950) courses at different levels and is a Pioneer institution in Pakistan to offer some unique programmes at post-graduate level e.g. Special Education. It is the only institute/ university across the border which is offering Educational Planning and Management (EPM) programme at postgraduate level. Analysis of the data shows that a vast majority (80%) of the respondents were agree with this statement that at any level, programmes of AIOU are based on comprehensive course outline which they cannot find in scheme of study of other institutions. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU female students of their areas support the statement given above.

“A female who is working with an international organization, was in search of a degree programme related to educational plans and policies. She came to know about (EPM) at AIOU and got admission in the programme. She has completed her studies and she is of the view now that I feel proud to tell

people that I am an apprentice/ trainee of AIOU and it has an incredible learning system in such up-to-date specialized practical fields of studies.”

The last and thirteenth statement of the table under discussion was “they are unable or unwilling to physically attend the classes.” Data indicates that 40% of the respondents were having the opinion “strongly agree,” 47% were of the opinion “agree” however, only 4% of the respondents responded as “uncertain.” Though, just 5% of the respondents “disagreed” and only 3% of them “strongly disagreed” with this statement. The analysis shows that a high majority of the respondents agreed that because of the flexible learning system of AIOU in which regular physical attendance is not compulsory half of the females get themselves enrolled at AIOU. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU’s female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- “Many years ago, a female who was physically handicapped and living in Saudi Arabia got admission in graduation at AIOU because she was not in position to go and attend any conventional institution there. She completed her studies successfully and now her daughter is a current student of a postgraduate programme at AIOU.”
- “A female who got her education after middle (08th-class) from AIOU and now completed her graduation and eager to get higher education. Her grandparents were not in favor of female education because of the fear that they will learn so many other unnecessary things when go out daily and spent many hours in schools/ colleges without supervision of parents/ elders. In such a scenario she get education just because of the ease that there were no classes to be attended by her. She is of the view that there are many success stories of

sisters, daughters, cousins, neighbors, who have completed their education from AIOU and playing vital roles in all walks of life.”

Table 4.7: Distribution of the Respondents by Reasons for getting Admission in AIOU

	Reasons for getting admission at AIOU	Frequency	Percent
i	Difficult to Seek Admission in any other University	13	0.5
ii	AIOU offers the opportunity of education while staying at home	381	15.2
iii	AIOU charges lesser fee than other universities	201	8.0
iv	It provides an opportunity to study while in service	589	23.5
v	AIOU educational system allows continuing of education after a certain period of time	267	10.6
vi	It is comparatively easy to pass AIOU exams	25	1.0
vii	AIOU permits one to extend the completion period of a program	131	5.2
viii	The materials provided in AIOU are self sufficient for their studies	143	5.7
vix	Choices of conventional universities are limited	144	5.7
x	AIOU offers education with no age restrictions	21	0.8
xi	To get promotion/improve their employment status	178	7.1
xii	AIOU offers a wide range of courses/discipline in contrary with other educational institutions	116	4.6
xiii	They are unable or unwilling to physically attend the classes	299	11.9
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.7 is the continuation of table 4.6 and shows the respondent’s personal reason for seeking admission at AIOU. Thirteen statements were asked from the respondents regarding different aspects of AIOU. The study subjects responded to almost all the statements ranging from lowest to highest level of agreement to the given options in the questionnaire regarding their reason to get admission at AIOU. Table indicates that among important reasons one was “it provides an opportunity to study while in service.” 24% of the respondents were having this reason to get enrolled with AIOU.

15% of the respondents were agree with the statement; "AIOU offers the opportunity of education while staying at home." While, 12% of the study respondents were having the reason "they are unable or unwilling to physically attend the classes." Another statement "AIOU educational system allows continuing of education after a certain period of time," became a reason for 11% of the respondents for joining AIOU. However, "AIOU charges lesser fee than other universities" and "to get promotion/improve their employment status," were the reasons for 8% and 7% of the respondents respectively. Analysis shows that "difficult to seek admission in any other university" and "it is comparatively easy to pass AIOU exams," were the personal reasons for hardly 2% of the respondents which is also supported by high level respondent's disagreement (more than 50%) opinion for the aforementioned statements in table 4.6. Another statement "AIOU offers education with no age restrictions" was also practically the case of hardly 1% of the study respondents because the data shows that majority of respondents joined AIOU because of being engaged with jobs. Although in table 4.6 a vast majority (92%) was having the agreement for said statement, this practical difference means that AIOU is an outlet more for those who come mostly to invigorate their socio-economic status in the society. Remaining, 20% were having reasons like, ease of exams, flexible degree completion time, provision of study material, limited choices for conventional universities, and availability of a wide range courses/ programmes to get admission at AIOU.

4.4 Role of AIOU in Women Empowerment

In present study the emphasis is to explore and measure the role of ODL in women empowerment so different questions were asked to meet this objective. A comprehensive analysis is being made to discuss the role of AIOU for developing a reliable synthesis. Empowerment as a avariable was operationalized in to five areas

i.e. economic, political, social, individual autonomy and family level, three same type of questions were asked for all of these five areas. For every area first question in the tool was, whether AIOU plays any role in that very area of empowerment or not. The second question was regarding opinions about role of AIOU in affecting different indicators of that specific type of empowerment. Third question was asked to know about personal attainment of different types of empowerment by the respondents through AIOU education. Following paras of the chapter are a representation of data and discussion pertaining to this very area.

Table 4.8: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinion about “ODL system has been instrumental to the economic empowerment of women in Pakistan”

		Frequency	Percent
i	Yes	2459	98.0
ii	No	49	2.0
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.8 shows the respondent’s overall opinion about the influence of educational system of AIOU on economic empowerment of women. Education has a significant impact on the development of human society. Education and women empowerment has a strong relation as it is witnessed by the developed world that with a strong base of educated women society can better achieve the objectives of economic, social and political development and may reap the fruit of prosperity.

If we look into Pakistan’s situation, being more than half of the total population the literacy rate for females as compared to males is still considerably very low and there is a dire need to be focused on female education at grass root levels because it is considered as an essential tool in overcoming barriers in women life. Illiteracy has negative impact not only on economic growth of a country but it also adversely affects the social spectrum of a society. Empowerment is a process which transforms

the circumstances of powerless especially women towards more control over their lives. For the current table it was tried to determine education from AIOU as a tool of enriching women with economic empowerment.

Table shows that almost all respondents 98% were of the view that AIOU has contributions towards economically empowering women all over the country and response of only 2% was otherwise. The importance of distance learning increases many folds in a country like Pakistan where high population growth, poverty, and traditional system are few among many problems in female education. These hurdles supported by customs, limited female mobility, further cause increase in number of dropouts from those who reach educational institutions.

Women are perceived as having low social status considerably across classes, regions and rural/ urban divide which further deteriorate women opportunities and consideration for education as far as Pakistani culture is concerned. Due to such reasons still women have limited access towards economic opportunities with regard to access and participation in the socio-economic and political domains.

Table 4.9: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinion about Role of AIOU in Different Areas of Economic Empowerment of Women in Pakistan

	Role of AIOU in different areas of economic empowerment	To Some Extent	To Great Extent	Not at All	Total
i	Education through AIOU enhances women's access/control over family resources	1427 (56.9)	847 (33.8)	234 (9.3)	2508 (100.0)
ii	Education through AIOU enhances women's access to employment opportunities	1203 (48.0)	1139 (45.4)	166 (6.6)	2508 (100.0)
iii	Education through AIOU enhances women's economic contribution to family support	1168 (46.6)	1151 (45.9)	189 (7.5)	2508 (100.0)
iv	Education through AIOU enhances women's ownership of family assets/land	1091 (43.5)	727 (29.0)	690 (27.5)	2508 (100.0)
v	AIOU education enhances women's ability to make small or large purchases independently	1126 (44.9)	863 (34.4)	519 (20.7)	2508 (100.0)

Table 4.9 discusses the respondent's perceptions about role of AIOU in different areas of economic empowerment of women in Pakistan. The study respondents were asked five statements to assess their opinion regarding role of AIOU in different aspects of economic empowerment for women in Pakistani society. AIOU through its open distance learning education has inherent benefits that it could cater a widely dispersed audience across the region.

It is the achievement of AIOU that it has access to unreachable and underprivileged segments with the especial focus on women all over the country. Therefore, this study has an especial focus on how through education AIOU is playing its part to enable women to realize their rights and responsibilities and how they could change their fate and can produce a positive change as an effective member of the society. Human achievements towards development all over the world are evident due to education and advancement of the nations in acquisition of knowledge without discrimination.

Women empowerment is now a part of United Nations development goals as far as Pakistan is concerned that females are at the bottom ends with reference to economy e.g. income generation, availability and access to income based activities. Educated and empowered women have become a basic need to encounter the developmental challenges like overpopulation, poverty, inflation, unemployment, poor family health, crimes, etc. However, gradually Pakistan is showing progress in women education and their increased contribution in different professional fields such as, teaching, medicine, forces, business etc. but still their progress is low as compared to their male counterparts. Women empowerment means development of mental and physical capabilities of women which they can meaningfully utilize to uplift their socio-economic status.

For the current research study women empowerment is assessed from five aspects including economic, social, political, individual, and of family through opinions and personal level of empowerment attained by the respondents via AIOU education. In such a scenario the table under discussion demonstrates the opinions of study respondents about those areas of economic empowerment in which AIOU has contributions through its education for empowering Pakistani women economically.

Among these areas the first was “education through AIOU enhances women's access/control over family resources,” in response to this statement majority 57% of the respondents were having the opinion “to some extent,” 34% were of the opinion “to great extent” however only 9% responded “not at all.” The analysis of the data shows that a vast majority 91% of the respondents were having the view that generally education from AIOU has increased women access towards family possessions e.g. income, gold ornaments, domesticated animals, and valuable goods. As shared by a respondent, the success story of AIOU's female student, given below, supports the statement.

“A lady who has done masters from AIOU, after marriage to her cousin started living in a rural area of Punjab. Just because of her education and better understanding level, she has given the charge to look after family chores. She has still successfully running her family responsibilities including the management of family dairy farm.”

The second statement of the table was about, “education through AIOU enhances women's access to employment opportunities.” The table indicates that 48% of the respondents were having the opinion “to some extent”, 45% were of the opinion “to a great extent” however, only 7% of the respondents responded “not at all.” The analysis of the data shows that a very high majority i.e. 93% of the respondents were of the view that education is the bedrock for women to empower themselves through

engagement in economic activities. Education develops all those abilities and attitudes in a person which are of positive value to any society. The provision of education for females in a society like Pakistan is very essential, especially, with reference to their progressive contribution in country's economic development. For that reason, education from AIOU gives meaning to their existence by providing access to more favorable employment environment which subsequently risen up their economic status. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above. Two such success stories are briefly narrated below.

- "A lady, who has small children and old parents and is the only bread winner of the family, was doing a marginal job in an office and hardly fulfilling the basic needs of her family. Due to her responsibilities and low income she couldn't afford to continue higher studies so she decided to join AIOU as only option where she could be facilitated. She was of the thought that with appropriate educational skills, she will be in a position to avail a better job. She completed her studies and after struggle of two years for better opportunity, now she got a reasonable job in an organization."
- "A lady, who is now teaching at university level, has left her education after middle (Eighth grade) due to domestic reasons, and then joined AIOU for further studies. She has been AIOU's student from matriculation to masters and on the basis of this education she got this reputable job."

The third statement of the table under discussion was "education through AIOU enhances women's economic contribution to family support." The table shows that 47% of the respondents were to some extent agree with the statement followed by 46% of the respondents whose agreement was to a great extent level. However, only 8% were having the opinion "not at all" to the aforementioned statement. The analysis

shows that a vast majority (93%) of the respondents were having the strong perception about AIOU's role in bringing improvement at household level due to educated female family members in Pakistan. It is observed fact that when females are provided with education they became in a better position to serve their families in more appropriate way. When women are economically empowered, their children get more emphasis on acquisition of education with lesser chance of discrimination among male and female children. Due to education they become able to give tuition to their siblings and children, do jobs in different fields, as well as run business etc. and through all these efforts ultimately economically contribute to their families.

No doubt AIOU through its education cracking the shallow cultural traits that women's place is in the kitchen only and they can't be as productive towards family as males could be. Opinion of majority of the respondents affirms that at the family and society's level educated women can play their roles in a more functional and productive way as far as economic contribution is concerned. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A housewife, whose family was suffering badly from financial loss in business, has to do some work but failed to get any job response because of her minimal education. She decided to improve her qualification through AIOU and now doing job and having a reasonable income through which she is supporting her family to come out of that unfortunate situation."
- "A girl after the death of her parents in a car accident took the responsibility of her family. There was no one to consistently support her family financially so she decided to look after the family business-firm. Soon she realized that without proper business education she can't be in a position to take her family's business upwards. She joined AIOU along with her work and

completed her higher level business management degree and now more progressively running the firm and the family.”

Fourth statement of the table was “education through AIOU enhances women's ownership of family assets/land.” Data indicates that 44% of the respondents were having the opinion “to some extent,” 29% were of the opinion “to great extent.” However, 28% of the respondents were having the response “not at all” to the statement. The analysis of data shows that majority about 73% of the respondents were having the view that AIOU's education increases women awareness and understanding of their rights related to family's resources. Although some (28%) of the respondents were not agree that education has any role in accumulating women possession of family assets in Pakistani society. In Pakistan, usually women do not have direct access or authority towards their family's property so that's why she cannot get benefited by its usage e.g. use as collateral to get loan from banks as compared to the male members of the family. Observations and researches have shown that due to existence of a strong patriarchal structure and conservative culture, of there is still a long way for women to achieve their due share in family's possessions. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

“A housewife who has graduated from AIOU and living in a small city of KPK with her husband after death of her father was disowned from her share in her father's property by her brothers and nephews. She decided to go to court for her right to property. She won her rights through court after continuous struggle of nine years and got her share in her father's property. She is used to say that it's only my education which gave me that insight of my rightful obligation.”

The fifth statement of the table under discussion was "AIOU education enhances women's ability to make small or large purchases independently." Data in the table shows that 45% of the respondents were to some extent agree with the statement followed by 34% of the respondents whose agreement was to a great extent level. However, among respondents 21% were having the opinion "not at all" to the statement.

Education increases women's pivotal role in gaining centrality to the process of any nation's development which in return enhances women empowerment in all spheres of life. As the analysis of statement shows that majority (79%) of the respondents were having the opinion that education enables women to take financial decisions of purchasing different household accessories more confidently, especially, if they are earning as well. Although 21% of them were not having the point of view that AIOU's educational role enhances women's ability of independent purchasing. In Pakistani society, it has been observed that women do not have free access to family income so if need to buy something for themselves or household items they look forward to male members of the family. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

"A female who is single and living with her parents in Lahore, completed her Master's degree from AIOU and on the basis of that degree she got a government job. She has constructed her own small house in Lahore now after ten-to-twelve years of her job under her supervision. Her parents are of the view that if we give a chance to our daughters to be educated then there is no task that a female cannot perform even all those which usually are attached to males in our culture."

Table 4.10: Distribution of the Respondents by their Personal Experience of Economic Empowerment through AIOU

	Personal experience of economic empowerment	Frequency	Percent
i	None	511	20.4
ii	Education through AIOU enhances women's access/control over family resources	397	15.8
iii	Education through AIOU enhances women's access to employment opportunities	452	18.0
iv	Education through AIOU enhances women's economic contribution to family support	287	11.4
v	Education through AIOU enhances women's ownership of family assets/land	591	23.6
vi	AIOU education enhances women's ability to make small or large purchases independently	244	9.7
vii	Any other	26	1.0
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.10 is the continuation of table 4.9 and shows the respondent's personal attainment level of economic empowerment due to education from AIOU. The study respondents were asked five statements regarding different aspects of economic empowerment to assess their attained empowerment level. The study subjects responded to almost all the statements ranging from lowest to highest number of respondents agreement to the given options in the questionnaire. Table indicates that among important statements one was "Education through AIOU enhances women's ownership of family assets/land," 24% of the respondents were having personal experience that being educated they can have more access towards their family assets.

The comparison of opinions and personal experiences regarding the said statement shows opposite results. As given in Table 4.9, the lowest number of the respondents was having opinion that AIOU enhances the chance of women ownership of family assets. In contrary to this, the personal experiences of study subjects highlight that the role of education has a very strong impact on this area. "Education through AIOU enhances women's access to employment opportunities," was the personal experience

of the 18% of the study respondents. The statement has same highest value in table 4.9 as far as the respondent's opinion is concerned. While 16% of the respondents stated, "education through AIOU enhances women's access/control over family resources," as their personal experience of empowerment which is also supported by a vast majority in table 4.9.

There were 11% of the respondents who supported the statement "education through AIOU enhances women's economic contribution to family support" on the basis of their personal experience. The comparison of opinions and personal experiences regarding the said statement also shows opposite results. As given in table 4.9, the highest number of the respondents was having opinion that AIOU enhances economic contribution to family by a person. In contrary to this, the personal experiences of study subjects show a low number of respondents having positive impact of AIOU education in family economic support. Findings present that 10% respondents experienced that "AIOU education enhances women's ability to make small or large purchases independently." Among respondents of the study 20% did not share any impact of AIOU education on their economic empowerment.

Respondents who were identified other than specified statements e.g. own establishment of business as a personal experience of empowerment were just about 1% of the total sample. Education plays a significant role in enhancing women's wellbeing and act as a starting point towards their empowerment. The analysis of the data shows that high majority (80%) of the respondents for all five statements were in one way or the other with the help of their education marked them as economically empowered women in the society.

Table 4.11: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinion about influence of AIOU educational system on political empowerment of women

		Frequency	Percent
i	Yes	1919	76.5
ii	No	589	23.5
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.11 indicates the respondents' overall opinion about influence of AIOU's educational system on political empowerment of women. The roots of political empowerment of women have been traced out by education in Pakistan. Today they have a reasonable representation at all levels in politics though have been discriminated in acquisition of positions as compared to their total numerical strength. Women have been observed in local level political representation to national level in Pakistan for the last decade. Now-a-days in Pakistan, speaker of national assembly, a number of ministers, ambassadors, and advisors are females. Education has an instrumental role in bringing awareness among women about their political rights; from right to vote to active participation in politics.

It was tried to determine AIOU's education as a tool for influencing women to attain political empowerment. Data in the table shows that 77% of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU has influence in bringing political empowerment among women all over the country compared to 24% who think otherwise. Analysis of the data shows that among respondents there is an understanding that education has a positive value for women in all spheres of life including empowering them politically. Due to education now women are more equipped to occupy their rightful positions at all levels and they are more aware of their rights. In addition to that, this awareness and women empowerment will provide a vital base of sustainable development in countries like Pakistan. Further analysis of the data demonstrated that

24% of the respondents were of the view that education does not contribute towards political empowerment of women.

In political structure of Pakistan most of women politicians are having background from affluent business or political families or supported by male politicians of the country. It is a newly initiated process of democracy in which women are still not liberated especially with reference to use of the administrative authority, as politics is still considered male domain in Pakistan. The relevance of women education with improvement of their political awareness is a viable fact over the globe. Political empowerment means having an ability to organize and mobilize for change, so it can be accessible through education. The increased consciousness and realization of this fact will automatically ensure empowerment for women in all walks of life.

Table 4.12: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinion about Influence of AIOU in Different Areas of Political Empowerment of Women

	Influence of AIOU in different areas of political empowerment	To Some Extent	To Great Extent	Not at All	Total
i	AIOU education enhances women's knowledge of political systems	1396 (55.7)	594 (23.7)	518 (20.7)	2508 (100.0)
ii	AIOU education enhances women's domestic support for their political participation	1058 (42.2)	656 (26.2)	794 (31.7)	2508 (100.0)
iii	AIOU education helps women to exercise their right to vote	1151 (45.9)	949 (37.8)	408 (16.3)	2508 (100.0)
iv	Education through AIOU enhances women's participation in community level decision making process	1247 (49.7)	764 (30.5)	497 (19.8)	2508 (100.0)
v	Education through AIOU enhances women's chance of getting affiliated with omepolitical party/group	914 (36.4)	627 (25.0)	967 (38.6)	2508 (100.0)

Table 4.12 discusses the respondent's views about role of AIOU in different areas of political empowerment of women in Pakistan. The study respondents were asked about five statements to assess their opinion regarding role of AIOU in different aspects of political empowerment for women in Pakistani society. The situation of

women with reference to political participation in Pakistan has remained limited in scope. Pakistan's history reveals that women came into politics with the limited power of decision making via reserved seats through indirect elections till the last decade which shows the status of women in the society. However, the scenario has been changed during last ten years for women political participation at the national and local levels. In such a scenario the table under discussion demonstrates the opinions of study respondents about those areas of political empowerment for women in which AIOU has influences through its education in Pakistan.

Among these areas the first was "AIOU education enhances women's knowledge of political systems," in response to which little more than half (56%) of the respondents were having the opinion "to some extent." Followed by 24% "to great extent," however, 21% of the respondents were having the response "not at all" to the statement. Benefits associated with education for females include, improvement in family roles, self-reliance, participation in economic as well as political activities, etc. yielding highest returns in all developmental spheres of the state. A high majority (80%) were having the view that generally education from AIOU has increased women access towards awareness of different political systems. Since 1970s women can be seen actively participating in politics and got boost by military government in 2002 which empowered women with 33% seats in local political scene.

Further, analysis shows that about 21% of the respondents were not having the opinion that education has any role in improving women's political understanding. Generally, in Pakistan joining politics or even talk over political affairs is not appreciated for women folks. Reasons are many folds including socio-cultural patterns, male domination, lack of education and awareness, poor economic conditions which hardly free women from domestic responsibilities etc.

The second statement of the table was "AIOU education enhances women's domestic support for their political participation." It indicates that 42% of the respondents were having the opinion "to some extent," 26% were of the opinion "to a great extent" however, 32% of the respondents responded "not at all." Globally, political participation of women is recognized as an important indicator of women empowerment which includes from casting of vote to contesting elections. Education is that medium through which women can empower themselves to deal with critical situations e.g. political participation in a society like Pakistan. There is a dire need to enhance women capabilities so they could take decisions for themselves at the societal level, which is possible with emancipation of education among women.

The analysis shows that 68% of the respondents were having the opinion that education from AIOU has increased family support for women's political participation. However, 32% were of the view that there is no relation between education and domestic support for women's political participation. Politics in Pakistan is a male centered field which involves power and money. Women are not considered suitable for this field because of restricted mobility, low level of literacy, being not economically active, having no control over resources, and being weaker than males physically. Through educational expansion at the grass root level women can participate with better understanding along with the family's support.

The third statement of the table under discussion was "AIOU education helps women to exercise their right to vote." The table shows that overall 46% of the respondents were to some extent agree with the statement followed by 38% of the respondents whose agreement was to a great extent level. However, 16% were having the opinion "not at all" to the aforementioned statement. The analysis of data shows that a high majority (84%) of the respondents were having perception about AIOU's role in

uplifting political empowerment among women through enhancing their confidence so they can exercise their right to vote. A study conducted by Mumtaz (2007), mentioned in the literature review, also support the findings of the study that women's low level of education in Pakistan is one among many reasons for not actively participation in politics.

It has been observed that when females are equipped with educational skills in return they become more sensible towards fulfillment of their responsibilities from the family to the societal levels. Education enhances women abilities of questioning, critical thinking, and discussions on public issues that sensitize them with the country's challenges and prospects regarding governance. Political participation not only gear-up women's understanding and knowledge but makes them able to raise their voices for society's ills especially related to women that have been ignored since a long time and such vocal attitude in return helps them to become empowered.

Further analysis of the data reveals that 16% of the respondents were not agree with the AIOU's role in developing vote casting approach among women. According to Saiyid (2001), mentioned in literature review, female vote registration is low in Pakistan, and one of the important factors is the tradition of isolation of females from politics in the society.

In this globalizing era, women need to be appeared on the socio-political scenes with the positive representation, so that they can play their complimentary role in strengthening economic conditions, solutions to socio-political problems, overcome illiteracy, eradication of poverty, enhancement of women status, and provision of equal access to opportunities. Without education it is not possible for the middle and lower class women in Pakistani society.

Fourth statement of the table was "education through AIOU enhances women's participation in community level decision making process." The table indicates that 50% of the respondents were having the opinion "to some extent," 30% were of the opinion "to great extent." However, 20% of the respondents were having the response "not at all" to the statement. Education brings changes in individual's perceptions which lead towards changes on the community and societal levels to address the social issues and their solutions. By engaging individuals of a society as partners in problem's solutions is a process of empowering them with all respects for the community's development. In such a scenario, women participation plays a vital role to bring positive social changes for the betterment of a society and at this stage the role of education for women cannot be denied.

The analysis shows that majority (80%) of the respondents were of the view that AIOU's education increases women participation in community level decision making. Women's education enhances their developmental vision, understanding of community's perspectives on different issues and problems, along with creative and realistic solutions. Although 20% of the respondents were not agree that education has any role for women in decision making at the level of community. Women's absence in public spheres is greatly responsible by their socio-political structures in which they are restricted to interact with outside world. This restriction makes women folk as an alien for even the issues and decisions concerning themselves in their communities. A feeble minority of women who are involved in the decision making process in community are having many obstacles to move on in a male dominating society.

The fifth statement was "education through AIOU enhances women's chance of getting affiliated with some political party/group." Data shows that 36% of the

respondents were to some extent agree with the statement followed by 25% of the respondents whose agreement was to a great extent level. However, 39% were having the opinion “not at all” to the aforementioned statement. Traditionally, politics is considered as male domain which requires aggressive, assertive, and authoritative qualities that is not associated with women in Pakistan. Leaving aside few of the influential female politicians, women remains as politically weak entity in the political scenes of Pakistan. The analysis of data shows that 61% of respondents were having perception about the role of education for female affiliation with political parties. At grass root level women political participation such as voting, convincing, representation at the local bodies’ elections has no doubt increased but at the national they have still encountered with the structural constraints.

Although an obvious number (39%) of the respondents were not having the perception that AIOU has any role in engagements of women in political parties. In Pakistan, political parties remain reluctant for allowing women to contest election because of socio-cultural hurdles of their mobility, financial limitations, and cultural norms. So considered as weak candidate they are having very limited representation in decision making at the national level politics. Politics requires high level mobility, excessive public participations which in the existing normative structure for women along with household responsibilities hampering their chance of participation into the political arena. Issues related to under representation of women in politics includes, lack of female interest in politics, financial resources, political skills, women segregation and speculation from public arena.

Table 4.13: Distribution of the Respondents by their Personal Experience of Political Empowerment through AIOU

	Personal Experience of Political Empowerment through AIOU	Frequency	Percent
i	None	681	27.2
ii	AIOU education enhances women's knowledge of political Systems	393	15.7
iii	AIOU education enhances women's domestic support for their political participation	269	10.7
iv	AIOU education helps women to exercise their right to vote	269	10.7
v	Education through AIOU enhances women's participation in community level decision making process	791	31.5
vi	Education through AIOU enhances women's chance of getting affiliated with some political party/group	105	4.2
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.13 is the continuation of table 4.12 which shows the respondent's personal attainment level of political empowerment due to education from AIOU. The study respondents were asked five statements regarding different aspects of political empowerment to assess their attained empowerment level. Responses of the study subjects covered almost all the options related to political empowerment given in the questionnaire. Table indicates that among important statements one was "Education through AIOU enhances women's participation in community level decision making process." Data shows 32% of the respondents were having personal experience of getting more chances to participate at community level activities because of their education. The comparison of opinions and personal experiences of the respondents regarding the statement has proved a strong role of education in community level participation of women. It was second highest agreement for any of the political empowerment aspects as 80% of the respondents supported it. In personal experience case, it even has the highest agreement as 32% of the respondents experienced this impact.

It has been observed that at the community level, women efforts have been recognized by their communities in Pakistan. Women are now a part of different administrative level decisions of their communities because of being educated; they have a better understanding of their community's problems and can play their role in a more productive way for betterment of the society. "AIOU education enhances women's knowledge of political systems," was the personal experience of the 16% of the study respondents. The statement has same second highest value in table 4.12 as far as the respondent's opinion is concerned. While 11% of the respondents stated, "AIOU education enhances women's domestic support for their political participation" which was supported by 68% of the current study respondent's opinion demonstrated in table 4.12.

Another 11% of them stated, "AIOU education helps women to exercise their right to vote," as their personal experience of political empowerment. The respondent's opinions and their personal experiences were opposite as 84% of the respondents were having opinion in favor of the statement whereas in case of personal experience it has almost lowest response (11%). The analysis of the current study shows that still a fair majority of the respondents were not having any opinion about the role of education in enhancing family support for women in their political participation. This results in lack of interest for any political activity including casting of vote practically in Pakistan.

In addition to that, about 04% of the respondents were having strength of experience for the statement, "Education through AIOU enhances women's chance of getting affiliated with some political party/group." The respondent's opinions and their personal experiences regarding the statement has shown the same results that education has no role in enhancing women's chances to be affiliated with some political party. This statement was having lowest favorable response both in the case

of respondents' opinions as well as for their personal life experience. Among respondents of the study, 27% did not mention any impact of education from AIOU on political empowerment. Education has a strong role in bringing awareness among women about their surroundings and creates significant opportunities for them to participate in different arenas of life. Analysis of the data shows that 73% of the respondents for all five statements were in one way or the other with the help of their education marked themselves as politically empowered women in the society.

Table-4.14: Distribution of the Respondents Opinion about “Effects of AIOU Educational System on Social Empowerment of Women”

		Frequency	Percent
i	Yes	2341	93.3
ii	No	167	6.7
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.14 presents the respondents' overall perception about the influence of AIOU educational system on social empowerment of women in Pakistan. For too long, women had been perceived as responsible for domestic chores only. Their contributions had not been recognized by the communities and they were not considered partners in developmental process in many countries. Education has a direct impact on the differentials of socialization patterns for boys and girls in a society. Women education is very important intrinsically with reference to their capacity building for achievement of socio-economic development of a country. In developing countries where resources are scarce and people have limited access to higher education, ODL is fulfilling the promise of widening access to education. Empowerment for women is a process of strengthening existing capabilities so they can perform in a better way for their families and societies.

For the current table it was tried to determine AIOU's education as a significant tool for influencing women with social empowerment. The data in the table shows that an

immense majority (93%) of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU has influenced social empowerment among women and only 7% of them think otherwise. The analysis of the data shows that 93% of the respondents were having a strong perception about the role of education in social empowerment of women. In a country like Pakistan where women are culturally considered as second class citizens, who are responsible for child bearing and rearing, only education can change their fate. It is a fact, in Pakistan now women have been seen on the social spectrum of the country as they have earned respect in many male specified fields, be it politics, armed forces, IT professions or other.

Education influences women's feelings about their inner strengths believe in their abilities and control over their lives. AIOU has carried out education to the doorsteps of women in the socio-cultural set up of Pakistani society. In Pakistan, females have many challenges e.g. domestic work, work outside home, and continuation of studies etc. Education has been identified as germane for eradication of imbalances for women in any society and awarding them with their due social representation in both public and private spheres of life.

Further analysis of the data demonstrates only 7% of the respondents were against the view that education has any contribution towards social empowerment of women in Pakistan. In Pakistani society stereotypes attached with women are so strong and highly enculturated that still education cannot bring a real change to socially empower women in general. Women's suitability to domestic roles restrained their access to acquisition of career education which can bring change over the societal level. Every society imparts status among its individuals which they acquire through social norms, which is a significant determinant of how they perform their diverse roles in a particular society.

Table-4.15: Distribution of the Respondents Opinion about Effects of AIOU in Different Areas of Social Empowerment of Women

		To Some Extent	To Great Extent	Not at All	Total
i	Through AIOU education women become prestigious and receive attention/respect from others	1223 (48.8)	1010 (40.3)	275 (11.0)	2508 (100.0)
ii	Education through AIOU enhances women's freedom of mobility/movement	1062 (42.3)	846 (33.7)	600 (23.9)	2508 (100.0)
iii	Education through AIOU enhances women's positive image in society	1255 (50.0)	1046 (41.7)	207 (8.3)	2508 (100.0)
iv	AIOU education enhances women's participation in social activities at community level	1180 (47.0)	805 (32.1)	523 (20.9)	2508 (100.0)
v	Education through AIOU enhances women's ability to avail basic facilities of life	1200 (47.8)	991 (39.5)	317 (12.6)	2508 (100.0)

Table 4.15 discusses the respondent's perceptions about role of AIOU in different areas of social empowerment of women in Pakistan. The study respondents were asked five statements to assess their opinion regarding role of AIOU in different aspects of social empowerment for women in Pakistani society. There are several compelling benefits attached with the female education including, control over fertility rate, enhanced domestic roles, economically becomes more productive, increased political participation, socially more active etc. ODL through AIOU with its prominent features e.g. explosion of knowledge, learning while earning, non-physical attendance, improvement of qualification and cost effectiveness has opened up doors of education for individual empowerment, especially, for females in a society like Pakistan. Culturally, it is assumed that women's place is at home and males are the breadwinners but increase in education is gradually enhancing women status and placing them on equal footing with the males in a society.

For the current research study social empowerment is one among five indicators through which women empowerment has been assessed. The table demonstrates the opinions of study respondents about those areas of social empowerment in which AIOU has contributions through its education for empowering Pakistani women

socially. Among these areas first was, "Through AIOU education women become prestigious and receive attention/respect from others." In response to this statement 49% of the respondents were having the opinion "to some extent," and 40% were of the opinion "to great extent" however only 11% of the respondents were having the response "not at all". The analysis of the data shows that a vast majority about 89% of the respondents were having the view that generally education from AIOU has increased women status and respect in the society. Respect and status are attached with social norms in a society which guide individuals about their different roles.

In Pakistan with the passage of time women's social roles are changing and one of the major reasons is their attainment of education. Educated women are considered more mature and people ask them for opinions regarding different concerning issues. Education places women on such a position in a society that people look towards them with greater respect and called them with honor. Education provides women with alternatives to prevailing androcentric views which is the symbol of social change with reference to women's place in the society. Education empowered women socially and raised their status whether they economically contribute towards their families or not. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

"A lady who has a rural background and belongs to a conservative family with the view that there is no need of girl's education, she continued her studies in such a situation with the help of her mother from AIOU and completed her graduation. In her family where males were not as such educated she became the first graduate female and became an example with illustrious reputation for others in the area. Now she is tutoring children at home and proved herself an independent member of the family and of her community as people of the area

has started sending their daughters to the educational institutions with lesser traditional concerns related to female's education."

The second statement of the table was "education through AIOU enhances women's freedom of mobility/movement." Data indicates that 42% of the respondents responded "to some extent", opinion of 34% was "to a great extent," however, 24% responded "not at all." The analysis shows that majority (76%) of the respondents were of the view that education enhances social empowerment of women with reference to their freedom of movement in a society. Although, 24% of the respondents not agreed to the role of AIOU education in mobility of women in different domains of social life. Females in our society are expected to be more loving, passionate, and caring towards family and preferred to stay at home especially the young girls. It is assumed that outside visits of female without any male are not appropriate. Some times it is not allowed even for important reasons such as visit to doctor, to buy food or some thing required for themselves or their children. These all reasons increase women restrictions towards their freedom of mobility and the level of illiteracy in the country. This situation further increases the worth of AIOU's educational system for women in a society. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A lady was left by her husband, because she has four daughters and having no son. She returned to her parental home and started living with them; soon she realized that although her family loved her and her children but she should not burdened them as far as her children were concerned. She decided to enhance her qualification through AIOU's education so she could be able to get a reasonable job. She has completed her master's degree and joined an organization. Now she is doing job with moral support of her family and of

her children and even moved outstations alone with dignity. Her family is very much happy for her that rather getting disappointed by the stigma of a divorcee attached with her, she gathered herself and make a mature decision for her life and for her children's better future."

- "A lady, who is now a high school teacher has studied since graduation from AIOU and completed her master's degree education. Just because of her regular government job and higher education she got married to a settled educated family in Islamabad. She has now two children and because of being an educationist her family has given the responsibility to take care of her children's educational matters. She picked and dropped her children to school, purchase their books and uniforms, pays their fees, tutor them, took them for outing, as well as fulfills different domestic responsibilities including grocery from markets, deposit bills etc. by herself alone."

Third statement was "education through AIOU enhances women's positive image in society." Table 4.15 shows that 50% of the respondents were to some extent agree with the statement furthermore, 42% agree with the statement to a great extent. Only 8% were having the opinion "not at all" to the aforementioned statement. The analysis shows that a vast majority (92%) of the respondents were having the strong perception about AIOU's role in creating women's positive image because of being educated. Women in Pakistan have been observed as caretaker, nurturing the children, cementing relationships in family, and provide emotional support to ensure the smooth running of the family. It is further assumed that through these roles a woman maintain equilibrium in the prevailing social system of a society. With the passage of time, education turned social spectrum of the society and moved the familial attitudes egalitarian towards gender roles e.g. now women are considered as financial provider, career oriented etc. Education for women is the aggregate of all those processes by

which they develop their potential of positive value to the society in which they live. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A girl, whose family suffered badly from earthquake (2005, in Pakistan) financially as well as physically, as her father got paralyzed. At that time, she was doing her masters from AIOU and decided not to quit her education. She completed her education and with the help of her community she started a school for girls as there was left no signs of schools in her area. She is successfully running the school and considered a responsible, more aware, and an active member of the family as well as of her community."
- "A lady who has done her graduation from AIOU and after marriage as most of the times her husband lives abroad, she is successfully running her family. And people living in her surroundings appreciate her efforts for the family and considered her an honorable lady. Though she is not doing any job but just because of her education she has a say and authority in her family matters and being an educated housewife can better socialize and understand needs of her children."

Fourth statement of the table was, "AIOU education enhances women's participation in social activities at community level." The table indicates that 47% of the respondents agreed "to some extent," 32% agreed "to great extent," however, 21% of the respondents did not agree and responded "not at all." Analysis shows that majority (79%) was of the view that AIOU's education increases women awareness and understanding of their surroundings and makes them more participative at community level. Although 21% of the respondents were not agree that education has any role in women's outside family participation at the community level. In Pakistani society, majority people live in rural areas and due to agrarian economy women participate in

outside home activities. They work in the fields and interact with others and become more participative at the community level activities. They help others in harvesting crops, building houses, marriage/ death ceremonies, participating in different campaigns initiated at the community level in any difficult situation. Education helps individuals to enhance their physical and mental abilities so they can perform their functions more effectively in a society. No doubt education has many times increased the chances of women participation at the community level activities even in urban areas of Pakistan. AIOU provides a platform to its students all over Pakistan to come in contact during their classes and workshops and exchange their views about their community issues and prosperities.

Generally, AIOU's students are working people and their interaction with each other not only boosts their confidence but by sharing their experiences they learn a lot about different community level issues and remedies for such problems. Women participation at the community level is very much important. As being part of any community's activity they can get support, information, contacts, and even help in their business which in returns strengthens the process of their empowerment. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A lady who has done graduation from AIOU and after marriage living as a housewife with her family, started with the help of her husband participation in the polio campaign in her area. She is doing this voluntarily for the last five years as she used to say that this is my responsibility that being an educated individual I serve my community in any capacity."
- "A lady who has completed her masters from AIOU, now doing job in an organization of her area. She gets the opportunity to serve her community because of her education. Through her job she came in contact with other

women of her area, know about their problems, and shared the women's concerns with her organization. Due to her sincere efforts for the community now she became successful in opening a vocational training institute for females in her area."

The fifth statement was "education through AIOU enhances women's ability to avail basic facilities of life." The data shows that 48% of the respondents were to some extent agree with the statement followed by 40% of the respondents' whose agreement was to a great extent. However, among respondents only 12% were having the opinion "not at all" to the statement. The analysis shows that a high majority (88%) of the respondents were of the view that AIOU's education has an influence on women's ability to avail basic facilities of life. Education is a multidimensional process of women empowerment in all spheres of life. If women are equipped with educational skills, they become more effective in agricultural productions as mostly women are participating in agricultural activities in our country. Being educated women, they are more aware about basic health care so they could in a better way take care of themselves and of their families. Through education women could use different technological devices such as cell phones, computers, internet, for the fulfillment of different needs.

If women are educated they can help their families financially by doing jobs and their children by providing them educational guidance. The improvement of any society could not be attained without educating the women folks. The positive utilization of women's potentialities ensures the nation's progress as AIOU is increasing educational opportunities for women so they can foster their roles at the societal level development. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

“A lady who after marriage left her village and come to the city with her husband, suddenly come across with a totally different urban lifestyle. Soon she realized that she should improve her qualification to adjust properly in her new environment. She decided to continue her education from AIOU and has completed her masters. Now she has better understanding of her surroundings and confidently visits hospitals, markets, and other places to fulfill her personal and domestic needs as well as in search of a job so that she would share the economic burden with her husband.”

Table-4.16: Distribution of the Respondents by their Personal Experience of Social Empowerment through AIOU

	Personal experience of social empowerment through AIOU	Frequency	Percent
i	None	450	17.9
ii	Through AIOU education women become prestigious and receive attention/respect from others	426	17.0
iii	Education through AIOU enhances women's freedom of mobility/movement	278	11.1
iv	Education through AIOU enhances women's positive image in Society	336	13.4
v	AIOU education enhances women's participation in social activities at community level	819	32.7
vi	Education through AIOU enhances women's ability to avail basic facilities of life	199	7.9
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.16 is the continuation of table 4.15 and shows the respondent's personal attainment level of social empowerment due to education from AIOU. The study respondents were mainly asked five statements regarding different aspects of social empowerment with the objective to assess their attained empowerment level. The study subjects responded to almost all the statements ranging from lowest to highest. The table indicates that among important statements one was “AIOU education enhances women's participation in social activities at community level.” Data shows that 33% of the respondents were having personal experience that being educated

from this institution; they became more participative at community level activities. The opinions and personal experiences of the respondents regarding participation in social activities at community level shows opposition. In table 4.15, lowest number of the respondents was having opinion that AIOU enhances women participation in social activities. In contrary to this, the personal experiences of the respondents show that education has a strong impact on this area. Analysis of data shows that majority of the respondents were from urban areas where education enhanced the chances of their social participation such as participating in organizing medical camps, blood donations, campaigns for literacy, healthcare and hygiene etc. Educated women become members of different social networks, clubs, organizations, unions of professionals to serve their community more positively. That's why there has been observed difference in their opinion about the statement as it was assessed in general Pakistani scenario as compared to their personal experience.

"Through AIOU education women become prestigious and receive attention/respect from others," was the personal experience of 17% of the study respondents. The statement has same highest value in table 4.15 as far as the respondents' opinion is concerned. While 13% of the respondents stated "Education through AIOU enhances women's positive image in a society", as their personal experience of social empowerment. The opinions and personal experiences of the respondents regarding the said statement have an opposite difference. Majority of the respondents' opinion was highly in favor of the statement in table 4.15 while personal experiences have the contrary results.

The analysis of the current study shows that as many of the respondents were from urban areas where environment is comparatively competitive for females as compared to rural areas. And only 26% of the study subjects belonged to rural areas of Pakistan so that's why in their personal experience, there was comparatively lesser chances of

education in creating their positive image in a society. As being educated is not enough for women in urban settings to create their positive image. In rural areas there are lesser chances for women to get educated because of many socio-cultural and economic restrictions. So, generally over there education enhanced more positive image of women in a society as compared to urban areas of Pakistan. That's why there has been observed difference in their opinion and of personal experience regarding the said statement.

In addition to that, about 11% of the respondents were having strength of experience for the statement, "Education through AIOU enhances women's freedom of mobility/movement". The statement has almost same value in table 4.15 as far as the respondent's opinion is concerned. About 8% of them experienced that "education through AIOU enhances women's ability to avail basic facilities of life." The opinions and personal experiences of the respondents regarding the said statement has an opposite difference as 88% of the respondents were having opinion in favor of the statement which was among the highest response reported for any of the social empowerment aspects in table 4.15. However, in personal experience it has the lowest response rate as of 8%. In urban lifestyle procurement of basic facilities is not that much directly linked with education as compared to rural areas that's why there has been an observed difference in their opinion and personal experience.

Among respondents, 18% did not share any impact of AIOU education on their social empowerment. Education has a significant effect on women's social positioning, their status in their communities, and on their roles in the respective society. The analysis of the data shows that overall majority (82%) of the respondents in one way or the other marked all the five statements with the help of their education as socially empowered women in the society.

Table-4.17: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinion about “AIOU Educational System Enhances Women Autonomy”

		Frequency	Percent
i	Yes	2237	89.2
ii	No	271	10.8
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.17 shows the respondents opinion about the influence of educational system of AIOU on women's autonomy. Education can be said not only as the beginning of individual knowledge, awareness, and understanding rather it's a strategy for developmental change in any society. Education has a critical input not only in human resource development but for the social stability and for the wellbeing of the individuals. It has value in itself as it is essential for the development of personality of the individuals. The basic functions of education for women autonomy includes widening of the horizon of women's exposures and of their experiences. This in return enhances their self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficiency, and enable them to be independent individuals of the society.

For the current table, it was tried to determine AIOU's education as a significant tool for influencing women with individual level empowerment. The data in the table shows that high majority (89%) of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU has influenced individual autonomy among women compared to only 11% who think otherwise. Traditionally, in Pakistan women have been regarded as second-fiddle to males. It is on the basis of their non productive and low social status which assigns them subordinate position in a society. Over times, it has been observed that education plays a role of a catalyst in bringing women's autonomy in Pakistan. The analysis of the data shows that among respondents, there is a clear understanding that, education has a positive value for women as far as their individual empowerment is

concerned. Education has equipped women with a strong personality so she can encounter the traditional stereotypes attached with women folk.

Education enhances women's abilities on political, economic, social, and familial level which in returns boosts their individual recognition and standing in the society. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- “A lady who has done masters from AIOU and now running her own boutique successfully, always used to say that AIOU's education is contributing in female's rationality so they can take appropriate steps in practical life and by doing so makes sense of their existence.”
- “There are many women who are due to certain reasons did not get married but completed their education and doing jobs. They have not only supporting themselves financially but also contributing in family's finances, rather than just living their lives as burden on their families. Education from AIOU brought light in such unlucky women's lives as endowed them with dignity in the society.”

Table 4.18: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinion about the Role of AIOU Education in Different Areas of Women Autonomy

	Aiou educational system enhances women autonomy	To Some Extent	To Great Extent	Not at All	Total
i	Education through AIOU gives women their own identity as an independent individual	1105 (44.1)	791 (31.5)	612 (24.4)	2508 (100.0)
ii	Education through AIOU enhances women's self Confidence	1201 (47.9)	1151 (45.9)	156 (6.2)	2508 (100.0)
iii	Education through AIOU enhances women's self esteem	1172 (46.7)	1177 (46.9)	159 (6.3)	2508 (100.0)
iv	Education through AIOU enhances women's self-efficiency	1160 (46.3)	1163 (46.4)	185 (7.4)	2508 (100.0)
v	Education through AIOU enhances women's ability to better perform different social roles	1116 (44.5)	1236 (49.3)	156 (6.2)	2508 (100.0)

Table 4.18 discusses the respondent's opinion about role of AIOU in different areas of individual empowerment. The study respondents were asked five statements to assess their opinion regarding role of AIOU in different aspects of women's autonomy. Education not only brings positive changes in a society but also dismantles, especially, for women those socio-cultural norms and practices which devalue, disempower, and dispossess them in a society. It means giving education to women is basically empowering them to contribute in economy, take and participate in decisions at different levels from family to national. They would be able to reduce the level of their vulnerability, dependency, passivity, and can be the central focus rather than remains on peripheral sides in a society. For the current research study women autonomy is one among five indicators through which women empowerment has been assessed. The table under discussion demonstrates the opinions of study respondents about those areas of women autonomy in which AIOU influences through its education.

Among these areas the first was, "education through AIOU gives women their own identity as an independent individual." In response to which, 44% of the respondents were agree "to some extent," and agreement level of 32% remained "to great extent" however 24% of the respondents were having the response "not at all." The analysis shows that majority (76%) of the respondents were having the view that generally education from AIOU has increased women's individual identity in a society. Although 24% of the respondents were not with the perception that AIOU's education has any contribution towards women's own identity as an independent individual in Pakistan. It is necessary to have an understanding of the socio-cultural effects on individual's lives, behaviors, and on their attitudes to better understand the women position in any society. In all societies of the world generally social status decides individual's significance and standing in their respective society. In Pakistani society,

males are usually assigned with higher social positions as compared to women who have more chances of being vulnerable to discrimination. Low status of women in any society increases the chances for them being socially stigmatized, confining their contributions inside family, and makes them vulnerable to all types of prejudices. Education has a strong effect in bringing change in social positioning of women and enabling them as an individual being in a traditional society like Pakistan. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A lady who has been married in a rural background conservative family in such an early age and left her studies incomplete. After five years of her marriage she got separated by her husband and started living alone with her two children. She decided to continue her studies to be able to support herself and her children. She got admission at AIOU and completed her graduation and got a job in an organization. Now she is supporting her family and fulfilling all household responsibilities. Along with job, she has recently completed her master from AIOU and has the views about AIOU that she got the opportunity to explore herself as an independent woman who can survive in this society just because of her educational skills."
- "A housewife whose husband died in an accident and there was no one to support her family, was left with only one option to start working outside home. During her job she was advised by her colleagues to improve her qualification through AIOU. She has done masters from AIOU and now more autonomously dealing with different tasks at home and of her work place."

The second statement of the table was "education through AIOU enhances women's self confidence." Table indicates that 48% of the respondents were having the opinion "to some extent," 46% "to a great extent," however, only 6% of the respondents were

responded as “not at all.” The analysis shows that most (94%) of the respondents were of the view that education enhances women autonomy with reference to their self-confidence. It has been observed that educated women remain more confident as compared to illiterate females with reference to dealing with any situation. Educated women become more respectable members of the society as they can argue and take decisions by their own. Education enables women to bring change in their lives by making effective use and control over resources. Education enhances women’s personal development remarkably which in returns tremendously affects the society’s progress. Education enhances women’s self-confidence and their abilities to contribute from family to national level development. For long, women were made to believe that their rightful position in a society is their home, and core responsibilities included domestic chores and as caretaker of their children.

Traditionally, women were not recognized as partners in nation’s progress in various countries for so many years but education has changed the situation for women today. AIOU is lighting up lives of women as by empowering and inculcating hope and purpose of life in them. As shared by the respondents of the current study, success stories of AIOU’s female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- “A female has done masters from AIOU and joined her father’s business firm. And just after four years, now she has her own independent business outlet and has plans to expand her business in other cities of Pakistan. She has gained the courage of independent decision making just because of her education from AIOU. As she used to say that I am proud to be a student of AIOU, which makes me believe in my own abilities.”
- “A girl lost her last chance to appear in conventional university exams so she became hopeless and attemptd twice for suicide. She was convinced by a friend and got admission in masters at AIOU and again started her education

and got her self-confidence back in her studies. Now she is waiting for her last semester result.”

- “A girl who became handicapped in an accident and at once just confined inside home. As she was not able to continue her studies in regular college due to physically handicapped, she became so disappointed and left participation in any friends or family’s activities. After continuous counseling of her family and teachers she got admission at AIOU. And after completion of her masters she realized her capabilities and got the purpose for her life as she started teaching with full of her determination in a special children school.”

Third statement of the table under discussion was “education through AIOU enhances women's self-esteem.” The table shows that 47% of the respondents were to some extent agree with the statement followed by another 47% of the respondents whose agreement was to a great extent level. However, only 6% were having the opinion “not at all” to the aforementioned statement. The analysis of data shows that a vast majority (94%) of the respondents were having the strong opinion about AIOU’s role in enhancing women’s self-esteem and just 6% of them think otherwise.

Education no doubt increases women’s status in a society but as majority of women in Pakistan are uneducated so they have suppressed positions, which further gets strengthen from traditional social norms and prejudices attached with educated women as they are at liberty, aggressive, and ultimately a threat for male domination. Education inculcated women from their typical subservient position to their dominant positions in a society. Education has the capacity to change the women status and break the vicious circle of their exploitation as of inferior, second class citizens. Education has equipped women with the skills and capabilities to feel proud on them.

As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A girl who was from a poor family of a small town near Hyderabad but with the support of her family she completed her graduation and started teaching in a private school. She is very grateful to AIOU which makes her able to contribute in her household income. She was considered as a son in her family and such a productive role of herself towards her family enhanced feelings of pride in herself."
- "A lady who has been divorced by her husband as she has no children, started living with her brothers. She decided to start work and during her job she joined AIOU to enhance her qualification. Now she is serving in a national level organization and her higher education boost her self-esteem. She has the view that the life of a working woman becomes more disciplined and she has more control over her life as compared to uneducated women who are not able to say or do anything for themselves."

Fourth statement of the table under discussion was "education through AIOU enhances women's self-efficiency." Table 4.18 indicates that 46% of the respondents were agree "to some extent", followed by another 46% of them who were of the opinion "to great extent" however only 7% of the respondents were having the response "not at all." The analysis of the data shows that a vast majority (92%) of the respondents were having the view that AIOU's education enabled women to improve their qualification which in returns ensure their self-efficiency in all spheres of life. Although only 7% of the respondents were not agree that AIOU education has any role in women's self-efficiency.

Education has been regarded as an effective way to contribute in women empowerment. Provision of access towards education for women at any level would

create a sense of belongingness and of individuality among them. Moreover, education increased range of choices and their alternatives available for them which enhance their skills and their utilization for the betterment of themselves as well as of the society as a whole. Education not only has impact on women's self-confidence and boosts their self-esteem but also reshapes their thinking and makes them more realistic towards life.

There are many women who have been denied access to education due to different socio-cultural reasons. In such a situation AIOU's distance education system provides them an opportunity to become self-efficient without going against the injunction of their traditional practices. Education thereby enhances women's performance to fulfill different tasks which in returns makes their lives more comfortable and smooth for them. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A lady whose husband got second marriage and left her with two children, sometimes she lived with her parents and sometimes with her in-laws. Finally she decided to continue her studies from AIOU to take up her family issues in a better way. Now she is living with her in-laws and by making sense of her abilities she is successfully managing her marital and familial problems."
- "A lady who has done graduation from AIOU now running very successfully her own business of manufacturing of daily use items very successfully in a remote area of Punjab. Traditionally women have been tailored with some specific stereotyped occupations such as nursing or teaching. But now diffusion of education through AIOU in to the remote areas of Pakistan enhanced women's efficiency of contributing in previously male centered professions."

- “A lady has done her graduation and then masters from AIOU and now serving in an international organization as a project manager very successfully. She has the view that AIOU not only gave her education but also equipped her with the working skills which enabled her to survive in this competitive world today.”

The fifth statement was “education through AIOU enhances women's ability to better perform different social roles.” Data in the table shows that 45% of the respondents were to some extent agree with the statement, followed by 49% of the respondents whose agreement was to a great extent level. However, among respondents just 6% were having the opinion “not at all” to the statement. The analysis of the data shows that a vast majority (94%) of the respondents were of the view that AIOU's education has an influence on women's ability to better perform different social roles.

Education enhances women's horizons of experiences and exposure and enables them to perform productive social roles from family to societal level. If women are educated they become aware of their family issues and can come up with remedies in a sensible way can manage home tasks. Educated mothers become more inquisitive regarding their children's education and health concerns. Education has multiple benefits for women and for society, as they can better perform their social role as a mother, daughter, sister, wife, member of community, and as an individual of a society. Their social roles with all these diverse positions in a society varies from caring and rearing of the children, domestic chores, participation in economic activities, health care activities, to their participation in communities.

Education is considered as a tool for social change and inculcates new thoughts, values, and ideas to the society which in returns boost women's individual identity and positively affect their social performance. As shared by the respondents of the

study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A lady who was just a housewife, suddenly her husband lost his job. She was having small children and don't know what to do. During these circumstances, she decided to improve her qualification from AIOU. With the passage of time, she has carried out her family's house hold tasks, children's education, and became a supporter of her family in all respects."
- "A lady who has done masters from AIOU, and now tutoring her children as well as other children of her area. Education enabled her to manage her different responsibilities and now she has a positive image and good social relations within and outside family. Being educated, now she can easily move around, visit her family, and attend different family and community events."

Table 4.19: Distribution of the Respondents by their Personal Experience of Individual Autonomy through AIOU

	Personal experience of individual autonomy through AIOU	Frequency	Percent
i	None	283	11.3
ii	Education through AIOU gives women their own identity as an independent individual	378	15.1
iii	Education through AIOU enhances women's self confidence	481	19.2
iv	Education through AIOU enhances women's self esteem	259	10.3
v	Education through AIOU enhances women's self-efficiency	943	37.6
vi	Education through AIOU enhances women's ability to better perform different social roles	164	6.5
vii	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.19 is the continuation of table 4.18 and shows the respondent's personal attainment level of individual's autonomy due to education from AIOU. The study respondents were asked five statements regarding different aspects of women

autonomy to assess their attained empowerment level. The study subjects responded to almost all the statements ranging from lowest to highest number. Table indicates that among important statements one was, "education through AIOU enhances women's self-efficiency," in response to which, 38% of the respondents were having personal experience of that area of empowerment. The opinions and personal experiences of the respondents regarding enhancement of women's self-efficiency has strengthen the role of AIOU's education. "Education through AIOU enhances women's self-confidence," was the personal experience of 19% of the study respondents. The statement has also the highest value in table 4.18 as far as the respondent's opinion is concerned. While 15% of the respondents stated, "Education through AIOU gives women their own identity as an independent individual" as their personal experience.

Another 10% of them stated, "Education through AIOU enhances women's self-esteem", as their personal experience of women autonomy. The opinions and personal experiences of the respondents regarding women as independent individuals has a difference. In table 4.18, the highest response is reported for the influence of education on women's independent identity. In contrary to this, personal experiences of the study subjects show the lowest response for that particular area.

There were only 7% of the respondents who were having strength of personal experience for the statement "education through AIOU enhances women's ability to better perform different social roles." The opinions and personal experiences of the respondents regarding enhancement of women abilities has a difference. In table 4.18, majority of the respondents were agree that AIOU is playing an important role in enhancement of women's abilities. In contrary to this, personal experiences of the respondents have the lowest response for that area. Among study subjects just 11%

did not agree about AIOU's impact on women's individual autonomy. Education is an instrument in eliminating gender disparities in any society which in return ensures the females own identity, wellbeing, their abilities and positive image for themselves. The analysis of the data shows that overall majority (89%) of the respondents in one way or the other marked all the five statements with the help of their education as individually autonomous women in the society.

Table-4.20: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinion about "AIOU Educational System enhances Female Status within Family"

		Frequency	Percent
i	Yes	2389	95.3
ii	No	119	4.7
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.20 shows the respondents opinion about the influence of educational system of AIOU on women status within a family. Education is considered as a greatest investment for the full promotion and improvement of women status by any nation. Education not only improves living standards of women but also makes them able to move and advance in different fields of human endeavors. Educational empowerment of women enables them to empowered themselves in any other domain of empowerment i.e. social, economic, political, or even at the family level.

Education for women means the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities which makes them able to fulfill their different roles and responsibilities. It also enhances their existing capabilities so they can in return improve themselves, their families, and the society as a whole. Education plays a significant role in female involvement at the family level activities to the societal level which in returns enhances their status not only within the family but also at the societal level. For the current table it was tried to

determine AIOU's education as a tool for influencing women status within the family domain. Data shows that a vast majority (95%) of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU's education has positive influence on improving female status within the family as compared to just 5% of them who think otherwise.

The analysis of the data shows that almost all the respondents of the study were agree upon the role of education in enhancement of women status within the family. Educated women enhance their skills and have more confidence in themselves to deal with their family matters positively. They contribute effectively into the family's decisions, routine matters of family members, family conflicts, and more importantly bringing up new generation with progressive minds. Generally, it has been observed that educated women are more likely to involve by family members in any issue related to the family. They have a say for solutions to such matters particularly related to children and other domestic chores. In Pakistani society, education brings phenomenal changes in women's life even within the family. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "There are many women who get educated from AIOU and are living in different far flung areas of Pakistan and their education contributes in the ease of their lives. They have been treated more humanly by their families; male members gave importance to their point of views. Being educated, they have analytical skills to understand any situation or issues to be listened seriously by others. They are expected to know and deal with issues/ situations in a better way as compare to uneducated women. Even they have been asked about the matters related to the marriages of family members. They have say

in different matters and their opinions are given value by their male members of the family.”

Table 4.21: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinion about AIOU Educational System Enhances Female Status within Family

	AIOU educational system enhances female status within family	To Some Extent	To Great Extent	Not at All	Total
i	AIOU education enhances women's participation in domestic decision making	1231 (49.1)	840 (33.5)	437 (17.4)	2508 (100.0)
ii	AIOU education enhances women's ability to avoid domestic conflicts	1304 (52.0)	663 (26.4)	541 (21.6)	2508 (100.0)
iii	Education through AIOU decreases chances of gender based discrimination against women within a family	1260 (50.2)	842 (33.6)	406 (16.2)	2508 (100.0)
iv	Education through AIOU increases chance of right to choice for selection of their spouse as well as of their children	980 (39.1)	577 (23.0)	951 (37.9)	2508 (100.0)
v	Education through AIOU enhances women's ability to deal with routine issues of children	1136 (45.3)	1158 (46.2)	214 (8.5)	2508 (100.0)

Table 4.21 discusses the respondent's views about role of AIOU education in improvement of women status within family. The study respondents were asked five statements to assess their opinion regarding role of AIOU in enhancement of women status inside family. Women in Pakistan have multidimensional obligations being a mother, wife, sister, or daughter. Women are expected to take care of their families and homes (i.e. cleaning, cooking, rearing children) with the best of their skills and knowledge. Educated women can better understand importance of hygiene and health care, home management, domestic issues, etc. and perform her duties creditably well as compared to uneducated women. The table under discussion demonstrates the opinions of study respondents about those areas of family level empowerment for women in which AIOU has influence.

Among these areas the first was “AIOU education enhances women's participation in domestic decision making.” In response to this statement 49% of the respondents’

opinion was “to some extent,” and 34% agreed “to great extent” however 17% were having the response “not at all.” The analysis shows that a vast majority (83%) of the respondents mentioned that education from AIOU has enhanced women status within the family by increasing their participation in domestic decision making. In our culture women accept men as decision makers due to internalization of their status as subservient to males. But with the acquisition of education women are now able to manage things in such a way that their male members give importance to their opinions and decisions regarding family matters. Further analysis of the data shows that about 17% of the respondents were not having the opinion that education has any role in improving women’s participation in domestic decision making process.

The culture and traditions of Pakistani society reveals the obvious signs of gender stereotyping. Females since childhood expected to be good housewives and mothers. They have assigned the ultimate goal and objective of their life which is marriage. Cultural traits like, early marriages and female exclusion from outdoor activities are important hindrance in the way to actualize women potentials in decision making. Education has played an effective role to bring changes in the spectrum of socio-cultural domains. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU’s female students of their areas support the statement given above.

“A lady who has done graduation from AIOU and is the only educated female of her in-laws. While she is not doing any job and not contributing into the family finances but has respect and say in household activities and matters. She has the view that just because of AIOU I get the opportunity to be educated and earned this repute in the family.”

The second statement of the table was “AIOU education enhances women's ability to avoid domestic conflicts.” The table indicates that 52% of the respondents were

having the opinion “to some extent,” 26% “to a great extent” however 22% responded as “not at all” to the statement. The analysis of the data shows that majority (78%) respondents were having the opinion that education from AIOU has increased women’s ability to avoid domestic conflicts. Where education improves women’s understanding of their surroundings it also enlightened them with the capabilities to be a beneficial member of the family. Education empowers women whether they financially contributes or not to the family income but sensitize them about their position in the family. It enables them to contribute in family issues in non-confrontational ways.

However, 22% did not see any such effect of education in the lives of women. The continuous prevalence of gender inequality in Pakistan is an important infringement of women’s rights as well as educational inequality leads women’s inability to deal with domestic issues and conflicts. Existing data on female literacy in Pakistan shows that school dropout is more in girls as compared to boys. Reasons may include early marriages, heavy engagements at household activities, economic burden, limited choices of professions and male dominating culture etc.

Third statement of the table under discussion was “education through AIOU decreases chances of gender based discrimination against women within a family.” The table shows that 50% of the respondents were to some extent agreed with the statement followed by 34% of the respondents whose agreement was to a great extent level. However, 16% were having the opinion “not at all” to the aforementioned statement. The analysis of data shows that a vast majority (84%) of the respondents were having perception about AIOU’s role in uplifting women self-esteem which helped them to decrease gender inequality within a family.

It has been observed that female dropout from conventional educational institutions is higher than males in Pakistan while AIOU is the institution where majority of the students enrolled are females. If women get educated it ensures that there will be lesser chances of differences in socialization patterns for children at their early stages of life. Educated mothers never perceive their daughters' education as irrelevant or non-productive which further ensures the absence of masculine image of education in the society.

Further analysis of the data reveals that 16% of the respondents were not agree with the AIOU's role in decreasing gender inequality within a family. Socio-cultural believes and practices such as son preference, male as bread winner, female as child bearer, prevent females from educational opportunities in Pakistan. Believes which portrays women as obedient, shy, and passive, further reinforce traditional gender roles for women. AIOU educational system has that potential to change the fate of women folks in Pakistani society by enabling them to get recognized as a significant member in a family. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

- "A lady who got married at an early age and having middle class background when came to city after marriage got admission at AIOU to again continue her studies. She has completed her graduation with the support of her husband from AIOU. Now she is mother of four children and sending her daughters to school while resisting her in-laws who are not in favor of girl's education. They are of the view that girl's education putting burden on family's economy and are just the wastage of resources. But she is tutoring her children by herself and managing their school expenses by giving tuition to other children of the areas trying to lessen the economic burden of her husband."

Fourth statement of the table was “education through AIOU increases chance of right to choice for selection of their spouse as well as of their children.” The table indicates that 39% respondents were agree “to some extent”, 23% “to great extent” however, 38% of the respondents were having the response “not at all”. Analysis shows that majority (62%) of the respondents were having the view that AIOU education enhances the level of awareness among women about their rights. It also affects females’ opinion about right to choice for selection of their mates as well as number of their children. Women education not only encounters the dilemma of early marriages of females but also controls over the issue of over population by limitizing the number of children to be given birth by women. Education enhances the status of women in a society and they are not merely taken as an object or possession of males. They have been asked in different domestic matters as well matters related to their own life.

It has been observed that educated women in Pakistan have more control over the number of children as compared to illiterate women. Although 38% of the respondents were not agree that education has any role for women in decision making related to their spouse selection or of their children. In patriarchal culture, women are brought up with the ultimate objective of being a good mother and wife. They spend their whole life by proving themselves as the perfect housekeepers. In such a scenario their rights are often denied and even the basic right of education becomes a dream. No doubt education has changed the status of women and they are now regarded by male members even in a society like Pakistan.

The fifth statement was “education through AIOU enhances women's ability to deal with routine issues of children.” The table shows that 45% of the respondents were to some extent agree with the statement followed by 46% whose agreement was to a

great extent level. However, just 9% were having the opinion “not at all” to the aforementioned statement. The analysis of data shows that a vast majority (91%) of the respondents were having perception about the role of education for enhancing female ability to deal with children’s issues. An educated mother has better understanding of her children’s needs and being a best counselor for her children in a more comprehensive way. She can better guide and deal with their routine problems and also can help her children in their studies, visit schools to meet their teachers for their better academic performance. Education enables women to make opinion as well as decisions about the future career of their children. Educated mother can better plan the activities of leisure time for her children to positively utilize their energies. Educated mother can, in a better way socialize her children and equipped them with skills that are need of time. Education empowers women with the abilities to perform more effectively towards the welfare of their children and families.

Only 9% of the respondents were not having the perception that AIOU has any role in the enhancement of women’s ability in dealing children routine issues. In traditional societies although female’s place is in home and her obligations are domestic chores but decisions from children’s schooling to their career finalization remains as male domain. Throughout the globe family is considered as an important institution for the social stability of any society and women as its significant component. So if woman is educated, she will strengthen this institution which in returns ensures the social stability for smooth progress of a nation. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU’s female students of their areas support the statement given above.

“A lady who has completed her master’s degree education from AIOU and after marriage left her job and spending her life with her family. She is the mother of two special children and being an educated mother with

responsibility taking care of her children, and is very much eager about their education.”

Table 4.22: Distribution of the Respondents by their Personal Experience of Family Level Empowerment through AIOU

	Various aspects of women empowerment at family level	Frequency	Percent
i	None	461	18.4
ii	AIOU education enhances women's participation in domestic decision making	393	15.7
iii	AIOU education enhances women's ability to avoid domestic conflicts	307	12.2
iv	Education through AIOU decreases chances of gender based discrimination against women within family	209	8.3
v	Education through AIOU increases chance of right to choice for selection of their spouse as well as of their children	742	29.6
vi	Education through AIOU enhances women's ability to deal with routine issues of children	396	15.8
vii	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.22 is the continuation of table 4.21 and shows the respondent’s personal level of attainment of empowerment at family interpersonal level due to education from AIOU. The study respondents were asked five statements regarding different aspects of family level empowerment to assess their attained empowerment level. The study subjects responded to almost all the statements ranging from lowest to highest number. Table indicates that among important statements one was “education through AIOU increases chance of right to choice for selection of their spouse as well as of their children.”

Data shows that 30% respondents, because of education from AIOU, were having personal experience of more chance for getting their voice heard in selection of life partners and to plan their family size. The comparison of opinions and personal experiences regarding the statement has a notable difference as 62% of the respondents agreed that education increases right of choice in spouse selection and

number of children and it was lowest agreement in table 4.21. In case of personal experience, the highest number (30%) of the respondents experienced this very impact of education in their lives.

Pakistani society is still not much liberated to give the right of selection of mates, or to have a say in family size, to females. Still very strong patriarchal practices dominate the family institution. The analysis of the current study shows that majority of the respondents were between the ages of 20 to 30 years and 54% were single. We can assume that by changing scenario of the society they have more chances of their choices regarding their marriage or say about their family size.

The difference has been observed in their opinion and experience because the opinion is mostly made on the basis of general perceptions about the culture. Personal experience of 16% respondents remained in support of the statement “education through AIOU enhances women’s ability to deal with routine issues of children.” Opinion and personal experience regarding the statement has proven the role of education in enhancing women’s ability to deal with children’s issues as in both the cases the agreement level remained high.

The potential of educated mothers is not limited to their access to get awareness about children’s psychological problems but also extended to children’s health, education, and social wellbeing. While another 16% respondents stated, “AIOU education enhances women’s participation in domestic decision making” as their personal experience. Further 12% of the respondents stated, “AIOU education enhances women’s ability to avoid domestic conflicts,” which was supported by 78% of the current study respondent’s opinion. In addition, there were 8% respondents who were having strength of experience for the statement, “education through AIOU decreases

chances of gender based discrimination against women within family.” Respondent’s opinion and personal experiences regarding the statement have a notable difference. As in table 4.21 a high majority (84%) favoured the statement whereas personal experiences of the respondents have the lowest response. Majority of the respondents belong to urban areas where gender based discrimination at family level is low as compared to workplace discrimination. Still majority of the respondents were having the opinion that education decreases chances of discrimination against women at family level. Among respondents of the study 18% were of the view that they are yet not empowered at family level through education from AIOU.

Women’s education has a strong impact on family institution in Pakistan as it has observed many changes over time. These changes include, involvement of women in family level decisions, selection of mates, family size, overcoming domestic conflicts, and discrimination against women. The pace of change in gender roles and practices is slow in Pakistani society. More specifically women have attained more autonomy and empowerment at economic, individual, and social level as compared to practices in the family. The analysis shows that overall majority about 82% of the respondents for all five statements in one way or the other marked themselves as empowered women with the help of their education at the level of family.

4.5 Opinions Regarding Effectiveness of AIOU System

It was tried to assess the opinions of the study subjects regarding effectiveness of different components of AIOU over all study package. Different questions related to the components of AIOU’s system of education were asked and the details are presented as:

Table 4.23: Distribution of the Respondent's Opinion by Utilization and Dissemination of AIOU Knowledge in Daily Lives

	Utilization of AIOU knowledge in daily life	Frequency	Percent
i	To Some Extent	1209	48.2
ii	To a Great Extent	1207	48.1
iii	Not at all	92	3.7
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.23 discusses the respondent's views about utilization of AIOU's education in their daily life as well as its dissemination to others in the family or in their surroundings. In response to this statement, 48% of the respondents were having the opinion "to some extent," another 48% were of the opinion "to great extent" however just 4% were having the response "not at all." This statement raises the importance of education for women because education not only enabled them to utilize this skill in bringing improvement into their lives but also be beneficial to others.

Analysis of the data shows that a vast majority (96%) of the respondents were having the view that education from AIOU has improved their understanding about daily life matters. They positively utilize their educational skills for performing different tasks more efficiently. Education boosts confidence of women and by their valuable input which contributes towards positive change in themselves, in their families, and in respective communities. If women are educated they will not only extend their knowledge utility outside home but utilize their skills to counter routine issues also inside home. As shared by the respondents of the study, success stories of AIOU's female students of their areas support the statement given above.

"A lady who has done masters from AIOU and was the only educated female of her small village in a remote area of Punjab. She decided to educate the females of her area and started teaching them at her home. Soon her efforts got

recognition and support of her area's elders and there was established a school for girls in the village. Now some of the area's females are students of AIOU."

Table-4.24: Number of Women in Respondent's Community who also taken up the AIOU Courses

	Other women in respondent's community who taken up AIOU courses	Frequency	Percent
i	None	130	5.2
ii	Just a Few	655	26.1
iii	Many	1630	65.0
iv	Don't Know	93	3.7
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.24 shows the respondents opinion about their awareness of other female students of AIOU of their respective communities. The table under discussion demonstrates that majority (65%) of the respondents were known about other women of their areas who were also enrolled in different programmes at AIOU. The second largest group (26%) of the respondents was familiar about just few of the other females of their areas who were also students of AIOU. However, only 5% of the respondents were not familiar with other AIOU's students of their communities. There were just 4% of the respondents who did not respond to the aforementioned statement.

Data shows that a vast majority (91%) was to some or greater extent familiare about women's of their communities who have taken up admission in different courses at different levels in AIOU. AIOU has the aim to reach to all corners of the country through its ODL system of education and the majority's response affirms that AIOU has its roots from center to the remote areas of Pakistan. As mentioned by the respondents of the current study, there are many success stories of sisters, cousins,

neighbors of their areas, who have been educated by AIOU or still getting benefits of AIOU's educational system.

Table-4.25: Distribution of the Respondents by Learning of Personal skills through Self-study Courses

	Personal skills learnt through self-study courses	To Some Extent	To Great Extent	Not at All	Total
i	Organizing your own study plans	1227 (48.9)	1175 (46.9)	106 (4.3)	2508 (100.0)
ii	Reading	862 (34.4)	1525 (60.8)	121 (4.8)	2508 (100.0)
iii	Preparing your own lessons	910 (36.3)	1502 (59.9)	96 (3.8)	2508 (100.0)
iv	Self-assessment of your own written work	947 (37.8)	1435 (57.2)	126 (5.0)	2508 (100.0)
v	Communicating with other women class mates who are doing the same course	1096 (43.7)	1224 (48.8)	188 (7.5)	2508 (100.0)
vi	Helping younger school going members of the family to do their homework	858 (34.2)	1420 (56.6)	230 (9.2)	2508 (100.0)
vii	More confidently taking part in outdoor community activities if any	1210 (48.2)	976 (38.9)	322 (12.8)	2508 (100.0)
viii	Using theoretical knowledge learned from books in your work situation	1366 (54.5)	965 (38.5)	177 (7.1)	2508 (100.0)
ix	Actively participating in decision making process at family or at community level	1232 (49.1)	979 (39.0)	297 (11.8)	2508 (100.0)
x	Advising and guiding others to take up AIOU courses	1088 (43.4)	1218 (48.6)	202 (8.1)	2508 (100.0)
xi	Making your own personal independent judgments about political and other issues concerning the nation	1252 (49.9)	830 (33.1)	426 (17.0)	2508 (100.0)

Table 4.25 illustrates the respondent's opinion about their learning of personal skills as students of AIOU's self-study courses. There were asked eleven statements regarding different aspects of personal skills development from the respondents. The major contributing factors of distance education e.g. cost-effectiveness, knowledge creation, no age limits, at home education, and others have a strong role in the development of personal skills and in return empowering women through education.

The table demonstrates opinions of respondents that to which extent AIOU's self-study courses have enhanced their personal skills.

Among these skills the first was "Organizing study plans", in response to which 49% of the respondents were having the opinion "to some extent," another 47% were agreed "to great extent" however, only 4% of them responded "not at all." The analysis shows that a vast majority (96%) was agree to some or great extent that with the help of self-study courses they have learnt the skill of organizing study plans. Through distance learning they have been exposed to knowledge and this education enabled them to put their own quota into country's development.

The second skill asked about was "Reading." The table indicates that 34% of the respondents learnt this skill "to some extent," another 61% "to great extent" however, only 5% responded as "not at all." The analysis further shows that an immense majority (95%) of the respondents was agree that AIOU's self-study courses have enhanced their personal skill of reading. Generally in Pakistan women have been less enthusiastic towards formal education, especially, after marriage. It is usually because of different constraints e.g. rearing and caring of children, domestic obligations, and non-encouraging behavior of males towards female mobility outside home. In spite of all this, through AIOU educational system, women learned different personal skills including enhancement of reading ability.

The third skill asked to the respondents was "ability to prepare lessons." Table shows that 36% of the respondents were agree with the statement "to some extent" followed by 60% of the respondents who agreed "to a great extent." However, only 4% were having the opinion "not at all" to the statement. Women have been benefited by distance learning mode of education and enabled to understand the courses by their own. It was further revealed that 96% of the respondents become capable of preparing

their lessons through AIOU's courses to some or great extent. They have developed that skill through learning their interactive study materials.

Fourth statement of the table was, "self-assessment of own written work." Table indicates that 38% of the respondents agreed "to some extent", another 57% "to a great extent." However, only 5% of the respondents responded as "not at all." AIOU is effectively disseminating its educational benefits to all especially those who are denied access to education or unreached due to one or the other social constraints. A vast majority (95%) of the respondents were agree with this statement that because of AIOU's self-study courses, they have been able to do self-assessment of their own written work. They have become able to utilize their cognitive abilities to judge their own efforts in writing of their assignments and other written work.

The fifth statement of the table was regarding "communicating with other women class mates." Data shows that 44% of the respondents were "to some extent" agree with the statement while about 49% agreed "to great extent". There were only 7% of the respondents having the opinion; "not at all" to the said statement. The analysis indicates that majority (93%) of the respondents agreed to some or great extent with the statement that AIOU's self-study courses have a significant role in their improved communicating skills. Women have become able to share and disseminate their exposure and understanding on the subject with other fellows. This communication has enabled them to share with each other not only their intellectual understanding of the subject but also their personal problems.

The sixth statement of the table under discussion was "helping younger school going members of the family to do their homework." Table shows that 34% of the respondents were "to some extent" agree with the statement followed by 57% of the respondents who agreed "to a great extent." Among respondents 9% were of the

opinion “not at all” to the statement. That means 91% of the respondents were agree including 57% of them had shown their agreement to the level of great extent. It can be assumed that because of the AIOU education women not only benefited themselves but also facilitated their family members by providing them with educational guidance.

The seventh statement was “more confidently taking part in outdoor community activities.” Relevant data indicates that 48% of the respondents were “to some extent” agree with the statement and 39% were agree “to great extent”. There were 13% of the respondents who replied “not at all.” It means, 87% of the respondents were to some or great extent agreed that AIOU courses enhanced their confidence to take part in activities at community level. An effective way to empower women is to widen up their access to education. Education enhances their sense of belongingness and is an important tool to incorporate the female potentials into the societal development.

The eighth statement was “using theoretical knowledge in your work situation.” Table shows that 55% of the respondents were agree “to some extent” and 39% “to great extent”. However, 7% of the respondents replied “not at all” to the statement. It reflects that majority (94%) of the respondents was to some or great extent agreed that it’s an important skill developed due to comprehensive study materials provided by AIOU. Education, no matter whichever kind has strong impact on self-confidence and self-worth of individuals. The self-study system of AIOU enabled women to utilize their learned knowledge and skills into their professions.

Ninth statement was “actively participating in decision making process at family or at community level.” The table under discussion shows that 49% of the respondents were having the opinion “to some extent” and 39% were of the opinion “to a great extent” to the statement. However, 12% of the respondents were “not at all” agree

with the above mentioned statement. It further shows that 88% of the respondents were agree to some or great extent with that because of education they have learned the skills to actively participate in family or community level decision making.

The tenth statement of the table under discussion was “advising and guiding others to take up AIOU courses.” Table shows that 43% of the respondents were “to some extent” agree with the statement followed by 49% who agreed “to a great extent.” Among respondents of the current study 8% responded as “not at all” to the statement. The analysis of the data reveals that an immense majority (92%) of the respondents was to some or great extent agree that many women have setup trends in their communities to get education from AIOU. There are so many success stories shared by the respondents that how other women of their respective areas get influenced by them and got admission into different courses at AIOU.

Eleventh statement was “making your own personal independent judgments about political and other issues concerning the nation.” Table indicates that 50% of the respondents were having the opinion “to some extent,” 33% “to a great extent” however, 17% of them responded as “not at all.” Analysis reveals that majority (83%) agreed that education enhances individual’s personal skills to get aware by the surroundings and could make independent judgments about national issues. Education has the capacity to reshape women’s thinking and make them more realistic towards life. However, some of them were having the opinion that education does not enable women in Pakistan to make their own verdicts about national issues whether they are related to politics, religion, or education.

Table 4.26: Distribution of the Respondents by their opinions regarding Study materials, Tutorial Meetings and AIOU regional offices/campuses

	Opinions of respondents regarding...	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Total
i	Study materials received from AIOU	131 (5.2)	546 (21.8)	1266 (50.5)	565 (22.5)	2508 (100.0)
ii	Effectiveness of tutorial meetings	315 (12.6)	683 (27.2)	1093 (43.6)	417 (16.6)	2508 (100.0)
iii	Cooperation from AIOU regional offices	448 (17.9)	708 (28.2)	937 (37.4)	415 (16.5)	2508 (100.0)

Table 4.26 indicates respondent's rating of different components of AIOU study package. ODL system of education is spread through its study materials, tutorials, and its network of regional offices all over the country. The study respondents were asked to rate so in return we can assess the effectiveness of the system. Respondents rate their responses on ordinal scale of poor to excellent. AIOU has the educational system in which after enrollment, study materials (e.g. study guides, allied material, and audio-visual aids) is sent to the students for preparation of assignments and examination.

Fortnightly tutorial classes are arranged for study guidance from respective course tutors. Role of regional offices/ campuses is very vital to coordinate and facilitate the activities of AIOU in different parts of the country. Information given on the official website of AIOU further clarifies the methodology of distance learning system as:

“Assignments written by the students are evaluated by the tutors and returned to them with comments. There are AIOU's regional offices/ campuses all over the country to coordinate and facilitate decentralized system of education of the university. The regional directors keep a roster of qualified teachers and experts in each field of study in their area and enlist them as the university's part-time tutors. Each group of students is entrusted to a tutor for guidance.

The regional campuses also arrange practical training, teaching practice, workshops and seminars and facilitate holding of examinations in their own areas.”

The table under discussion shows that there were three statements on which respondents rate their effectiveness of study materials, tutorials, and of regional offices/ campuses. Among these statements the first was, “rating the study materials received from AIOU”, in response to this statement just 5% of the respondents rated as “poor”, another 22% rated as “fair.” Though, majority (51%) of the respondents were having the rating opinion as “good.” In addition, 23% of the respondents rated the statement as “excellent.” This shows that a vast majority (74%) rated the study materials good or excellent. Among three of the statements, it has the highest response rate which shows the satisfaction level of the respondents from study materials of AIOU.

The second statement of the table was “rating the effectiveness of tutorial meetings.” The table indicates that 13% of the respondents rated the effectiveness of tutorial meetings as “poor”, another 27% rated as “fair.” The largest group (44%) rated tutorial meetings as “good” and 17% respondents as “excellent.” The analysis shows that majority (61%) of the respondents were satisfied with the effectiveness of tutorial meetings for their studies from AIOU.

The third statement was “rating the cooperation from AIOU regional offices.” The table shows that 18% of the respondents rated the statement as “poor,” and another 28% as “fair.” Data shows that 37% and 17% rated the cooperation from staff and officers in AIOU regional offices as “good” and “excellent” respectively. It further reveals that about half of the respondents (54%) replied during the study that they have been appropriately facilitated by regional offices/ campuses. In spite of all this,

about another half of the respondents were having the response that regional offices/ campuses cooperation was not up to the desired level. Among the three statements it has the lowest response rate which shows that respondents' satisfaction level remained low with reference to cooperation from regional offices/ campuses.

Table-4.27: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinions regarding Examination System of AIOU

	Examination system is appropriate	Frequency	Percent
I	To Some Extent	1346	53.7
II	To Great Extent	990	39.5
III	Not at All	172	6.9
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.27 discusses the respondent's views about effectiveness of AIOU examination system. AIOU examination has different tasks to perform including, collection of result of continuous assessment component from regions, conduct term final examination at centers, and compilation/processing of results, issuance of Certificate/Degrees to the students. The table under discussion demonstrates the views the respondents about the appropriateness of AIOU exams system. In response to the question, majority (54%) of the respondents rated examination system's appropriateness "to some extent," 40% "to great extent." However, just 7% of the respondents were having the response "not at all" to the question. It reflects that a vast majority (94%) of the respondents were having the view that generally AIOU examination system is highly appropriate.

Table-28: Distribution of the respondents regarding preference of AIOU to undertake first degree

	Preference of AIOU for first degree	Frequency	Percent
i	Yes	1368	54.5
ii	No	1140	45.5
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.28 indicates the respondent's opinion about selection of AIOU as first choice to undertake a degree. AIOU's educational system has distinctive strengths of ODL which makes it a choice for those who otherwise could not continue education from conventional institutions. Due to these promising characteristics AIOU is more suitable for females in Pakistan. The respondents were asked that if a choice is given, would they like to undertake their first degree through AIOU. The question was asked to assess the perceptions of the students regarding significance and strength of AIOU's education.

The data shows that majority (55%) of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU education has positive influence on them and they would prefer study at AIOU. Another 25% reported that AIOU would not be their first preference. However, 20% of the study respondents did not clearly mention their preference for first degree institution. The analysis shows that AIOU education is an essential tool for women to enhance their capabilities to able to deal with their lives in a more appropriate manner. Generally, it has been observed that AIOU with its network of regional offices/campuses and with its wide range of course offering make it a distinctive institution of the country.

4.6 Attainment of Empowerment Status (AES)

In this part of the study report, analysis and discussion on the attainment of empowerment status by women through ODL education in AIOU is made. Through a developed scale, the empowerment status of women was measured.

To measure whether empowerment attained through AIOU remained at what level, a numeric scale was developed for AES. It means that through a scale it was tried to calculate whether the impact of AIOU remained low, medium, and high on the study subjects. In the questionnaire, all the questions regarding all the empowerment aspects

were given uniform response categories. Based on the linkert's scale, to measure the strength of agreement level with AIOU's empowering role, the response cetogories include "to great extent," "to some extent," and "not at all."

The categories were assigned with different numeric values on the basis of their response strength. These numeric values were assigned to calculate AIOU's impact on women empowerment in all the five areas i.e. economic, political, social, individual autonomy, and family level. The values assigned were:

- To great extent = 5
- To some extent = 3
- Not at all = 0

For personal experience of any aspect of empowerment the score assigned was "5." So, if a respondent did mention her experience of attaining different areas of empowerment, "5" score was added to calculate total score in an aspect of empowerment for measurement of its level of attainment.

To further explain the developed scale following example is given:

"In questionnaire, five statements were given to cover different aspects of every variable concerning to an area of empowerment. Let us suppose, a person agreed to all the five statements "to great extent" and it is assigned the value '5' that means the score will be $5+5+5+5+5= 25$ and if she also experienced the same empowerment in her own life, another '5' shall be added so, the total score for that person will become '30' and,"

"if another person agreed to all the five statements "to some extent" and it is assigned the value '3' that means the score will be $3+3+3+3+3= 15$ and if she also experienced the same empowerment in her own life another '5' shall be added so the total score for that person will become '20.'

On the basis of total score in every area of the empowerment i.e. economic, political, social, individual autonomy, and family level, following categories were developed for Attained Empowerment Status* (AES) of a person:

- Score 0 – 10 = Low empowerment attained
- Score 11 – 20 = Medium empowerment attained
- Score 21 – 30 = High empowerment attained

*discussed in table 4.29.

To measure the overall attainment level of empowerment, total score based on all the statements given in different empowerment related questions (discussed under table 4.8 to table 4.22) was calculated. The Overall Attained Empowerment Status** (AES) was also categorized in same way. The details are as following:

- Total score in all questions, less than 50 = Low empowerment attained
- Total score in all questions, 50 – 100 = Medium empowerment attained
- Total score in all questions, 101 – 150 = High empowerment attained

**discussed in table 4.30.

Table-4.29: Distribution of the Respondents by Attained Empowerment Status (AES) Score

	Attained Empowerment Status (AES)	Low (0-10)	Medium (11-20)	High (21-30)	Total
i	Total variable score on economic empowerment	116 (4.6)	510 (20.3)	1882 (75.0)	2508 (100.0)
ii	Total variable score on political empowerment	401 (16.0)	694 (27.7)	1413 (56.3)	2508 (100.0)
iii	Total variable score on Social empowerment	180 (7.2)	550 (21.9)	1778 (70.9)	2508 (100.0)
iv	Total variable score on personal empowerment	88 (3.5)	459 (18.3)	1961 (78.2)	2508 (100.0)
v	Total variable score on family empowerment	213 (8.5)	688 (27.4)	1607 (64.1)	2508 (100.0)

Table 4.29 shows, Attained Empowerment Status (AES) score at different levels of the respondents. In connection to the scoring scheme, the table shows the

respondent's Attained Empowerment Status (AES) score in five different areas i.e.economic, social, political, individual autonomy, and family empowerment. The table indicates that in the first area "total score on economic empowerment" 75% of the respondents' AES score was between 21-30. That means such vast majority get enabled, through AIOU education, to attain high level of economic empowerment. Another 20% respondents' AES score remained between 11-20 so their attained status was considered at medium level. Only 5% of the respondents did not attain any significant empowerment through AIOU education.

In the second area "total score on political empowerment" 56% of the respondents' AES score was between 21-30, which shows their high attainment of political empowerment. Followed by 28% who achieved medium level of empowerment by scoring between 11-20. While, remaining 16% remained at low level of political empowerment because of their score is less than 10. The low status of women along with low level of education and existence of strong patriarchal culture are the important elements among the barriers towards women political empowerment. Therefore, still a considerable number of respondents did not approve role of education in political empowerment of females as compared to other areas of empowerment.

In the third area "total score on social empowerment" 71% of the respondents' AES score indicates high level of empowerment attained as it was between 21-30. Another 22% of the respondents were having up to the medium level of empowerment attained which was between the category of 11-20. Only 7% were having low level of empowerment attained as their score was below 10.

In the fourth area for "total score on personal empowerment" 78% of the respondents' AES score was between 21-30 which shows their high attainment in this very area.

Although, 18% of them attained medium level of empowerment with the score between 11-20. Just 4% were having score below 10 with the attainment of low individual autonomy. The analysis of the data shows that vast majority of the respondents achieved personal autonomy through AIOU educational system. Among all statements of women empowerment, this dimension of women empowerment has the highest Attained Empowerment Status (AES) score.

In the fifth area for “total score on family level empowerment” 64% of the respondents attained high level of empowerment as their AES score was between 21-30. While, 27% were having AES score between 11-20, and attained medium level of empowerment. Only 9% of them attained low family empowerment level as their score was below 10. The analysis of the data shows that majority of the respondents attained family level empowerment through AIOU educational system. However, the data shows, among all the five dimensions of women empowerment, at the political and family level yet empowerment was not attained in comparasion to others.

Table-4.30: Distribution of the Respondents by Overall Attained Empowerment Status (AES) Score

	Overall Attained Empowerment Status (AES)	Frequency	Percent
i	Below 50 (Low empowerment attained)	111	4.4
ii	50-100 (Medium empowerment attained)	282	11.2
iii	Above 100 (High empowerment attained)	2115	84.3
	Total	2508	100.0

Table 4.30 indicates overall Attained Empowerment Status (AES) score at different levels of the respondents. By using the scoring scheme, the researcher has calculated not only the respondent’s attained empowerment at the economic, social, political, individual, and family level but also calculated their “Overall Attained Empowerment Status.” The overall status was measured by adding up the scores of all the five areas

for every individual. The table under discussion shows that 84% of the respondents were having “overall attained empowerment status” score above 66% (101-150) which is the highest score attained by the respondents. That shows the high attainment of empowerment by the study subjects through ODL. Among the respondents, 11% were having “overall attained empowerment status” score between 33% to 66% (50-100 score) which indicates the medium level of women empowerment attained.

However, only 4% of the respondents were having “overall attained empowerment status” score below 33% (below 50 score). The analysis of the data in the table shows that a vast majority of the respondents were having the high level of empowerment. This finding strongly supports the hypothesis that ODL education strongly influences the status of women empowerment in a supportive way.

4.7 Measures for Improvement of ODL System

Respondents of the current study were asked to suggest suitable measures for the improvement of ODL system for effective empowerment of female beneficiaries. Suggestions are based on issues/ challenges which were faced by female students of AIOU. Following is the detail of suggestions given by the study respondents:

4.7.1 Suggestions regarding Workshops

Workshop is considered as one among the important components of ODL system of education. AIOU organizes workshops for its students at main campus Islamabad as well as through its regional offices all over Pakistan. The respondents reported that workshop daily schedule is very hectic and lengthy. It is difficult to absorb knowledge delivered by the resource persons. AIOU should consider and revise workshop criteria and timings. These should be squeezed in time though increase the days of workshop. It was also mentioned by the respondents that workshops should be held at the start of semester so students get maximum benefit from the thought provoking sessions.

Because knowledge gained from workshop lectures help them in preparation of assignments as well as for their preparations of exams. It was suggested that workshops should be more participative. These should include student's presentations, discussions, quizzes, other group activities, and field visits etc. It was also suggested that workshops should be held at home-stations of students so it would be convenient for them to attend workshops. Workshop centers need improvements especially regarding availability of basic facilities i.e. drinking water, condition of toilets, alternate for load shedding, proper seating (small chairs of school children not suitable for adults), etc.

It was further suggested that AIOU should build its own study centers rather than using schools. These centers can also be used for examination purpose. Students encounter issues related to staff in workshop centers. Respondents mentioned about inappropriate behavior of staff (at school centers), therefore, interventions such as communication trainings may be organized to improve conduct of staff. Workshops conducted in regions should provide hostel facility for students coming from long distances. Furthermore, it was suggested by the respondents that workshops should be held at undergraduate level as well. The students who enrolled at undergraduate level can benefit further through this initiative. This will not only help increase conceptual understanding but also self-confidence.

4.7.2 Suggestions regarding Tutorial Meetings

Another significant component of ODL is tutorial meetings. In different study centers, AIOU schedule tutorial meetings fortnightly for most of its subjects/courses which are not mandatory for students to attend. Respondents were shared that to make the tutorial meetings more effective AIOU should make tutorials a compulsory/mandatory component for students. It was suggested by the respondents that relevant subject expert should be selected as tutors as many respondents shared that there are

not qualified subject experts tutors assigned to them. There should be proper check and balance procedure devised by AIOU for effective monitoring of tutorial system as most of the times tutors do not attend tutorials. It decreases students' motivation to attend these classes as they are optional.

Assignment evaluation needs improvement as generally tutors have their fixed criteria of assigning marks to students irrespective of copied assignment or a genuine hard work. An issue highlighted by the students was that there are many people in different cities engaged in selling of written assignments. They provide all levels and almost all subjects/courses written assignments to the students. It was also mentioned by the respondents that there is a communication gap between tutors and students which needs to be improved. Tutors non-cooperative and less encouraging behavior leads to student's lack of interest towards completion of their education. At the post-graduate level only university teachers should be appointed as tutors.

To improve the communication between tutor/student there should be a mandatory orientation meeting of them at the start of each semester. Return of assignments is a big issue for students. There should be a strict check and balance mechanism on tutors by regions. ODL system needs to be more interactive with reference to tutor/student relation. Some sort of quizzes and other activities should be the part of tutors' responsibilities for atleast few subjects. By doing so, not only confidence level of students will increase and they feel attached with the university but also take study materials seriously.

4.7.3 Suggestions regarding New Students of ODL

There is a clear majority of AIOU students who do not have previous experience in ODL system of education. They are familiar with traditional educational system and some times it's quite difficult and confusing for them to understand the roles of tutors

and study allied materials. In such a situation, it was suggested by the respondents, that an orientation session should be held by AIOU with each new batch regarding introduction on ODL system of education.

4.7.4 Suggestions regarding Mailing of Study Materials

The study respondents mentioned that delay in mailing of study materials is another important issue. Sometimes, because of shortcomings in study packages, contact to mailing department becomes a hectic job. In such cases, they have to visit main campus to get those missing materials. It was suggested by the respondents that to make on time delivery, these materials should be dropped at regional offices. From there the packages may be delivered to the students rather than mailing directly from the main campus.

4.7.5 Suggestions regarding study Materials

Further study data indicates that respondents pointed out problems associated with study materials received by them. Some courses data is quite out dated at different levels so it requires revision. The courses should be up dated with current scenario and the related facts and figures. Another issue highlighted was that mostly study allied materials provided to the students are of foreign authors. These are some times quite complicated to comprehend/understand. They suggested that to achieve the quality output from students such allied materials should include local or regional publications. These publications are easy to understand because of their local examples. These study materials should also include current articles or researches on different topics.

It was further suggested that AIOU should provide study materials in Urdu as well at post graduate level. It was further suggested that at under graduate level study materials of AIOU may include audio/video CDs as supporting material, the same should be provided at post graduate level as well. Furthermore, there is a need to

develop new courses in different programmes as well as new disciplines i.e. psychology, philosophy, international relations, etc. because such disciplines are the need of time.

4.7.6 Suggestions regarding Examinations

The respondents emphasized that the examination centers should be near homes. Some time examination centers are far away from student's homes and they have to travel for hours to reach. It was mentioned that examination centers are not properly facilitated e.g. no proper chairs and desks, no drinking water, no proper light arrangements and broken windows cause distortion from outside, etc. They suggested that regional office buildings may be enhanced and used for examination as well as tutorial purpose.

To overcome unfair means and some times inappropriate behavior of invigilators at examination centers, AIOU members may be included in invigilation team. It was also highlighted that evaluation system for papers checking needs improvement. It was mentioned that if a student has issue related to result he/she does not know that what to do and where to go. Some times issues not get resolved till next exams. It was suggested that process for such issues related to examination should be expedite and if there is a shortage of staff so it should be hired.

4.7.7 Suggestions regarding Correspondence/Communication

The study respondents share that some times students do not get in time date-sheets, work shop letters, admission forms, and other important information from the university. In this situation they lose their semester and the duration of their degree accomplishment gets longer. It was suggested by the respondents that atleast at post graduate level AIOU should email such letters/documents and other important

information to the students along with its postal mailing so if a student could not get or missed the postal mail atleast he/she can be informed through email.

It was indicated by the study respondents that to contact main campus offices (admission, examination, mailing, etc.) is very laborious task as telephone numbers are not attended by service providers or remain busy. It was suggested that as the number of students are increasing day by day so AIOU should increase telephone lines as well to facilitate such a huge number of clientele efficiently. To overcome issues related to behavior of service providers, it was suggested that communication skills trainings be organized. It is to be explained that how to deal with the students for service providers.

The study respondents pointed out that some times regional offices are not cooperative with the students regarding tutor informations. If the student's issues are related to examination or admission it becomes worst. They further added that regional offices should provide tutors information i.e. tutor address or contact number. And regional offices should also provide proper guidance regarding other issues of students concerning main campus offices/departments.

4.7.8 Suggestions regarding Admissions

Study respondents shared some admission related issues including, if there is an error in their name, might be by typing mistake, it will take semesters and semesters to be corrected. If the same case happened to mailing address they do not know where their study material has been sent by the university. For such type of corrections they have to come to main campus, Islamabad as regional offices are not having updated information about their cases which are forwarded to main campus. It was suggested that there should be a robust network of communication between regions and head office as it will positively affects students. Another issue being highlighted by the

study respondents was related to admission's conformation which take much time i.e. few months to be finalized. During that hollow gap applicants get confused that either they get admission or not. It was suggested that rather waiting for finalization of whole process it would be better if after every two weeks batch by batch admission data be uploaded on the website.

Missing of admission forms is another problem of serious concern that is students submit fee but due to certain reasons their forms are misplaced. As a result they are not registered with the university. When they come to know that their admission form got missed and if they provide receipt they will get admission other wise not. It was suggested by the respondents that there is a need to enhance human resource to overcome such negligence.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS)

This Chapter discusses the result of the study, explored using the qualitative research methodology. Study explains the trends and causes related to ODL system of education and its effects on lives of females in Pakistan. It is to mention further that the names used in case studies are changed due to research ethics to maintain confidentiality of the respondents.

5.1 Responses and Comments to Open-end Questions in Qualitative Study

5.1.1 Factors behind Admission in AIOU

Most of the respondents reported in questionnaires used during quantitative research design and documented their opinion regarding different factors for joining AIOU as higher education institution in Pakistan. A range of questions/ statements were asked related to decision of admission in AIOU. The statements were ranging from different factors related to ease of access, Open and relaxed timing as scheduled by the student, economic requirements, admission eligibilities, quality of reading material, and choice of wide range of disciplines. Data showed that there are many factors behind getting admission in AIOU but studying while staying at home, option of getting education while doing some job, possibility of extending degree/ certificate completion time, and no age restrictions remained most relevant.

To have an in-depth understanding of all above mentioned factors, open ended questions were asked to the selected respondents during interviews. Findings of the present study shows that most of the respondents mentioned that studying while staying at home is a very crucial factor behind females' enrolment in AIOU programmes. They told the researcher that there are many restrictions on mobility of

women, especially in rural areas. It is not considered appropriate for a woman to travel alone. In addition, the social roles related to domestic responsibilities attached with women do not allow them to stay out of their homes for long hours. In this socio-cultural environment, AIOU's methodology suits them best as they can continue their studies while staying at home.

The strength of relevance of this very factor can be assessed from responses of the study subjects. Some of those are "**Roz roz jana nai parta aur ghar main he baith ke aap parh saktay hain¹**" - There is no need to go on daily basis and it allows you study while being at home²" "**Hamaray haan larkion ke akailay bahar janay ka riwaaj nai hay aur issay bura samjha jata hay**" - In our area females do not usually go outside alone and it is also considered inappropriate" "**College aur university shehar main hain jo bahot door hay aur larkion ka akailay jana mehfooz nai hay aur rozana tou koi mard sath nai aa ja sakta na**" - College and University are in city which is far away and it is not safe for girls to go alone as well our men cannot go with them on daily basis" "**Larkion ko aaj kal ki dunya ka andaza nai hay lihaza ghar baith ke jo bhi kerain who behtar hay**" - Females are not aware of today's world so whatever they do from home is better".

Majority of the respondents were of the view that a very supportive feature of education through AIOU is that you can continue your education while doing some job. In this time of inflation with rising urbanization, everyone wishes to improve his/her income as well as professional status. As evident from the responses, "**Open university ka sub se bara faida yeh hay ke hum kaam kernay ke sath sath parh**

¹ Actual response in original wording (Urdu) has been indicated with in quotations and shown in bold face.

² The original response is followed by translation in English.

saktay hain- The biggest benefit of AIOU is that we can study while doing our job”
“Aaj kal mehngai itni hay ke tankhwa se guzara bahot mushkil hota hay issi liay her banda koshish karta hay ke kuch taraqi ker sakay takay behtar zindagi guzray -
Now a days because of inflation it is quite difficult to sustain with the salary so everyone tries that he could improve his quality of life”.

Higher education remains very crucial in professional development and achievement in present time. Most of the respondents told that due to relaxed system of AIOU they are able to do job as well as complete their desired education level. They further mentioned that there are no regular classes and tutorials are not mandatory as well as mostly scheduled in evenings or off days as data shows *“Aik achi baat yeh hay ke regular classess nai hoti warna kon daftar se roz roz chhutti laita-* A good thing is that there are no regular classess otherwise who could take day to day leaves from office” *“Tutorial classess bhi kabhi kabhar hoti hain aur agar na bhi ja sako tou koi masla nai hota-* Tutorial classess are also conducted fortnightly and even if you could not attend these no issue develops” *“Kitabain aur doosray material main kafi maloomat hoti hain aur ussi ki madad se assignments bana laitay hain-* A lot of information is given in books and other study materials that we can easily write our assignments with the help of these”.

Data shows that the study subjects think it is very supportive for them that all the mandatory workshops/ classes are scheduled in one go during their semester. It is a difficult thing according to some of the respondents but they plan their official activities according to that and it is also not very difficult to get some leave once in six months. Some of the related responses are, *“Workshops main regular jana thora mushkil hota hay magar woh hamaray liay zaroori bhi bahot hain-* It is quite difficult to attend workshops but these are also very important for us” *“Workshop main janay se hum bahot seekhtay hain aur kion ke pooray semester main aik he*

dafa hoti hain iss liay office se chhutian mil jaati hain- We learn a lot by attending the workshops and since these are held once in a semester so we can get leave from office”.

It was further added by the respondents that there are so many examples in their departments and areas of residence who improved their education from AIOU along with job. Many of those persons have improved their professional positions/ grades by getting earlier promotions because of having higher education. A very interesting and most prevalent case remained for teachers throughout Pakistan.

According to the students of teacher training programmes, they themselves and thousands of other; both males and females have improved their skills through AIOU teacher training programmes. They were just P.T.C or C.T when they started their career as school teachers and just because of AIOU flexible system of education now those thousands have got B.A, B.Ed and Master level degrees in the field of education and teacher training. It was observed from the respondents that majority of them were working females and irrespective of their profession, they had hope for a better position or a better job after completion of their degree.

In most of the Pakistani universities there are different rules and regulations regarding age and year of passing out of graduation exams to get admission in postgraduate programmes. Unlike these, in AIOU there is no restriction of age to get admission. It was found during the study that this also remained very crucial variable in getting admission in AIOU. Many people realized later during the course of their life that they should continue their education from where they left it. So in this situation there is only one institution “AIOU” which can cater to their needs.

Secondly, in present circumstances the openness of time to complete a degree is another variable which proved to be very important in attracting masses towards Open

University. It is reflected from these responses *“Ab iss umar main aur kahin to dakhla milta nai hay-* now its quite difficult to get admission in any other university in this age” *“Sub se achi baat jo mujhay lagi who yeh hay ke aik aik ya do do subject ker ke aaram se pas ker lo-* What I like the most is that one can pass the subject one by one” *“main nay M.Sc kay do semester ker ke family issues ki wajah se chhor dia tha aur phir teen saal baad dobara admission lia aur 3rd semester se he continue kia-* I left my M.Sc after doing two semesters due to some family issues and then after three years I have continued from the 3rd semester”.

5.1.2 Economic Empowerment Opinion/ Experience

Results of the present study show that the opinion of the respondents pointed out a strong and positive relationship between economic empowerment of women with their education from AIOU. Almost all of the study subjects were of the view that education through AIOU enhances women's level of economic empowerment. It was tried to assess the role of AIOU in economic empowerment of women by asking the respondents an open ended question regarding the effect of Open University on their personal empowerment.

Data showed that majority of the respondent women mentioned that due to education from AIOU females can be in a better position to find out and get some job opportunity which is very important for economic independence as well as empowerment of a woman. They said that today it is not easy to find out some better job without getting the required level of education and other than AIOU there are very limited options available for women in most areas of Pakistan. As the same is reflected from the comments of the respondents of the study i.e *“Open university se parh ker he tou hum kuch kamanay ke qabil hua hain warna matric ya F.A walay ko kon poochta hay-* We have become able to earn something after studying/getting

education from AIOU otherwise no one bothers for those who are simply matriculated or done F.A”, *“Baghair taleem kay nokri kahan milti hai aur agar open university na hoti tou main tou itna kabhi na parh sakti-* Who gives any job without education and if there was no Open university, I shall never be able to get as much education”, *“Hamaray tou pooray zillay main B.Ed kahin nai hota, agar open university se B.Ed na kerti tou main aur meray bachay tou bhookay mar jatay-* There is no institution which offers B.Ed in our entire district and if I have not done B.Ed from AIOU, me and my children would have died of hunger and poverty”.

In interviews, it was further highlighted by the study subjects that because of AIOU programmes many females can improve their education. Females are trying to enroll in different level programmes on the basis of available job opportunities. As the following responses show *“Main nay matric ker kay chhor dia tha magar open university ki wajah se main ab M.A ker rahee hu-* I left my education after doing matriculation but due to open university, I restarted and now doing Masters degree” *“hamaray sheher main bahot sari larkian AIOU se course ker ke sarkari school main teacher lag gae hain-* In our city, many girls have got job of teaching in government schools after doing courses from AIOU”. Many females prefer to do teacher training courses and degrees (i.e. P.T.C, C.T, B.Ed, M.Ed etc.) and most of those are employed in different level government and primary schools. Other who are graduates would like to go for masters degrees as these increase chances of getting some well paid jobs.

Findings of the study present that females were considering education from AIOU as an effective source/ tool for getting employed and those who were employed were considering that it could improve their employment status. It was a consensus among most of the study sample that by getting engaged in income generation activities, females feel more empowered than before. It was also reported by few of the

respondents that education through AIOU has no role in making females get job opportunities rather people from influential families, economically rich and those who completed education from regular universities get jobs.

Most of the women pointed out that due to the education they become in better position to access their family resources and for most of the grown up females of Pakistan, AIOU is the most feasible option. Respondents were of the view that education makes them more confident and they feel it easy to extend their self towards persons and things of their belongingness with in a family. They reported that the females having lower level of education are considered that they do not know much about outer world. Their opinions are usually not given due importance therefore it leads to weaker self esteem in such women so they do not feel comfortable in using family belongings. As it is reflected from the response *“Kum parhi likhi ko tou ghar walay bhi bewaqoof samajhtay hain-* A less educated female is often considered fool even by the family members”, *“Agar insaan parha likha kum ho tou Koi nai baat kernay ki himmat nai hoti-* If a person does not consider him/ herself enough educated, he/ she will not have enough courage to say any new thing”. While they explained that educated women are more aware and they feel more comfortable in using and controlling their family resources.

It was further mentioned that husband of those females who are more educated, gives them more control over their family income. As the response shows *“Ab main M.A ker rahee hun aur school main parhati bhi hu iss liay meray husband nay ab ghar ke bahot saray muamlaat meray pe chhoray huay hain-* Now I am doing M.A and also teaching in a school so my husband has left many of the family issues and their decisions on me”. They can use their family money more easily and comparatively educated women do shopping for their children and family independently as compared to uneducated women. As far as the issue of family permission to do formal

jobs is concerned, the findings of the present study show that it has a positive relationship with females' level of education. Few of the respondents mentioned that it is not something which is any way related to women. Usually in our society, men own and control all type of resources and it purely depends upon men's attitude that if they want, they share and give control to women. Some males are good as their women are either educated or illiterate, working or housewives; they give access and control of their family belongings to them.

Another important factor related to female empowerment at the level of family economy is the ownership of economic resources by women. It was reported that educated females have more tendency of doing efforts to have their family property in their own names. It was observed that most of the women think that by having family property in their names, they feel more secure in their relations.

Respondents of the study mentioned that because of education from AIOU, they are more aware about their rights especially their religious right of share in family property and other belongingness. Some of the responses are given as *"Parhee likhi khatoon ko apnay haqooq ka pata hota hay aur who unn ke liay baat ker sakti hay-* An educated woman often knows her rights and she can talk about those" *"Agar larki ke naam pe ghar ya jaeidad ho tou shohar ke samnay who khud ko ziada mehfooz samajhti hay-* A female who owns a house or property often feels secure in her relation with husband". These women further mentioned that because of the education they have got more exposure and confidence and they feel that they should and all other women should also do take stand for their very important right.

Some of the study subjects told the researcher that women are often refused their right of share in parents' property. But they think that it is just because of females' lack of awareness and education. Some of the relevant responses are *"larkion ko khud apnay*

haqooq ka pata nai hota aur na he woh mangti hain issi liay unhain aksar jaeidad main hissa nai dia jata- Mostly females are neither aware about their rights and nor they demand these that's why they are not given the due share in family property”
“kamzor aur kam ilm ko kahan kuch dia jata hay- Weaker and less knowledgeable is never given any thing”, *“Jub tak khawateen parhee likhi nai hon gi aur who kuch kamany nai lagain gi, hamesha khud ko kamzor he samajhti rahain gi-* Uptill women will not get educated and not start earning something, they will always consider themselves as weak and unable to do some thing”.

Results of the present study also include that many women reported that due to due to inflation especially in food and education related expense, it is very important for women to become economically active. They further highlighted that because of education through AIOU, their contribution in home economy is increased as they get comparatively well paid jobs due to their professional/ teaching qualification from AIOU, especially with reference to their rural areas. They highlighted the fact that by contributing toward their home economy in the form of cash, they feel that their status and respect has been improved. They are given more space about their own self and have a say in decisions related to their children. They can make independent purchases of even those expensive things for which previously they were totally dependent upon the will of males in their family. This includes jewelry, clothes for themselves and their children, children's education related things, and even the property in few cases.

5.1.3 Political Empowerment Opinion/ Experience

Another major area highlighted by the detailed responses of women regarding effect of education through AIOU on their lives was the ability to decide and participate in family, community, and society level political process. It was reported that their

education makes them aware of many new things and by mobility because of education related activities like exams etc. and a sense of achievement because of improved educational status, females consider themselves able to understand and discuss their administrative and political issues right from the political organization at Jirga or Biradari level to the state legislature level. Data directs us to synthesize these political achievements in many different ways. First of all reported by most of the respondents is enhancement of knowledge regarding political systems and policies in Pakistan.

This is a very important effect as politics and all other administrative roles are traditionally considered as male oriented phenomena. It was throughout the history considered that women have nothing to do with the politics. As the responses show *“Hamari auratain siyasat waghera nai kertee-* Our females do not do politics type things”, *“Faisala kerna tou hamesha se mardon ka he kaam hay-* It always has been men’s job to take decisions”. This understanding prevails throughout the process of socialization of males and females in their lives. So, as a result most of the women do not feel any interest in politics and political issues like the responses show *“Hamain kia laina daina siyasat se-* We have nothing to do with politics”, *“Aam tor per auraton ko aisi cheezon main koi interest nai hota-* Usually females do not have any interest in such topics”. Rather TV dramas, dress and fashion related things, and other children related issues are considered as subject of females’ interest.

Finding of the study show that most of the women told that either directly through AIOU material or indirectly because of increased interest due to social subjects related education, they feel themselves more aware regarding political system and issues in Pakistan. Some of the related responses of the study subjects are presented as follows: *“Parhnay ki wajah se hamain mulk kay masail kay baray main ziada behtar pata chala-* Due to studies, we better understood the issues faced by the

country”, *“Taleem se yae pata chala kay kisi mulk ki taraqee main siyasat kitni ehm hay-* Education makes me realize the importance of politics in the development of a country”, *“Ab Open University se parhnay ki wajah se apnay ilakay aur mulk kay bahot saray siyasat dano aur partion ke baray main iss liay pata chala kion ke ab mujhay aisa lagta hay ke auraton ko bhi siasi massail main tawajoh daini chahiey-* Due to studying in Open University I come to know about politicians of our area and country because now I feel that females should also pay attention to political issues”. They said that there are a lot of subjects regarding society at F.A, and B.A level courses of AIOU and students get aware about their own society by studying these subjects.

Many respondents of the present study were of the view that due to education from AIOU they feel more aware and confident to participate in political process of Pakistan. Some also mentioned that because of getting education and awareness of the social phenomena they have won the support of their family to get engaged with local authorities for the improvement in their lives and solution of their problems related to very basic human needs. Some of the related responses are: *“Meri taleem ki wajah se ghar walay aksar faisala kertay huay mujh se bhi mashwara laitay hain-* Because of my education, my family members mostly ask for my opinion before taking any decision”, *“Main apnay rishta daro aur baqi logo ko aksar kisi sarkari idaray ya afsar ko darkhwast likhnay main madad daiti hoon-* I mostly help my relatives and others around in writing application to some government authority or department”, *“Meri taleem ki wajah se ab muhallay walo ki marzi se main sarkari primary school ki committee ki member hoon-* Now I am a member of government primary school committee with the support of people of my area”, *“Main aksar apni khatoon councillor kay sath zillae hakoomat kay mukhtalif daftaro main jati thee takeh apnay gaon kay massail per baat ker sakoon-* I usually accompanied our lady

counselor to different offices of district government so that I could talk on the issues of our village”.

It was also mentioned by the majority that because of their education from AIOU, they are more aware of importance of vote in democratic process. Many reported that education has changed their mindset and they will go for casting of their vote in next elections. They further added that by getting education they have realized that the functioning and performance of government is not the responsibility of politicians instead all individual have some responsibility since they have elected their leadership by the vote.

As far as the issue of practical participation in political activities is concerned, the findings remained a bit different in comparison with other areas of women empowerment. During interviews, it was strongly highlighted that still in Pakistani society; practical participation of women in politics is considered inappropriate especially in rural areas. Some of the related response are *“Hamaray haan auraton ka siyasat main aana bura samjha jata hay-* In our area the involvement of women in politics is considered inappropriate”, *“Shareef gharon ki auraton ka siyasat main aana mumkin naee hay-* Involvement of females from respectable families in politics is not possible”, *“Agar koi aurat siyasat ki baat keray tou yeh samjha jaata hay ke aazadi chahti hay-* If a female talks about participation in public politics, it is usually considered that she wants complete freedom in her life”, *“Siasat daano per tou khulay aam batain hoti hain magar hamanra culture yeh ijazat nai daita ke iss tarah auraton ko khulay aam discuss kia jaey-* Politicians are usually very openly discussed in public but our culture does not allow such open discussions on women.

Politics is considered as the domain of men being a strongly patriarchal society. But a very interesting fact is that this understanding of the phenomenon is developed

because of their education. So, the process of change of thought is being started. Participants pointed out during interviews that political participation of females is purely dependent upon needs of their males, like the responses show, *“Jub mardon ki zarurat hoti hay tou khud sath lay jatay hain vote dalwanay-* When men feel any need they themselves take us for casting of votes” *“baaz auqat aisa bhi hota hay ke auratain jalsay jalooson main jaein magar yeh sub mardo ki marzi se he hota hay-* It also happens sometimes that females participate in public processions but it only happens with the approval of males”. If they need women for vote, or participation in a procession, their participation is facilitated. But if a female wants to take some initiative to participate in politics at any level, it is usually discouraged.

Most of the study subjects reported that they feel themselves more aware of community level issues because of their education. Some of the related responses given during the course of interview are as follows: *“Mujhay yah lagta hay ke taleem ki wajah se meri samajh main bahot izzafa hua hay. Ab main behtar tareeqay se apni zindagi aur ird gird ke masaaail ko samajh sakti hu aur hul kernay ki koshish ker sakti hu. Aur agar open university na hoti tou shaid iss level tak main taleem hasil na keer pati-* I feel that due to education, I have enhanced my understanding capacity. Now I can better understand and deal with the issues in my life and surroundings. And if there were no Open university, I would not have been able to get education up to this level”. It was further reported that due to their increased knowledge about their people and problems, they are in a better position to take appropriate decisions for betterment in the society. But it is usually not supported by males at large.

Many respondents mentioned during the study that they do feel affiliation with different political figures and parties but it was explored that they mostly affiliation with same parties as of their men. On the basis of collected data however, it can be

concluded that yet an educated female has more chances of success for getting affiliated with a political party than an illiterate woman subject to other variables remain constant. Because in addition to gender and education, the family background, socio-economic status and power are very crucial variables as far as an individual's engagement in practical politics is concerned.

5.1.4 Social Empowerment Opinion/ Experience

Empowerment is a quite comprehensive, multidimensional, and complex phenomenon to study. It was tried to explore the maximum possible aspects of the phenomenon by probing and giving a lot of time to the respondents. The questions were again and again repeated for getting more in depth information. Another area of empowerment explored by the present study was Social Empowerment. Almost all of the female respondents were of the view that education through AIOU has many positive effects on social status and empowerment of women in Pakistan.

They were of the view that due to AIOU educational programmes women at same time improve their educational as well as social status in a society. Like some responses show *"Taleem hasil kernay se muashray main auraton kay maqaam main behtri aaee hay-* Educational attainments have improved the status of women in the society", *"Ab parhay likhay aur jahil ki baat ko sub barabar ahmiyat tou nai day saktay na-* Opinion of an educated person and illiterate can't be given equal importance by everyone", *"Parha likha insaan khud apni izzat karana jaanta hay-* An educated person him/ her self knows how to get respect from others". The methodology of AIOU distance learning system played a very important role in acceptance of females' education in rural areas of Pakistan. It is a very important dimension to understand that traditionally female education was not supported by males' especially local decision makers in many rural areas of Pakistan. The main

argument of such people was related to the issues of “Parda-Veil” and mobility of women.

The methodology of AIOU proved the best strategy to deal with such cultural issues related to female education in Pakistan. The following responses best explain the argument: *“Aam college door hain aur larkio ko iss lia ijazat nai milli magar open university kion kay ghar baithay taleem daiti hay tou issi liay ijazat milna aasan hay. Doosra open university ki taleem ziada mehngi bhi nai aur yeh kitabain bhi khud he day daitay hain-* Mostly colleges are far away and many females could not get permission to study there but because of distance learning mode of open university one can study while staying at home so it is very easy to get permission. Secondly the education through Open university is not much expensive and they give the books also with in same fee.”

“Open university se yeh faida hay ke pehli dafa parhnay ki ijazat laina aasaan hota hay aur jub banda F.A, B.A ker laita hay tou tub tak ghar walay khud he ijazat day daitay hain bahar ja ker workshops attend kernay ki- The main advantage of AIOU is that it is easy to get initial permission of study and when one studies and passes exams of F.A and B.A till then family members themselves become used to with this and consequently allow doing masters and attending workshops out of city and stay at hostel”, *“Asal wajah yeh hay ke pehlay daakhlay ki ijazat mushkil kaam hay warna uss ke baad tou khandaan walay khud he ziada izzat bhi daitay hain aur koi rukawat bhi nai daaltay-* Main thing is that the permission of initial admission is difficult otherwise after that family members themselves start giving more respect and do not create any hurdle in education of women” *“Ziada tar larkion aur auraton ko parhnay likhnay ke baad woh sub log bhi bahot izzat daiatay hain jo pehlay unn ke*

parhnay ke khilaaf hotay hain- Most of the girls and women after being educated are given much respect by those who previously opposed their education”.

It was reported by most of the study subjects that because of increased educational status they feel more respected and prestigious in their community. Their opinion is more regarded in different family and community matters. Women explained that in their communities, all those women who are illiterate are now a days, considered that they do not know anything even regarding their own children. Some statements given by the respondents are; ***“Parh likh janay ke baad aurat ki qadar main izzafa ho jata hay-*** After getting education, the worth of female is increased in the society”, ***“Parhi likhi larki ki baat ko aksar ghalat keh ker taalna mushkil hota hay-*** Mostly it is difficult to deny and ignore the opinion of an educated female”, ***“An parh aurat ko tou aaj kal apnay bachay bhi kuch khas nai samajhtay-*** Now a days, the opinion of an illiterate and uneducated female is often not given due importance by even their own children” ***“Ab aik an parh maan ko kia pata ke aaj kal ke daur ke masail kaisay hal ho saktay hain-*** How an uneducated woman could know the ways to deal with the issues of modern world.”

It was further added that because of education through AIOU, they are considered superior/ better than the illiterate women of their own age. In response these women feel confident in doing many things especially related to new technology. As today mobile phones and computers have diffused well in many rural areas culture in Pakistan. Women feel that those who are more educated consider it easy to learn and use these machines/ devices. Even if they do not know about the usage of any such technology even then their opinion is more regarded in comparison to uneducated women. Some relevant statements given by the study subjects are ***“Parhnay likhnay ke baad insaan khud ko kisi qabil samajhnay lagta hay-*** After getting education, a

person starts feeling able to do something”, *“Meray khayal main parhai se insaan main yeh confidence aata hay ke who koi naya kaam ker sakta hay-* In my opinion, education gives a person confidence that he can do something new which he never did before” *“Parhnay likhnay se bahot sari cheezo ki mohitaji khattam ho jati hay jaisay kuch nayee machinery wali cheez laina ho, tou insaan uss ka cover parh sakta hay aur chala ker daikh sakta hay ya an parh ki nisbat jaldi seekh sakta hay-* By education the dependence on others in many matters can be avoided like in buying something new related to machinery that one can better read its covers and can try and test it or at least in comparison to an illiterate can quickly learn it”

Another factor related to social empowerment of women is their mobility. The present research pointed out that the women who studied from AIOU think that they are more independent in their movement. They can easily go to market for shopping of all those things which were previously very difficult for them. Like the responses can be evident *“Parhnay likhnay se insaan main khud aitamadi aati hay aur who apni zarurat ki cheezain khud khareed sakta hay-* By getting education a person develops self-confidence and can buy things of his/her need”, *“Taleem se bahar ki dunya ki samajh aati hay aur insaan behtar tareekay se logo ka saamna ker sakta hay-* Through education the understanding of outer world get enhanced and an individual can face people in a better way.” They consider it normal to go outside for daily based requirements. It was a very crucial thing reported by the study subjects so it was tried to go in details.

One of the reported factors was awareness of all the ways and means of approaching different places. The women who do not get education, usually their mobility remains restricted to their own area or maximum to hospitals. Some of the relevant responses are: *“Workshops ki wajah se kafi din tak roz shehar jana para aur iss tarah yeh bhi faida hua ke bahot saray raston aur gadion ka pata chala-* Due to workshop, I had

to go to our city for many days on daily basis and one of its benefits is that I came to know about many routes and options of public transport” *“Meri teeno semester ki workshops mukhtalif centero main hueen balkeh aik tou Lahore main huee warna tou who sub jagahain pata nai main kabhi jati bhi ya nai-* All of my three workshops were held in different centers and one even in Lahore otherwise I would not have been ever able to visit all of these places” *“Ab kai dafa fees jama karwanay aur workshop attend kernay ka yeh faida hua ke main aasani se mukhtalif jagah pe ja sakti hoon-* Now because of different visits to submit fee and attend workshops, one of the benefits is that I can easily go to different places” *“Pehli workshop pe abbu saath Islamabad aey thay magar ab woh khud gadi pe bitha daitay hain aur wapsi pe main akailay he ghar tak chali jati hoon-* For my first workshop my father accompanied me to Islamabad but now he came to just bus station with me and on return, I myself go alone up to my home.”

5.1.5 Individual Autonomy Opinion/ Experience

Another area explored in quantitative analysis was autonomy and strength at individual level. A very high number of the respondents mentioned that they feel more autonomous and empowered at personal level due to their enhanced educational status by AIOU. It compelled the researcher to explore its qualitative aspect by face to face interviews with the study subjects. Individual autonomy is an idea that is generally understood to refer to the capacity to be one's own person, to live one's life according to reasons and motives that are taken as one's own and not the product of external forces.

Most of the respondents mentioned in the interviews that usually in our society females identity is related to the males they belong to. Like females identity is that of their fathers or husbands and sons but due to education a sense of achievement has

been developed and they got their own identity with their own names and accomplishments. Some of the responses given by the females during interviews are’

“Aam tor per khwateen ki apni koi pehchaan nai hoti balkeh unhain kisi ki beti, bewi ya maan ke naatay muashray main pehchana jata hay aur who auratain khud bhi apna taaruf issi tarah karati hain- usually women do not possess any personal identity rather they are identified in the society being some one’s daughter, wife or mother and mostly these women also introduce themselves in same way”, *“Aurat ki pehchan tou uss ke ghar ke mardo se hoti hay magar taleem se larkian khud ko aik mukamal alehda insaan ke tor per smajhnay lagti hain-* The identity of women depends upon males in their family but due to education, girls start perceiving themselves as completely independent human being”, *“Open university se parhnay ke baad bahot jagah per gharon se bahar hamain apnay naam se bulaey janay ka tajarba hua-* After getting admission in Open University we for the first time experienced some one calling us by our names out of homes.”, *“Taleem nay hamain yeh sikhaya ke aurat ko hamesha apni pehchan ke liay kisi doosray ki zarurat nai, magar yeh ussi surat ho ga agar khawateen khud yeh samjhain gi aur zindagi main aagay barhnay ke liay kuch kerain gi-* Education taught us that women does not always need someone for their identity or recognition, but it will happen only if women themselves start believing this and will do something to come forward.”

The study subjects reported that receiving postal mail in their own names on envelopes containing books, tutor letters, exam date sheets and results was a very good experience developing internal sense of happiness among females. They further added that usually the names of women in their area were not called outside home and their identity was like some one’s daughter, sister or wife. But education through AIOU gave their name a social identity resulting in their feelings of enhanced self esteem. Some related responses are, *“Jub pehli dafa apnay naam ke sath lifafay*

main kitabain mili tou aik ajeeb si khushi mehsus huee kion kea am tour per aisa daikhnay ki aadat nai thee- when first time I received books through postal mail in an envelope with my name over it, an unusual happiness was felt because we were not used to see this before” *“Jub bhi koi letter ya kitabain aati hain tou yeh ehsas hota hay ke ab meri bhi pehchan hay aur ghar se bahar log meray naam ko pehchantay hain-* Whenever some letter or books are received, I feel that now I also have some identity and people outside home also recognize my name”, *“Hamaray haan ghar se bahar muhalay main aam tor per larkion ka naam baat cheet main nai laya jata magar parhnay likhnay ki wajah se mujhay lagta hay ke ab mera naam meri pehchan hay aur mujhay yeh bhi mehsoos hota hay ke mujh main bahot kuch kernay ki salahiat hay-* Normally in our area the names of females are not taken in discussions at streets but due to education now I feel that my name is my identity and due to this I also feel that I have the capacity to do a lot of things .”

Talk of personal autonomy evokes the image of a person being in charge of his life, not just following his desires but choosing which of his desires to follow. Most of the respondents also felt that education from AIOU has enhanced their self confidence and they feel in a better position to take decisions related to their own self with more clarity and understanding of consequences. Most of these respondents further added that before getting education from AIOU, they always felt reluctant to do anything competitive because of lack of believe in their capacity. They mostly relied on criticizing the system and society for their lack of access to opportunities.

By education, now they have developed a sense of having equal capacity as others have. So, now taking initiative to apply for jobs and competitive positions etc. is very easy for them as compared to the past. Some of the related responses are *“Mujhay pehlay aisa lagta tha ke main kisi job ko iss liay hasil nai ker sakti ke uss ke liay bahot saray log apply ker rahay hon gaey-* Previously I always felt that I cannot get

some job because there will be many other people also applying for that”, *“Workshops ke dauraan yeh daikha ke bahot se laiq aur kamiaab log bhi open university se parh rahay hain-* During workshops, I observed that many intelligent and successful people are also studying from open university.” *“Sub se ahm farq yeh para ke ab lagta hay ke bahot parhay likhay aur laiq log bhi hum jaisay he hotay hain bus farq sirf khud aitamadi ka hay-* Most significant difference is that now I think that much educated and intelligent people are also like us and the difference is just of self confidence and self esteem.” The reason is their enhanced eligibility because of education, understanding of procedures and trust on personal capacity that if others can achieve, I also can achieve if adequate efforts and struggle is made.

Interesting information in this area was another change felt after continuous interaction with AIOU and that was a sense of accomplishment and self praise after achieving something i.e. passing the exams. They mention that now they don't see their any success just an incidence of luck rather it is mostly a result of their own efforts and determination. Many of the respondents reported that they have felt an increase in their performance in doing something at home or performing some role outside home. They added that self confidence leads them to not getting confused and give their full energy to work.

Some of the respondents were of different views and mentioned that the society is very strongly conservative and patriarchy is highly prevalent in behaviors. According to them still the education has not played any significant role because the way of thinking of grown up and older generation has to be changed. Other institutions especially religion and religious scholars/ clerics need to be included as change agents.

The views presented by this group of respondents showed a strong perception that the religious institution has been a strong variable to restrict the empowerment and self autonomy of women in Pakistan. Some of the relevant responses are *“Yeh dunya mardo ki hay aur woh tabdeel nai hon gaey-* This world is the world of men and they will never get changed”, *“Larkion ke parh likh jana se kia hota hay jub sub faislay mard he kerain-* What could happen by educating the girls when all the decisions are made by men.”, *“Jub tak molvion ka asar rahay ga tub tak auraton ke haqooq mushkil he milaein-*It is quite difficult that females would get their rights until the influence of clerics is reduced”, *“Agar waqae tabdeeli lay ker aani hay tou mazhabi rahnumaon ko sath milana ho ga-* If we really want to bring change then we have to ask support of religious scholars.”

5.1.6 Family Level Empowerment Opinion/ Experience

Data received through case studies and interviews also presented a relationship between females' education through AIOU and their feeling of autonomy and empowerment with in family and family related responsibilities. Many respondents of the study mentioned that a female's education do have impact on her chance of right to choice for selection of their spouse. It was highlighted through probes in the interviews that if a female is educated and especially when she gets higher education of postgraduate level, her family interaction get changed many ways with her.

One of the very important areas is decision making about the marriage of a girl. Usually in Pakistani society it is considered the domain of parents to solemnly decide about the spouses of their children especially female children. Respondents of the present study mentioned that they have noticed in their own lives a very unusual change in this regard. A large number of respondents mentioned that due to their achievements in education their parents are taking the issue of their marriage more

seriously. Now often the proposals are shared with them which were not done before in their society. Some of the important responses in this regards are as: *“Parhnay likhnay ke baad larki kay khandan main uss ke maqam main izzafa hota hay-* After getting education, the status of women inside family gets improved.”, *“Parhi likhi baiti ko tou maan baap bhi waisay he kisi ke bhi pallay nai baandh daitay-* If a daughter is educated, her parents does not go for her marriage with any one easily available.”, *“mujhay yeh lagta hay ke meray parhnay likhnay ki wajah se meray walidain mujhay her rishtay kay baray main batatay hain-* I feel that due to my education, my parents always share my every proposal with me”, *“Parhi likhi larki kion keh khud kamanay ki slahiat rakhti hay iss liay ab aksar khandaan walay ussay waisay bojh nai samajhtay jaisay pehlay samjha jata tha-* Since an educated female often have the capacity to earn herself so in contrary to past, now a days family members do not consider them as burden.”

Although, yet the decision is mostly in the hands of parents but for females under present study, it is indeed a great change that their opinion is asked and now they can speak on this matter with parents especially with mothers. Like a girl in response said *“apni shadi ke baray main parents se baat krna hamara haq hay-* It is our right to talk about our marriage with the parents”. Another factor reported by the respondents remained that due to education of their daughters from AIOU the parents also feel more empowered in deciding about their marriage. Like in the past, females are not considered purely a liability and burden on family.

Child rearing is usually considered as more prime responsibility of female than male in Pakistani society. With reference to social roles at home, it was mentioned by the female respondents that being educated, they deal in a better way with children and because of having knowledge of day to day affairs of modern world, do not snip kids on their anxiety related questions. Some of the related responses are: *“mujhay lagta*

hay ke bacho ko tokna nai chahiey balkeh un ki her baat ko tawajjoh se sun ker jawab daina chahiey aur meri iss soch ki wajah meri taleem hay jo open university se mili- I think that children should not be snipped rather they should be listened carefully and answered accordingly and the reason behind my such thinking is my education which I got from Open University.”, *“Mujhay lagta hay ke bacho ki nashonuma se mutaliq course parh ker ab main ziada behtar tareeqay se apnay bachon ki tarbiat ker sakti hoon-* I feel that by studying a course related to child development, now I can brought up my children in a better way”. It was further mentioned by a large number of the study subjects that they deal in a better way with their relations and use reasoning instead of resistance.

During interviews, females reported that in comparison to those who did not get education, they are in a better place to understand the needs of their children. Now they can help their own children or other children in family with reference to their day to day educational needs like helping through teaching school syllabus and supporting in home work given by the school. Following are the related responses given by the study subjects *“Bhi kam az kam yeh tou faida hay na ke apnay bachon ko khud parah saktay hain-* Atleast it is the benefit that now we can teach our children”, *“Main rozana bacho se school main parha hua lesson sunti hoon-* I daily ask children to tell whatever they have studied in school”, *“Aik faida tou yeh bhi hua yahan se parhnay ka ke itnay logo se mil ker yeh andaza hay ke kin kin subjects main ziada scope hay. Ab chotay behn bhaion ko guide ker saku gi-* One of the benefits of studying from AIOU is that by meeting so many people now I know that which subjects have more professional scope. Now I shall be able to guide my younger siblings”. It was usually quoted that educated females can ensure the educated families of future resulting in a complete educated society. The important thing to mention here is that almost all of the study subjects were of the view that if

there were no opportunity like AIOU; they might not have reached up to postgraduate level of education.

Another area came during study was females' decision making at domestic level. It is usually believed that one cannot consider him/ herself autonomous or empowered if he or she cannot take decision or participate in the process of decision making, concerning to their lives and lives of their family members. Findings of the present study showed that most of the women were of the view that education from AIOU does have a positive impact on females' participation in decision making at family level. It was reported that due to education and exposure of outer world females are more trusted for their ability to decide on day to day family matters.

Study subjects mentioned that they saw their mothers waiting for their fathers to decide even on very small routine issues. They usually did not decide on the permission requests of their children to participate in different activities at school or community. It was a norm to wait for fathers to come and give decisions but now they are observing that due to education and exposure of the world, they feel more empowered to decide on such things and male family members have also accepted their authority in this regard and often left the responsibility of most of routine family decision making on women. Like some of the responses present the picture: *"Taleem ka yeh tou faida hua ke ab her chhoti chhoti cheez ke liay mardo ki taraf nai daikhna parta-* At least this is the benefit of education that I do not need to look towards men for petty things", *"An parh auratain tou bacho ki choti choti bato per bhi decide nai ker sakti-* Uneducated women cannot decide even about petty routine issues of children."

Another point of view mentioned by the study subjects was that it is not a voluntary shift of decision making power on small family issues to women rather it is result of

increased involvement of women in earning activities. Since now many females are also earning their livelihoods with male counterparts while many others intending to get economically active and this is also one of the objectives to get education, so its consequence is females increased involvement in decision making process. Some of the related responses are *“Apna kamati hoon iss liay kum az kum apni chhoti chhoti chezon aur kamo kay liay doosro ke mohtaj nai hoti-* I am earning therefore not dependent on others for petty things.” But some of the respondents also mentioned that still all the important decisions are taken by males. Mostly males of our family are practicing patriarchal norms with masculine expressions. The right of decision making given to women is not given voluntarily rather the least important things in day to day decision making like what to cook, what should be the setting of things in home, and what to buy in dress for children etc comes in females jurisdiction. These things are left on females to decide since these do not affect males in any way.

Another important area highlighted during interviews was enhancement in ability to avoid conflicts at domestic level. It was reported by some of the study subjects that due to education they have learn the ability to better deal with the difference of opinion within the family. It is a result of better understanding of the situations due to increase exposure of these women to females from other areas. They mentioned that by discussions with other females and experience sharing they develop skills to improve their communication skills with family members. Some of the related responses are: *“Talem se main nay yeh seekha ke aik he cheez per mukhtalif log mukhtalif tareeqay se soch saktay hain aur yeh lazmi nahi hay ke koi doosray ki baat ko theek kahay-* This I learnt from education that there can be difference of opinion on one thing and it is not necessary that someone always agrees with the opinion of others”, *“Open university nay yeh moqa dia ke main bahot saray logo se mili aur issi wajah se mujhay pata chala ke mukhtalif jagah per baat kaisay ki jati*

hay- Open university provided me with the opportunity to meet different people and through this I learnt that how to speak in different situations". It was reported that education let them accept the realities in the society and that everything can't get changed in a day.

Most of the respondents also explained that due to education a major change is observed in their behavior towards males and females in the family. Due to education now they have realized that gender biased and discriminatory behaviors are wrong and such should not be possessed at least by women. Now these women were of the view that the discrimination between male and female children is purely unjust and this could be reduced by encouraging females to get maximum level of education. Few respondents mentioned their own cases that education and their active economic contribution has changed the behavior of their family towards them. Now they are treated equal to males in most of the things.

5.2 Case Studies

A case study is an intensive analysis of an individual unit describing the factors related to issue of enquiry in relation to its context. The case studies are usually made part of a research report to provide its readers with in-depth look at the individual in the context of his environment. We can learn a lot even by studying just one individual if the analysis being made is detailed enough to cover most of the background variables. The case-study method carries implications for understanding human mind and behavior in general. Through this method, we can study individual lives in the real context, by collection of information about the individual from multiple sources.

Therefore, some selected case studies of few of the respondents are given so the role of AIOU, in changing the lives of women, could be assessed. These are real life stories which present the factors involved in restricted females' mobility and exposure and the underlying factors in female subjugation and oppression in Pakistani society. The following case studies are the success stories where education helped females to overcome their issues and problems and it happened because of ODL opportunities given by the AIOU.

5.2.1 Case Study No.1

The first case study is of Sadia belonging to a remote village of Punjab province. She is in 36 years of age, a married women having 3 children all in adolescent age group. Sadia belongs to an educated family but at the same time being natives of rural area, follow traditions and cultural rituals strictly. When she was doing graduation (B.A), her family decided to marry her and soon after her B.A result she got married. After marriage she started a truly house wife life. When she became mother of 2 kids, it came in her mind that her husband is doing a lot of struggle to earn livelihood for her,

children and his own family. So, she consulted her friends and family regarding what could be done to become more suitable for some sort of decent job. On suggestion of a friend, she got admission in B.ed programme of AIOU. The study period was same as of her third pregnancy. She gave birth to her third baby soon after completion of her workshops. After successful completion her family did not allow her to go for doing any job. She was spending a routine family life when a drastic event changed everything she come to know that her husband was taking drugs since many years but he never told her anything. In past whenever she asked for his deteriorating health and reasons for his days long absence from home, he always claimed to his hectic work routine. At this time, her husband was in a very bad condition and he got seriously ill and consequently hospitalized for a couple of months. That was the worst period of her life when the health of her husband was worsening day by day, and there was no one to support her and the children. She felt so helpless and traumatized in that situation. These were the problems which she never thought about during her whole life. She decided to do something that could secure her family and life of her husband. She thought that it is necessary for their survival that she may earn something. After monitoring/ viewing of news papers for few days she got some opportunities short listed for applying. Soon she was offered a position as junior teacher in a school. According to her she was given this opportunity only because of her B.Ed degree secured from AIOU because where ever else she went for job the questions regarding experience as well as different official expertise were asked. She was happy being able to earn the livelihood for her family and can survive in the difficult times. She worked very hard in the school and applied all the different skills acquired during the course of her B.Ed degree. Soon she was promoted as coordinator of the junior section. Her husband is now recovered and doing a good job. She took admission in M.Ed programme of AIOU and recently is promoted as head of the junior section of her school. Now she is happy and confident but still there are many

fears in her heart because of her husband that uncertainty can any time again come to her life. Therefore she is determined to complete her master's degree and carry on with the further studies. She concluded that without AIOU her employment progress and further studies during the course of job was not possible.

5.2.2 Case Study No.2

Ammara who belongs to a rural area of Islamabad, the federal capital of Pakistan, now a days a married women living with her two children and husband. Her husband is a visually impaired person and despite of being polio effected lady they are living a happy and successful life. When Ammara was in her early childhood she suffered polio disease resulting in impairing of her one leg. In Pakistani society usually persons with any sort of disabilities are not living an ideal life because of lack of compatible environment and stereotyping etc. As now Ammara thought that she is a disabled person and she cannot get proper education to lead a successful life, she got admission in school but hardly could complete her education up to 10th grade level. Then she got admission in intermediate from AIOU as there was no need to go for the classes on daily basis. She passed her intermediate exams in 1st division and then she was very happy that she had overcome the issue of her physical mobility and family as well as community's discriminatory behavior against her. She started tuition at home and got admission in AIOU, B.A programme. After passing B.A she got enough confidence and enrolled herself in B.Ed programme of AIOU. After much difficulty and hard work she managed to attend the workshops and teaching practices. Her father was a very poor person so Ammara had to do this all purely on her own. Being physically handicapped, her family thought that she will not get some settled educated person as her life partner so she was married to a blind person in their village. Ammara was a very strong person and instead of living in poverty and extreme difficult circumstances she started applying for different job opportunities and with

the birth of her 1st child she received another good news. She received a letter from Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) for getting short listed on the basis of her test for the position of TGT. It was the greatest day in her life but a huge challenge of selection in interview was in front of her. She started preparation and appeared with full determination. A girl who was not allowed to attend a college is today selected as a teacher by the highest level selection body in the country. Now Ammara is a mother of two children and living a happy family life. She has now been enrolled in M.Ed programme at AIOU. On the basis of her education she today thinks that her children are more properly cared and guided for future. The family and community members who at one time considered Ammara just a lifelong liability is today among the most successful women in their area. Now she receives a lot of honor and respect from her family and relatives. This is a true case that how “ease of access” especially physical access in AIOU educational programmes can play a very important role in improving the quality of life among masses.

5.2.3 Case Study No.3

Uzma is a 35 years old woman belonging from Khyberpakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. She is married and having three children and now a days working as Master Trainer with a United Nation’s agency. Uzma was 25 when she was shortlisted for a teachers’ refresher course by a UN agency. She was living a routine life being a primary school teacher. Her Education was B.A and she was living with her husband and three children an orthodox life. She never thought about further studies or accelerated promotions in her life. The selection of such short term refresher course was a new experience of her life. She participated with full interest and tried to learn maximum from the opportunity. There she faced another world, a new world of international organizations and U.N.O. Due to her active participation, she was further nominated as Co-facilitator in next few trainings. There she decided to study further

and excel in her life. She came to know that many of the program related staff of these international and United Nations agencies were people with Social Sciences degrees. So, she got admission in M.Sc Sociology, learnt new things and skills related to socio-economic development of the society. Soon she was recognized as a good human resource in the district. Because of her Masters degree, she got a lot of confidence that now she is capable enough of working at a higher level. To further enhance her skills, Uzma got admission in AIOU's CYP postgraduate diploma in youth in development work. It was also a very good learning experience which further enhanced the self esteem of Uzma being a development professional. She was contacted by different local and national organizations for capacity building trainings of their staff. She left that school teaching job as now her skills are more suited for grown up adult audience. Because of her M.Sc degree from AIOU, she was offered training and capacity building related job in an international NGO working on the issue of education for all. Being trainer, she visited different cities of her Province. Then she came to know about a month long professional certificate course related to child protection issues and primary education in Thailand. She was happy that she was eligible to apply as the eligibility criterion was Masters Degree in Social Sciences. She got selected and beside this, she also attended different training workshops in different parts of the world during last couple of years. Now, she is working with a UN agency and enjoying a very good life style. According to her, AIOU played a very important role in all the success in her life. She learnt a lot and without AIOU she would have been in same position of a routine traditional primary school teacher in her area. She is planning to go further and get her M.Phil and PhD level education from AIOU in future. She thinks that through further education she can professionally excel further by developing her capacity and skill level.

5.2.4 Case Study No.4

Raheela is a married woman of 40 years of age. She is living with her husband and four school going children as a house wife. When she did her F.A as a regular student of college, her family decided her marriage. Her husband was a government servant in a federal government organization. Like a traditional Pakistani female, she started living with her husband and in laws in their town in a remote district of Sindh province of Pakistan. She never felt any need of studying further as she remained busy in many different domestic responsibilities. After one year of her marriage Raheela was blessed with a baby girl. Then with the average gap of two years, she gave birth to three more children. Now she was a mother of three daughters and a son. After a few years, her husband was transferred to Islamabad because he was promoted to a higher grade. It was a new city for Raheela so she faced much difficulty in finding schools and then admissions to her three children of school going age. She felt that Islamabad is an expensive city. Because of her long disconnect with the education she was unable to teach her children so they had to send them to tuition center. In a couple of years, her last kid was also admitted to school. She was very keen about education and socialization of her children but had the feeling that she is not educated enough and does not have capacity to guide and deal with the education related issues of her children. One day upon advice of a neighbored female, who did B.Ed from AIOU and now is a government teacher, Raheela got admission in AIOU B.A programme. Initially she was of the view that she might not complete her degree as she forgot her previous education, because of long gap but because of semester system and break up of subjects, she was able to manage her assignments. She felt a new confidence and pride while one by one her B.A degree's semesters got cleared. It gave her enough confidence that now she started guiding her children in their academic issues. Her husband was also happy as now Raheela started pulling their children one by one out of tuition center. It directly gave an economic relief to their

family. Without wasting any further time, she got admission in M.Sc and now is in her final semester. She thinks that now she can better take care of many different needs of her children. Now she is more aware of psychological needs, social needs and development needs of her children. She knows better about health and hygiene of her family because of many subjects studied during her B.A and M.Sc which are directly related to her day to day family issues and needs of her children. Her children are also happy that their mother is very helpful to them. Her opinion regarding any decision related to children is more regarded but previously her husband was of the view that she is a typical rural woman having no proper understanding of children related issues and needs in cities. Raheela thinks that her improvement in education has also enhanced her value and respect being an individual in the eyes of her husband as well as their native families.

5.2.5 Case Study No.5

This case study is related to a female Kiran who belongs from district Muzaffarabad of Azad Kashmir. She lost her right arm and become disable in 8 October 2005, earthquake. At that time Kiran was doing B.A and was in final year. She was dreaming to do M.A English since her childhood. Like a normal youth she was in high spirits to live an enjoyable life with all the ingredients. She was at her home when the drastic earthquake hit the area. Her house was also converted to debris in just few seconds. Her mother got fractures in both limbs and she was also badly injured and consequently her right Arm was removed. All her dreams were shattered due to just one incident. She started thinking that now she will never be able to study further as her writing hand was lost. She further developed negative thinking about her own self, like now who will marry her, she could not be a successful female etc.. She remained living in a continuous state of depression and was unable to deal with the trauma. During that period, she came to know that AIOU has offered "FREE OF

COST” admissions to all the residents living in earthquake affected areas. She thought that since she does not have any other option available and there is no money involved so the option can be availed. Kiran thought that if she did not succeed even then it will be fine since no money of her poor parents shall be lost and at least she will do some practice of writing with left hand. In start she felt much difficulty but soon she was able to write in a legible way. Because of her determination she completed her B.A from AIOU in required time period. She was happy that now she was again studying. At the same time she started teaching voluntarily in a tentage school in her area. Her whole community now gives her a lot of respect. She further carried her studies and now is in her final semester of Masters Programme. After completion of her first semester of M.Sc, she was offered job in an international humanitarian organization. Her parents are very happy from her and think that their daughter is again in normal life because of her efforts and the opportunity provided by AIOU. Now she does not think that her loss of one arm was loss of life. She further added that, she is educated and hard working female and hopeful that some very good person will be her life partner. Kiran closed her story with a statement that as her name is Kiran but AIOU is “*Umeed ki Kiran* – Ray of hope” for many.

5.2.6 Case Study No.6

Asma belongs to a remote village of southern part of Punjab province in Pakistan. She is now 22 years old living with her parents, one brother and two younger sisters. Her family enjoys a respectable position in community as they belong to a native family background and own a good piece of land. Her father is a matriculate but a person with progressive mindset and her mother is a traditional house wife. As there is only a primary school in their village and a high school in a nearby town, so like many others, Asma also left education after doing matriculation. She even did not desire for further studies. After a couple of years, just to kill time, she got admission in AIOU

intermediate programme. According to her, it was just because there was nothing else to do so she thought to have this experience. When she studied the courses like Criminology, Rural Development, and Human Rights, her mindset started changing. She started developing more interest in studies because she felt that education is very important for improvement of any society. After completion of F.A, she got admission in B.A where she studied different social subjects. She reported that because of her completion of F.A and admission in B.A her parents were very happy. Now she felt that she was given a different treatment by community. Family and relatives started asking about her opinion on different national and international issues. If somebody gets ill, they prefer to keep Asma with them while going to doctor. She said that they think she can better communicate to the doctor and consequently can better understand what doctor says. This honor and changed behavior of her own people lead her continue her studies after completing the B.A degree. She got admission in M.Sc and now is in her 3rd semester. According to her, she would have been a matriculate girl throughout her life and may have got married much earlier if her interaction with AIOU was not started. She further added that because of her initiative, now there are many girls who are doing, Intermediate, graduation or professional courses as PTC, C.T. She encouraged those females and convinced their parents for further education of their daughters. According to her, AIOU is the silent change agent in Pakistani society and doing a lot for improvement in the lives of humans especially women of Pakistan.

5.2.7 Case Study No.7

Fozia, a daughter of a broken family in which her father left and divorced her mother (Bibi Farkhanda) when she was just a few months old. She belongs from a town in central Punjab. Now she is working in an NGO and also doing M.Sc in Sociology from AIOU. This is the story starting from the time when Fozia was just a few months

old. When her father divorced her mother and pushed her out of his home, she went to her brothers' home. Now Bibi Farkhanda's brothers were the only hope as her father also died soon after her marriage. But the life at that time was so cruel to Bibi Farkhanda and due to family wealth and land and just to avoid the share of her they refused to let her live with them. They said that your character might not be good that's why your husband may have divorced you. She was having no option available to live and survive with her few months old Fozia. She cried and requested and then lived a couple of days with them. Then some relatives of another village allowed her to live with them and in response she was asked to do their home chores. She was happy that at least now she and Fozia have some place to live. After some years, she started sending her daughter in a government school in their village. She was very keen of studying but due to a lot of work to help her mother and lack of money, she could not continue her studies as the high school was not in their village. But Fozia did not leave effort and soon she got to know that she can do matriculation from AIOU. After a lot of crying and requests their landlord allowed her to send her admission fee to AIOU. In due course of time she completed her matriculation and was very happy. Then their landlord encouraged her to continue her studies and in response asked her to teach their young children of primary classes at home. She was happy because at the same time she was enrolled in intermediate and now having a comparatively respected position at home of their owners. Now they started using comparatively good and respectable words for her. She was given proper food being teacher of their kids. She was doing a lot of effort with their children and soon they started getting very good feedback from school in contradiction to their previous very bad results. Due to her determination, she continued her education and did B.A from AIOU. After floods in their area, many projects of government and civil society organizations started and soon she got a program level job in an organization (NGO) in their city. After some efforts their landlord also allowed her to do the job. It was a

job with very handsome salary and now the time started when her mother started receiving some ease in her life. After a few months they left that place and shifted to their new rented home. Fozia was remembering all the miseries in life of her mother so she tried a lot to give her comfort and happiness. She stopped her from doing anything and said that now it is time for her to work. She bought new dresses for her mother. She was very happy that now their life is comparatively settled. Fozia is now doing M.Sc Sociology and now she thinks that she can achieve a lot in life and sky is the limit. According to her, if there were no institution like AIOU, she would have been still living a life in extreme poverty doing home chores with her old mother in the house of their landlords.

5.2.8 Case Study No.8

Nauman was a four years old son of a poor mother (Shazia) whose husband died a few months back because of Tuberculosis (TB). After death of her husband she lost the only bread earner of the family so she keep on living with the joint family of her husband as it was the only culturally appropriate and necessary for living option. Their low socio-economic level of family's survival was upon a small piece of land and earning from labor of her husband's brother. She started working in house of a well off family in their area to earn some money to support her son and a little daughter of just two years. She was matriculate when she got married, so was considered an educated female in their small village. Day by day her economic condition was affecting the psyche of her children as she was not given any money by the family of her husband. Her kids' cries for toys and sweets became a routine in her life. She was very worried for the future of her children. One day she was working at home of the well off family and watched an advertisement on Television regarding admissions in AIOU. Her house lady told her that this is the system through which one can study being at home. She further said that "Shazia you are educated and still

young enough to pursue your further studies". She further offered her admission fee as a loan. Shazia was very happy that now she will continue her education and was hopeful that she will be in better position to support her children. But as she got admission in AIOU Intermediate programme and received the books, her brother in law became out of control and said that she will not study. As now her husband is dead so she is looking for options outside home. Actually education is just a tool that she could go outside and meet others. But Shazia was determined and silently tolerated all this and kept on sending assignments. She was not sure that whether it will be of any help or not but she was not in position to miss any chance for betterment in the lives of her children. After intermediate, she did B.A from AIOU and simultaneously continued the job of house maid. These more than five years were toughest period of her life when she worked a lot, tried her best to meet the needs of her children and faced harsh behavior of some family members. Soon after the completion of her B.A, she got a clerical job in a factory near their village. This was the turn in her life. Now she was getting a reasonable salary and more dramatically she started receiving respect from her family members as now her income was the major contribution in the home economy. She was happy being hopeful that her children can get education. The same brother in law who was against her education and blamed her for so many accusations asked her that why don't she go for further education. It was a great day for her that now she was in position to take independent decisions regarding herself and family. Then she got admission in M.A education and after completion of the degree, she started applying for better jobs. A year ago she achieved another milestone when she got selected on a position of Lecturer in girls college of her own district. She is very happy and prays for AIOU as this system has changed her life entirely. In her own words "AIOU is the lamp which is making the lives of weaker segments of society illuminated through the light of education".

5.2.9 Case Study No.9

Arifa is by profession a doctor and now a student of AIOU, special education Masters Programme. This case study is about life of a female in their relatives whose education through AIOU enabled her to change the life of her children especially daughters. Her name is Salma and now she is of age more than 45 years and working as a high school teacher in her district. When Salma was in high school she had an intense desire for higher education. She was very good in her studies and her family was also happy with her academic performance. After completion of her high school education, they got her admitted in a college in nearby town. She passed her F.Sc in first division but there was no degree college in their area. She went to her father and said she wants to do B.Sc from city. Because of economic constraints as well as traditional patriarchal cultural barriers, he refused to allow her for further education. Her grandfather also categorically refused to accept any of such requests by Salma. He said that her level of education is enough and more than required. She cried a lot but her father did not change his decision personally and also because of her grandfather. Actually he was a progressive person but having many fears in her mind as there was no other girl of their small village who was enrolled in the city for education and he was afraid that how her daughter shall come and go on daily basis. On the other hand he was not in favor of leaving young girls in hostels. He advised Salma to do B.A from AIOU but she refused and said that she want to study as a regular student in a college. Her mother was although in favor of her further education but she remained a silent character. Despite a lot of requests by Salma, her mother could not try to convince her father and grandfather. In this situation a year passed, and Salma was still sad because her dream of doing masters was not coming true. Her friend suggested her to accept the opinion of her father and get enrolled with AIOU. She half heartedly thought that doing some thing is better than fully leaving the education. She was not happy but she sent admission through AIOU. This half

heartedly taken decision actually proved a blessing in disguise for her life. She did B.A from AIOU and then B.Ed both in first division. During that period, due to media and other communication tools the environment of their village got changed and now their own college was upgraded to degree level. She started teaching in school of their area. Due to her B.Ed from AIOU she got a government job of TGT level in her city. Due to permanent nature of job and good salary, they allowed her to join the job. Salma got married and now her two daughters and two sons all are studying. Her elder daughter is in second year of her F.Sc pre-medical. She is determined that her daughters will get maximum education and she will facilitate them up to highest possible level. She is earning a good amount of money and she thinks that she is contributing equal to her husband in home economy and much more than him as far as other domestic responsibilities are concerned. She herself is doing M.Ed from AIOU and now in her final semester. According to her, the AIOU degrees lead her got selected as a teacher and ultimately break the vicious circle of gender discrimination at the family level. This will further bring change at community and over all society level.

5.2.10 Case Study No. 10

Javeria is now a days 18 grade officer in a Federal Government Organization in Islamabad the capital city of Pakistan. Javeria is living with her old parents and her one more married sister is living with her husband in Karachi and their only brother is living in Australia with her wife and children. Javeria when did B.A since then her parents tried a lot to get her married with some reasonable person. In Pakistani society, physical appearance matters a lot as far as marriage of a girl is concerned. Javeria was a very fatty girl with wheatish complexion. Her obesity became a serious problem for her parents in finding out some reasonable spouse for her. Even their relatives were not willing to marry their son with her. She waited for a couple of years

for any result of her parents efforts. She became highly disappointed and the continuous tension of her old parents started making her feel depressed all the time. Then to cope with the situation she decided not to marry ever and went to her parents and categorically told them to stop searching as now she has decided to live an independent life and will not marry any one. So, she has chosen AIOU for further studies and did B.Ed from AIOU and started teaching in a private school. It gave her a lot of confidence. She was determined and soon after B.Ed, she did Masters and completed her M.Ed from AIOU. Her salary was increased in the school and she was made vice-principal. She tried hard and gave all the required facilities to her old parents. After doing M.Ed from AIOU, Javeria got admission in M.A Teaching of English as Foreign Language (TEFL). Her parents never stopped her from any thing. In fact they left all the decision making related to their family in the hands of Javeria. One day she saw a grade 18 officer job opportunity while reading the news paper. She applied and got selected as Deputy Director and after a few months got a government residence. Now all those who previously rejected Javeria on the basis of her physical appearance can see her progress. Many of them are now willing to marry her just because of her achieved social position. She says that when there was nothing visible in her life, AIOU showed her path and by the grace of Allah and this educational institution she has achieved the status of an independent and successful individual.

5.2.11 Case Study No. 11

Saira belonging from a city of central Punjab was youngest in siblings and only sister with three brothers. Both of her parents were educated so they always supported the education of their children. She did matricualtion and F.Sc with first division securing distinction in school and college. She was famous in family and relatives for her keen interest in education. On the basis of her interest to do M.Sc in some field of Natural Sciences she decided to do B.Sc with Mathematics and Physics. While studying in a

degree college for B.Sc final year, she faced a road accident and her leg got fractured therefore could not appear in final exams and declared fail. A couple of months after declaration of the result, she was able to move with the help of a person so she decided to appear in supplementary examination but could not pass the exam. It disappointed her badly and she left hope of passing the exams and decided not to appear again. As it was her first experience of getting failed in examinations so it was very difficult for her to bear that. Her all other siblings (Three brothers) were postgraduate and having good jobs at that time. Soon her family forgot about her result and because of her accident and bad result, did not talk about her education with her. Time was passing and a silent feeling of failure in education kept on making her uncomfortable. She started feeling inferior in her family. At that time her parents and brothers were very tense because of her condition. Apparently she was normal but her interest in social activities and family events was heavily reduced. One day she saw an advertisement of AIOU on television for offering of admissions in different level programmes. When she heard that AIOU is one of the recognized mega universities of the world and hundreds of thousands of students are studying in it while being at home, she got interested to get some further information about the programmes offered by AIOU. She shared her interest with her mother so her family asked her to visit nearby Regional Campus of AIOU to get all the required information. She got a B.A level prospectus and was happy to see a very long list of subject options. She got admission and did B.A from Open University in due time with first division. Her subjects in B.A were mostly of Social Sciences and the reason according to her was availability of very interesting subject options in B.A general group. After doing her B.A she once again started thinking that still there is a lot for her to do in life. She was very happy and asked parents for further studies and they happily encouraged her. Now she is in her third semester of M.Sc in a field of Social Sciences and feeling very

energetic and confident. She is planning to appear for exams for civil services after completion of her M.Sc degree.

5.2.12 Case Study No. 12

Rashida is a mother of three children and living in Islamabad with her husband and kids. Her husband is a government servant in a clerical grade. When she got married, her husband was aged 40 years and she was married just a year after doing her matriculation when she was of 19 years age. She was brought up in Lahore city so was well aware of issues and problems of living in urban centers. Her husband was allotted a government flat so they were able to spend a normal life. After birth of consecutively three babies, she started feeling insecure because at that time her husband was in late forties and about 10 years were left from his retirement. As every day passed, her tension was increasing because her children were too young and there were no resources available other than the salary of her husband. She requested her husband that she wants to do some job but he replied that what sort of job can a matriculate woman get? She was aware that her husband is right but had no other way. Once she shared her concerns with a female who advised her to study further from AIOU. She said, you are quite young and by further education can get some appropriate job. She saved some money for next six months and got admission in F.A programme of AIOU and after doing F.A, she did CT (Certificate of Teaching). At that time her children started going to school and in the same school with in a year she got contract appointment as teacher. She continued her studies from AIOU and did B.A and now doing M.A from AIOU. At the same time she continued her hard work in her teaching job to successfully run the job contract. Approximately a few months before her interview in present research, her job was upgraded and now she is a permanent employee in a government primary school. She is very happy and feeling much secure in comparison to her past. Her husband is also very happy with her. She

is now not just able to financially support her family rather also teaching her children at home. She is of the view that without AIOU, she would have been in great tension and their life may not have been as secure and independent as it is today.

5.2.13 Case Study No. 13

Nabeela is today a gazzeted officer in a department of Government of Punjab. She is having two little children. Her husband is a lawyer. She was B.A when married having no job. Soon after her marriage, issues between herself and husband started. Fighting and verbal as well as emotional abuse became a routine. She was having no option than to compromise because her parents were old and she never wanted to increase their burden. One day her husband told her to leave his home and go back to her parents place as he does not like her. While with her parents, she got admission in M.Sc at AIOU. While she was in her second semester, some mutual friends of both the families mediated and agreed them to live together. A couple of months spent normally but same issues started again and became a routine of their life. With difficulty she managed to carry on her studies and with delay of a couple of semesters completed M.Sc degree. Meanwhile, regular quarrels and issues continued and she mostly lived in her parents' home. Life was going on in routine and a turn came when she saw advertisement of case worker positions in different cities by Public Service Commission. She applied and got that job of Grade 17. Previously none of her family member got government job of this level. Her job brought a huge change in her life. She was posted in Rawalpindi and soon started feeling strong enough to live and lead her life and the lives of her children. Now she was not as much depressed because of her family issues. In response to her appointment, initially her husband showed some reservations but allowed her to carry on. But the main difference was observed by her after a few months when her in laws started giving her more honor and respect. They for the first time started keeping a regular

contact to ask the well being of her and the children. She was happy that her in-laws family now accepted her completely. The major point of her success was the day when her husband came to her and asked that if she agrees they can try for her transfer to their home town because they miss her presence and she might be in difficulty while living in Rawalpindi. She happily agreed and soon got transferred. Because of her appointment in hospitals, she decided to do Masters in special education and got admission again in AIOU. Now she is very satisfied and living a successful life while giving her interview during workshop of her 3rd semester of Special Education Masters.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study was an attempt to assess and analyze the role of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) education system in promoting women's empowerment in Pakistan. The major purpose of the study was to examine the perception of AIOU's female postgraduate students about role of ODL in women empowerment in Pakistan and to suggest suitable measures to improve the ODL system in Pakistan for effective empowerment of female beneficiaries. An effort was made to collect the required data from female students from different areas of all four provinces of Pakistan also including AJK, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Islamabad to ensure representativeness of the study sample. These areas are within 20 AIOU's regional offices working in the country.

The present study was based on triangulation strategy in which both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were adopted. Initially the data was collected through a detailed and structured questionnaire and the findings were further verified through qualitative enquiry (in-depth interviews of 30 female postgraduate students). For the present research, proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the units of the study. A sample of 3000 female postgraduate students studying in their 3rd and 4th semester was selected for the purpose. The researcher would like to mention that out of total sample size i.e. 3000, response was received from 2508 respondents which is 84% of the sample size. The major findings have been presented in the forthcoming section.

6.1: Major Findings

The information gathered through questionnaire includes socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, effects of ODL on women empowerment in Pakistan, issues/ challenges faced by the female students of AIOU and suitable

measures for improvement of ODL system for the effective empowerment of female beneficiaries. The data analysis revealed the following major findings;

6.1.1 Demographic Analysis

This part of the research study wherein socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed revealed the following facts;

- The demographic data of the study reveals that 90% of the respondents were from Punjab province whereas rest 10% were from other provinces.
- Among respondents, 74% were from urban areas where as 26% of the total sample was from rural areas.
- Data indicated that majority of the respondents were from Rawalpindi, Lahore, Islamabad, and from Faisalabad and also indicates low participation rate from regions i.e. Abbotabad, Dera Murad Jamali, and of Sukker among the selected regions for the study.
- The study reveals that 77% of the respondents were from faculty of Education, followed by 14% from faculty of Social Sciences, and remaining 9% were from faculty of Arabic and faculty of Natural Sciences.
- The age analysis of the respondents shows that majority of the respondents were middle aged between 20-40 years.
- The information related to the respondent's monthly income reveals that half of the respondents (50%) were in govt. and private services. Among these working people (1360/ 54.2% of total respondent) 41% were having income less than Rs.20,000 per month. Further data indicated that majority (61%) of the respondent's family monthly income was below Rs.30,000. The income analysis of the respondents and their families' shows that a vast majority of the respondents belonged to middle working class.

- Data also shows that 55% of the total respondents were living in joint family system as compared to 34% who were having nuclear family system.
- Data further indicates that 43% of the respondents were married women. The analysis of the ages of respondent's children shows that majority of married respondents were having children up to 10 years of ages. The current is based on a comparatively young population of respondents between the ages of 20 to 40 years.
- Data of the study shows that the respondent's maximum years of affiliation with AIOU is about 8 years and minimum time period of affiliation with the institution is about 1 ½ years.

6.1.2: ODL System of Education Analysis

This part of the study based on the respondent's opinion about females seeking admission at AIOU and major findings includes:

- The analysis of the data shows that 74% of the respondents were not agree with this reason that females only come to open university because they don't have any other option or its difficult to get admission in other universities for them.
- 92% of the respondents were agree that AIOU offers the opportunity of education while staying at home.
- Another 50% of the respondents were having the opinion that females get admission at AIOU because of its lesser fees than other universities.
- A high majority (91%) agreed with distinguishing feature of AIOU that it provides an opportunity to study while in service.
- Majority of the respondents (90%) were agree that AIOU educational system allows continuation of education after a certain period of time.

- The study shows that 43% of the respondents were agree that it is comparatively easy to pass AIOU exams as compared to 57% of the respondents who thinks otherwise.
- Supporting AIOU student friendly approach, 66% agreed that it permits one to extend the completion period of a program.
- It was further revealed that 67% of the respondents were agree that the materials provided by AIOU are self-sufficient for their studies.
- The findings show that 60% of the respondents were agree that choices of conventional universities are limited in their respective areas.
- A high majority (92%) agreed that AIOU offers education with no age restrictions. Thus, it becomes one of the major reasons to get enrolled at AIOU.
- 89% of the respondents agreed that no doubt education enhances one's skills and definitely brings progression in professional existence.
- Results show that 80% of the respondents were agree that AIOU offers a wide range of courses/discipline in contrary with other educational institutions.
- Furthermore, 87% of the respondents were agree that the flexible learning system of AIOU in which regular physical attendance is not compulsory is one of the major reasons for higher female enrollment at AIOU.
- The study also includes data about respondent's personal reason for seeking admission at AIOU and important reasons included; opportunity to study while in service, opportunity of education while staying at home, unable or unwilling to physically attend the classes, and continuation of education after a certain period of time.

6.1.3 Women Empowerment Analysis

For the current research study women empowerment is assessed from five aspects including economic, social, political, individual autonomy, and of family through opinions and personal level of empowerment attained by the respondents via AIOU's education. Following paras reveals the major findings of different aspects of women empowerment.

6.1.3.1 Economic Empowerment Analysis

- The analysis of the data shows that 98% of the respondents were of the view that AIOU has contribution towards economically empowering women all over the country.
- Study indicates that 91% of the respondents were of the view that education through AIOU enhances women's access/control over family resources.
- Findings show that 93% of the respondents were of the view that education through AIOU enhances women's access to employment opportunities.
- Data indicates that 93% of the respondents were of the view that education through AIOU enhances women's economic contribution to family support.
- It was further revealed that 73% of the respondents were of the view that education through AIOU enhances women's ownership of family assets/land. Although some 28% of the respondents were not agree that education has any role in accumulating women possession of family assets in Pakistani society.
- Furthermore, 79% of the respondents were of the view that AIOU education enables women to take financial decisions of purchasing different household accessories more confidently especially if they are earning as well. Although 21% of them mentioned that AIOU does not enhance the capacity of making independent purchases.

- The data related to the respondent's personal attainment level of economic empowerment shows that 80% of the respondents were in one way or the other became economically empowered women with the help of their education.

6.1.3.2 Political Empowerment Analysis

- The data shows that 77% of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU has influenced in bringing political empowerment among women all over the country. However 24% of the respondents were not having the view that education has any contribution towards political empowerment of women in Pakistan.
- The findings presented 80% of the respondents were having the views that generally education from AIOU has increased women, awareness of different political systems and their activities and affairs involved in running a state or government.
- 68% of the respondents were having the opinion that education from AIOU has increased family support for women's political participation. However, 32% were of the view that there is no relation between education and domestic support for women political participation.
- It is to further mention that 84% of the respondents were having opinion that AIOU has a strong role in uplifting political empowerment among women by enhancing their confidence so they can exercise their right to vote.
- Majority (80%) of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU education increases women participation in community level decision making process in Pakistan.
- Furthermore, results show that 61% of the respondents were having the opinion that education through AIOU enhances women's chance of getting affiliated with some political party/group. Although 39% of the respondents

were not having the perception that AIOU has any role in engagements of women in political parties.

- The study data further reveals the respondent's personal attainment level of political empowerment due to education from AIOU. The analysis of the data shows that 73% of the respondents were in one way or the other achieved political empowerment through their education from AIOU.

6.1.3.3 Social Empowerment Analysis

- Analysis of the data shows that 93% of the respondents were having the strong perception about the role of education in social empowerment of women.
- Findings presented that 89% of the respondents were having the opinion that generally education from AIOU has increased women status and respect in the society.
- Another major finding was, 76% of the respondents were having the opinion that education enhances social empowerment of women with reference to their freedom of movement in the society. Although 24% of the respondents were not agree with the role of AIOU education in women's mobility/ movement in different domains of social life.
- It is also worth mentioning that 92% of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU has an influential role in creating women's positive image being educated female members of the Pakistani society.
- A high majority (79%) reported that AIOU's education increases women awareness and understanding of their surroundings and women in return becomes more participative at community level activities. Although 21% of the respondents were not agree that education has any role in women's outside family participation at the community level in Pakistani society.

- Furthermore, 88% of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU education has an influence on women's ability to avail basic facilities of life.
- Education has a significant effect on women's social positioning, status in their communities, and on their roles in the respective society. The analysis of the data shows that 82% of the respondents were in one way or the other, with the help of their education, marked themselves as socially empowered women.

6.1.3.4 Individual Autonomy Analysis

- The data shows that 89% of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU has influenced individual autonomy among women all over the country.
- It was revealed that 76% of the respondents were having the opinion that generally education from AIOU has increased women's individual identity in the society. Although 24% of the respondents were not with the perception that AIOU education has any contribution towards women's own identity as an independent individual in Pakistan.
- A high majority (94%) mentioned that education enhances women autonomy with reference to their self-confidence.
- It is also among major findings that 94% of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU has a strong influence in enhancing women's self-esteem.
- Results show 92% of the respondents were with the opinion that AIOU education enabled women to improve their qualification which in returns ensure their self-efficiency in all spheres of life.
- Furthermore, 94% of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU education has an influence on women's ability to better perform different social roles.
- The data also shows the respondent's personal attainment level of individual's autonomy due to education from AIOU. The analysis of the data reveals that

89% of the respondents were in one way or the other, with the help of their education, marked themselves as individually autonomous women.

6.1.3.5 Family Interpersonal Analysis

- The analysis of the data shows that 95% of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU education has positive influence on improving female status within the family in Pakistani society.
- It is further revealed that 83% of the respondents were having the opinion that generally education from AIOU enhanced women status within the family by empowering them with their participative role in domestic decision making process.
- Majority (78%) of the respondents supported that AIOU has increased women's ability to avoid domestic conflicts.
- Findings show that 84% said, AIOU has an influencing role in uplifting women self-esteem which helped them to decrease gender inequality within the family.
- 62% of the respondents mentioned, AIOU education enhances the level of awareness among women about their rights including right to choice for selection of their mates as well as of their children.
- A high majority (91%) were having the opinion that education through AIOU enhances women's ability to deal with routine issues of children.
- The data of the study further reveals respondent's personal attainment level of empowerment at family interpersonal level due to education from AIOU. The analysis of the data shows that 82% of the respondents were in one way or the other, with the help of their education, marked themselves as empowered women at the level of family.

6.1.4 AIOU Knowledge Utilization and Dissemination

This part of the study consisted on the respondent's views about utilization of AIOU's education in their daily life as well as its dissemination to others in the family or in their surroundings.

- It was concluded through findings that 96% of the respondents responded that education from AIOU has improved their understanding about daily life matters. They positively utilize their educational skills for performing different tasks more efficiently.

6.1.5 Awareness about other AIOU's Students of the Area

The study also reveals respondent's opinion about awareness of other female students of AIOU in their respective communities.

- It was also found that 91% of the respondents knew women in their communities who are enrolled in different courses at different levels with AIOU.

6.1.6 Learning of Personal Skills as Student of AIOU

This part of the study data indicates respondent's opinion about their learning of personal skills as students of AIOU self-study courses.

- The analysis of the data reveals that 96% of the respondents were agree to some or great extent that with the help of self-study courses they have been able to learn the skill of organizing their own study plans.
- Findings show that 95% of the respondents were agree that AIOU's self-study courses have enhanced their personal skill of reading.
- A high majority (96%) responded that due to AIOU self-study courses females have become capable of preparing their own lessons.

- It was further revealed that 95% of the respondents were agree that because of AIOU self-study courses they have been able to do self-assessment of their own written work.
- Study results show that 93% of the respondents were to some or great extent agree that AIOU self-study courses has a significant role in their improved communication skills with their other class mates.
- It is also worth mentioning that 91% of the respondents agreed that due to AIOU self-study courses they can help younger school going members of the family.
- Further to mention that 87% of the respondents agreed that AIOU's self-study courses enhanced their learning capabilities of personal skills to boost their confidence.
- Study also revealed that 94% of the respondents were to some or great extent agree that they have become able to use theoretical knowledge learned from books in their work situation.
- Another, major finding was, 88% of the respondents agreed that because of education they have learned the skills to put their positive contributions into the family matters and to community issues.
- Findings presented that 92% of the respondents were agree that they have been able to advice and guide others to take up AIOU courses.
- Furthermore, 83% of the respondents were agree that education enhances individual's personal skills to get themselves aware of the surroundings and could make independent judgments about issues concerning nation.

6.1.7 Rating of the Study Materials, Tutorial Meetings, and Regional Offices/Campuses

- The data showed that 74% of the respondents' opinion regarding rating of the study materials received from AIOU was good and excellent.
- The findings revealed that 61% of the respondents' opinion regarding rating of the effectiveness of tutorial meetings was good and excellent.
- Results further indicated that 54% of the respondents' were of the opinion that they have been facilitated and received due cooperation by the regional offices/ campuses.

6.1.8 Analysis of the Examination System

- Study also highlighted that 94% of the respondents were having the view that generally AIOU's conduct of examination and other aspects of examination system is appropriate.

6.1.9 Respondent's Choice to undertake their First Degree via AIOU

- According to present research, 55% of the respondents were having the opinion that AIOU education has positive influence on them and they would prefer to study at AIOU.

6.1.10 Attained Empowerment Status (AES) Score at Different Levels

Attained Empowerment Status (AES) of the respondents was measured for economic, social, political, individual, and family level of women empowerment.

- At power with the impact of AIOU on economic and social empowerment, 78% of the female students also mentioned that they have achieved personal autonomy because of education from AIOU.

- It was reported by 75% of the respondents that they have been economically empowered through AIOU's educational system.
- According to 71% of the respondents, they have been socially empowered through AIOU's education.
- Findings related to family level empowerment reveals that 64% of the respondents attained this very area of empowerment due to getting educated from AIOU.
- Among the study subjects, 56% of the respondents attained political empowerment through AIOU educational system.
- The present study shows that 84% of the respondents achieved the high "Overall Attained Empowerment Status" due to education from AIOU.

6.1.11 Suitable Measures for Improvement of ODL System

This part of the research study is replicating the major findings of the data related to respondent's suggestions of suitable measures for improvement of ODL system for effective empowerment of female beneficiaries. Suggestions are based on issues/challenges which were faced by female students of AIOU.

6.1.11.1 Suggestions regarding Workshops

- Study respondents suggested that AIOU should decrease the number of per day sessions in the workshops and the days may be increased.
- It was also mentioned by the respondents that workshops should be held in the start of semester so students get maximum benefits from them.
- Workshops should be more participative and the active participation from the students may be encouraged.
- Workshop centers need improvement especially regarding availability of basic facilities.

- Workshops conducted in regions should provide hostel facility for the students coming from long distances.

6.1.11.2 Suggestions regarding Tutorial Meetings

- To make the tutorial meetings more effective AIOU should make tutorials a compulsory/ mandatory for students.
- There should be effective monitoring of tutorial classes to ensure the participation of tutors.
- To improve the communication between tutor/student there should be a mandatory orientation meeting of them at the start of each semester so students may come to know about their tutors and tutors get familiar with their respective students.

6.1.11.3 Suggestions regarding New Students of ODL

- There should be an orientation session held by AIOU with each new batch regarding introduction on ODL system of education so that the students switching from conventional system may not encounter problems.

6.1.11.4 Suggestions regarding Mailing of Study Materials

- To avoid delays in mailing of study materials, it was suggested by the respondents that the books/ study packages should be forwarded to regional offices and delivered to respective students from there so if not received they can get it personally.

6.1.11.5 Suggestions regarding Study Materials

- Some courses material is quite old at post graduate level and needs revision with reference to current scenario.

- It was suggested by the respondents that to achieve the quality output from students' allied materials should include publications of authors from local/ regional countries.
- It was highlighted by the respondents that there is a need to develop new courses and programmes i.e. psychology, philosophy, international relations, criminology etc.

6.1.11.6 Suggestions regarding Examinations

- The respondents emphasized that examination centers should be near students' homes as they have to travel for hours to reach examination center.
- It was mentioned by the respondents that many examination centers are not properly facilitated with the required utilities. So the respondents suggested that space in regional offices should be increased to cater the maximum needs.
- It was highlighted that issues related to errors and results need efforts and time to get resolved. The AIOU authorities should take initiatives so the swift processing of such complaints could be done.

6.1.11.7 Suggestions regarding Correspondence/Communication

- It was mentioned by the respondents that sometime students do not received information/ communication letters from university on time resulting in missing of workshops, admission etc. They suggested that for postgraduate students, the AIOU should Email/ SMS the information of urgent nature to avoid such problems.
- It was suggested that as the number of students is increasing day by day so AIOU should increase telephone lines to facilitate the students in contacting officials at AIOU main campus.

- To further enhance the effectiveness of communication for best facilitation of the students, trainings may be organized for AIOU staff on effective communication skills.
- Study respondents pointed out that sometimes regional office do not cooperate regarding tutor information and issues related to examination or admissions. It was suggested that Regional offices need improvement in their capacity/ access to information so the dependence upon main campus may be reduced.

6.1.11.8 Suggestions regarding Admissions

- Issues like error the entry of student's name and any other mistake in student data takes semesters and semesters to get corrected. The students have to visit main campus for the corrections, so the regional offices may be empowered to deal with these issues.
- Admission conformation takes much time i.e. few months to be finalized. It was suggested that instead of waiting for finalization of whole process it would be better if the applicants' status may be upgraded after every two weeks on the university website.

6.2 CONCLUSION

In the light of current study it can be concluded that AIOU through its ODL system of education is playing a vital role in promotion of women empowerment in Pakistan. The students of AIOU constitute a majority of females from urban centers to remote areas of the country. A large number of AIOU female students were married belonging to middle class. In Pakistan joint family system is prevailing which is also supported by the findings of current study but emerging shift in family structure to nuclear is also evident. The respondents' longer affiliation with AIOU strengthens the reliability of data as longer relationship enhances better understanding of ODL

system. On the basis of the findings of the study it can be concluded that distinguishing features of AIOU which turn into reasons for females to join AIOU includes; opportunity of education while staying at home, lower fee structure, study while in service, no age limits and continuation of education after breaks. AIOU offers a wide range of courses/discipline which is also an important reason behind joining the institution.

The study found that there is a strong relationship between AIOU's ODL system of education and women empowerment in five areas i.e. economic, political, social, individual autonomy, and at the family level. There is a strong realization that education is intrinsic for women to be economically empowered in present challenging era. AIOU's influential role in different areas of economic empowerment of women in Pakistan includes women's access/control over family resources, access to employment opportunities, economic contribution to family support, women's ownership of family assets/land, and to make small or large purchases independently.

AIOU's positive role in different areas of political empowerment of women in Pakistan includes women's knowledge of political systems, exercise of right to vote, and participation in community level decision making processes but still politics is considered a male domain in Pakistan. It was explored that this very area yet needs specific efforts to be done for active participation of women in political/ electoral process. Role of AIOU in social empowerment of women includes; women feel prestigious, respectful and welcomed for participation in activities at community level.

The study further concluded that there is a strong relationship between individual autonomy and AIOU's education. Education from Open University enhances women autonomy which includes increased exposures, self-confidence, and feeling of self-

efficiency which enable them to be independent individuals of a society. The current study find out that women empowerment through education entails positive changes in their lives and reduce their present state of vulnerability. They can contribute effectively into the family's decisions, routine family matters, resolving family conflicts, and more importantly bringing up new generation in a better way. Traditionally passive roles of women are strongly enculturated therefore, multidimensional efforts are required to bring the change and the wider opportunities of education through ODL by AIOU assist women a lot.

The study further concluded that for the improvement of AIOU system, the workshops conducted in regions should be provided with hostel facility. Tutorial meetings should be made compulsory. Malpractices related to assignments should be discouraged and actions may be taken against persons involved. Orientation sessions should be held with new students for explanation of the system and procedures. Courses/ study materials may be developed by incorporating examples from local culture. Active monitoring of examination centers should be done by the AIOU authorities to reduce unfair means and malpractices and this will further increase women confidence on ODL system. Refresher courses as well as trainings on effective communication skills may be organized regularly for AIOU staff for behavioral change and enhancement in efficiency.

6.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been proposed for the enhanced empowerment of women in Pakistan through improvements in ODL system in AIOU.

- Tutor's training regarding ODL system of education is needed to guide and facilitate the students enabling them to benefit from the programme and effectively use in their professional life.

- For ODL institutions, part time tutors, to cater the outreach needs, may be appointed on periodic basis of at least 5 years to avoid procedural delays in every semester and to keep up their interest.
- Research related activities/ thesis should be encouraged to practically engage the female students in learning experience which is otherwise missing in ODL system of education.
- Open and distance learning institutions should launch their own TV channels to enhance the effectiveness of ODL initiatives through disseminating related information and airing of educational programs.
- The opportunity of atleast 10-20 merit based scholarships/ fee waivers in every programme for female students may be extended in the last two semesters on the basis of their performance in the first two semesters.
- A quota of free seats (without any economic expense) may be allocated to women from low socio-economic status in every programme, so they could also pursue their education which otherwise they cannot afford.
- ODL institutions should start vocational training programmes for females in different areas on the basis of availability of resources in those areas and the market needs. Preference should be given to remote areas in the country.
- ODL institutions should join hands with government departments and civil society organizations concerning with social welfare and human rights to enhance the level of awareness and capacity building of masses, especially women, to better deal with their problems.
- In future comprehensive researches and surveys may be conducted on the women issues. This will provide accurate data and enable the state and other stakeholders to take effective measures and introduce legislations to overcome the structural inequalities and discriminations in different spheres of life.

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Following are the details of the selected educational institution (AIOU):

Introduction

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is the first Open University in Asia. AIOU is a unique institution in Pakistan because of its philosophy, system, approach, functions and overall structure. The University with its main campus at Islamabad and huge network of regional centers spread all over the country is serving its clientele all over Pakistan and in the Middle East. AIOU is a Distance Education institution, which provides multi disciplinary education from basic to doctoral level programs. The university has established 36 regional campuses and centers in various parts of the country to coordinate and facilitate decentralized system of education of the university. The regional directors keep a roster of qualified teachers and experts in each field of study in their area and enlist them as the university's part-time tutors. Each group of students is entrusted to a tutor for guidance.

The main objectives of the University as enunciated in the Act are as under:

- To provide educational facilities to people who cannot leave their homes and jobs in such manner as it may determine.
- To provide such facilities to the masses for their educational uplift as it may determine.
- To provide facilities for the training of teachers in such manner as it may determine.
- To provide for instruction in such branches of learning technology or vocations as it may deem fit, and to make provision for research and for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge in such manner as it may determine.

Institutional Profile

- The biggest university in the country with course enrolment of 1,806,214 by the year 2004-2005.
- More than 950 courses being offered in the year 2004-2005.

- AIOU has 09 regional campuses, 23 regional centres and 90 part-time regional coordinating offices.
- Over 1400 Study Centers are established throughout Pakistan.
- The largest Teacher Education institution in Pakistan with average enrolment of one million students

Student Profile

- More than 70 percent students employed.
- Female enrolment more than 50 percent.
- The rural-urban distribution of the students 58% and 42% respectively.
- No age limit for enrolment in university programmes.

Brief History of AIOU

The Allama Iqbal Open University was established in May, 1974, with the main objectives of providing educational opportunities to masses and to those who cannot leave their homes and jobs. In the last 37 years, the University has more than fulfilled this promise.

It has opened up educational opportunities for the working people and has provided access to the females on their door steps. It has also done pioneering work in the field of Mass Education. It is now breaking new grounds in the fields of professional, scientific, and technical education. It is attempting to reach out to the remotest areas of Pakistan. It is also attempting to harness modern information Technology for spreading education in Pakistan.

The AIOU, when established in 1974, was the second Open University in the world and first in Asia and Africa. It, thus, speaks of the foresight of the policy-makers of that time. As the last 37 years of AIOU have proved, Distance Education has opened up new opportunities for millions, particularly women, and supplemented the efforts of the federal and provincial governments in a big way and that too without becoming a burden on their resources.

Latterly, the University is trying to fulfill another current need. Professional and technical education in Pakistan is becoming very costly, especially in recent years, because of government policy to encourage private sector in these fields. The lower

consisting of 64% of the total students enrolled at post graduate level programmes. Details of postgraduate programmes offered by AIOU are as following:

Doctoral Programmes

- Ph.D. Iqbal Studies
- Ph.D. Urdu
- Ph.D. Education in Distance and Non-formal Education (DNFE)
- Ph.D. Economics
- Ph.D. Chemistry
- Ph.D. Statistics
- Ph.D. Physics
- Ph.D. Food and Nutrition
- Ph.D. in Agricultural Extension
- Ph.D. Teacher Education
- Ph.D. Educational Planning & Management (EPM)
- Ph.D. Special Education
- Ph.D. in Islamic Law and Jurisprudence

MS/ M.Phil Programmes

- M.Phil Iqbal Studies
- M.Phil in Islamic Law and Jurisprudence
- M.Phil Urdu
- M.Phil Educational Planning & Management (EPM)
- M.Phil Physics
- M.Phil Mass Communication
- M.Phil Statistics
- M.Phil Economics
- M.Phil Food and Nutrition
- M.Phil in Pakistani Languages and Literature
- M.S. Computer Science
- M.Phil Chemistry
- M.Phil Teacher Education
- M.Phil in Pakistani Languages and Literature

M.A/ M.Sc/ PGDs

There are 40 Postgraduate (MA/ M.Sc/ PGD) programmes offered by AIOU. Details of the programmes are given in “Sample”.

AIOU Regional Centers/ Campuses

AIOU has a vast network of regional offices/ campuses throughout Pakistan. The university has established 36 regional campuses and centers in various parts of the country to coordinate and facilitate decentralized system of education of the university. The regional directors keep a roster of qualified teachers and experts in each field of study in their area and enlist them as the university’s part-time tutors. Each group of students is entrusted to a tutor for guidance. Assignments written by the students are evaluated by the tutors and returned to them, with comments. The regional campuses also arrange practical training, teaching practice, workshops and seminars and facilitate holding of examinations in their own areas. Details of these offices are:

Norther Areas/Federal Areas/AJK,

- ISLAMABAD., Regional Office
- SKARDU, Regional Office
- GILGIT, Regional Office
- MUZAFFARABAD (A.K), Regional Office
- MIRPUR (A.K), Regional Office

Balochistan,

- QUETTA, Regional Office
- TURBAT, Regional Office
- DERA MURAD JAMALI, Regional Office
- ZHOB, Regional Office
- KALAT, Regional Office

Sind

- KARACHI, Regional Office
- HYDERABAD, Regional Office
- THATTA, Regional Office
- MITHI, Regional Office

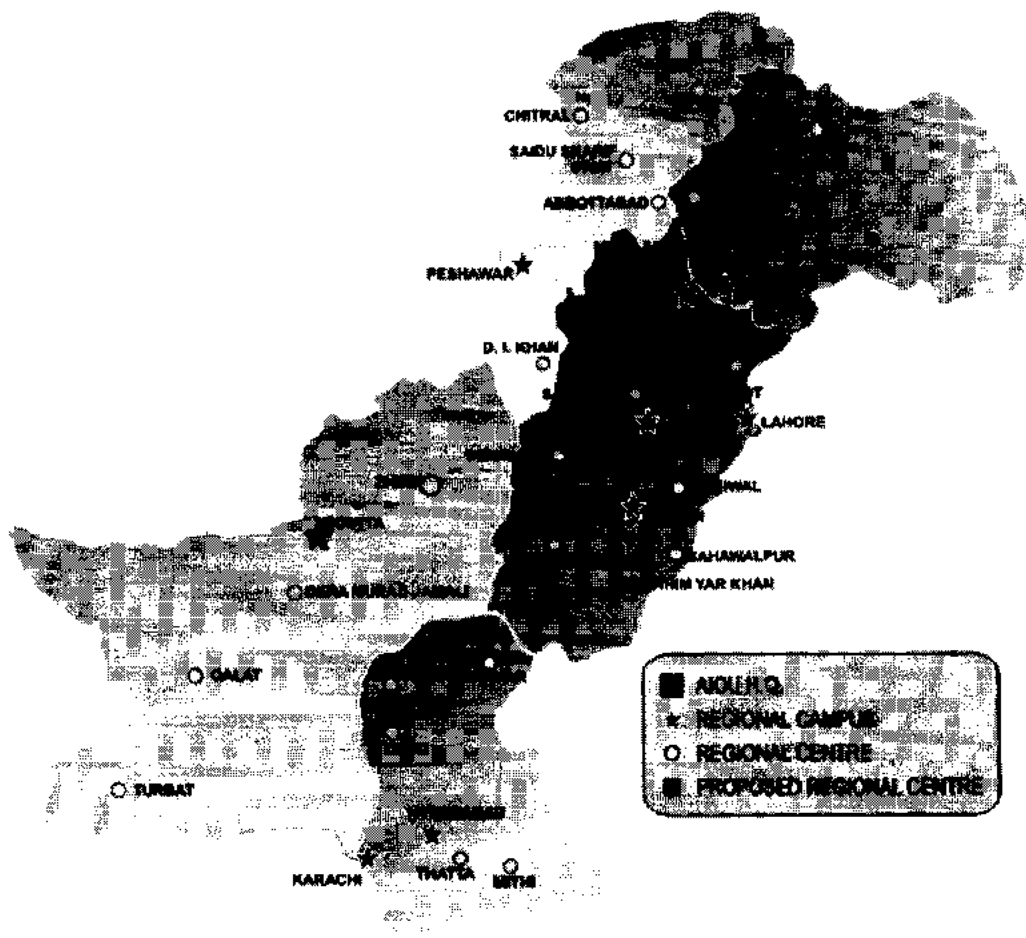
- SUKKUR, Regional Office
- Larkana, Regional Office
- Dadu, Regional Office
- Umer Kot, Regional Office

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

- Abbottabad
- Chitral
- D.I. Khan
- Peshawar
- Swat

Punjab

- BAHAWALPUR, Regional Office
- MULTAN, Regional Office
- DERA GHAZI KHAN, Regional Office
- SAHIWAL, Regional Office
- LAHORE, Regional Office
- Gujranwala, Regional Office
- Faisalabad, Regional Office
- Sargodha, Regional Office
- Mianwali, Regional Office
- Rawalpindi, Regional Office
- Rahim Yar Khan, Regional Office
- Jhang, Regional Office
- Chakwal, Regional Office
- Sialkot, Regional Office



Annexure-II

The main components of AIOU's educational package are the following:

- Correspondence materials- Including self learning study package and supplementary study materials, (Readers, Text Books, and Study Guides).
- The Voice of AIOU FM radio – Has been broadcasting educational programs on the national frequency of 91.6.
- Satellite Transmission – AIOU is putting on Air its educational media material on PTV-2 which is beaming out its transmission through satellite to more than 45 countries.
- Online Teaching – Various regions of AIOU have been linked for online education, and online classes through teleconferencing.
- Non-Broadcast media – Including Slides, Audio cassettes, Flip charts, and leaflets (generally for basic functional and literacy level courses) and also audio/ video cassettes as integral part of learning materials.
- Tutorial Instruction – Through contact sessions and academic guidance facilities at study centers (mostly in afternoons).
- Face to Face teaching – For those courses, which require intensively practical/ lab work or skill development.
- Workshops – for postgraduate programmes, generally at M.A/ M.Sc/ M.Phil/ and Diploma levels.
- Internship – of short term and long term duration in industrial or business concerns for some of the postgraduate programmes.
- Course Assignments – As an instrument of instruction, continuous assessment and general academic guidance of students: these are evaluated by the tutors.
- Final Examination – Held for each course, at the end of the semester.

Following is the details of Postgraduate Programmes offered under different faculties.

3.4.1 Faculty of Education

- M.A Special Education
- M.Ed in Special Education
- M.Ed. (Science Education)
- M.Ed. Distance and Non-formal Education (DNFE)
- Master in Educational Planning & Management (EPM)
- M.Ed. Teacher Education
- M.A Education (DNFE)
- PGD in EPM
- M.A Teacher Education

3.4.2 Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

- M.A Urdu
- Master in Library and Information Sciences (MLIS)
- M.Sc. Sociology
- M.Sc. Gender & Women Studies
- Post Graduate Diploma in Gender & Women Studies
- M.Sc. Pakistan Studies
- M.A Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)
- Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)
- Master of Business Administration in Information Technology (MBA(IT))
- MBA Executive
- MBA (Banking and Finance)
- MBA (Marketing & HRM)
- Certificate Course in Gender & Women Studies
- Master in Commerce (M.Com)
- M.Sc. Economics
- M.A History
- MPA Executive
- M.Sc. Mass Communication

3.4.3 Faculty of Arabic, Sharia, and Islamic Studies

- M.A Islamic Studies
- M.A Arabic

3.4.4 Faculty of Sciences

- M.Sc. Forestry Extension
- M.Sc. Physics
- M.Sc. Mathematics
- M.Sc. Agricultural Extension
- M.Sc. Community Health and Nutrition
- M.Sc. Chemistry
- M.Sc. Environmental Design
- Post Graduate Diploma in Dietetics for Dieticians
- Post Graduate Diploma in Nutrition
- M.Sc.(Hons) Live Stock
- M.Sc. (Hons) Rural Development

Annexure-IV

QUESTIONNAIRE																								
[Role of Open Distance Learning (ODL) in Women Empowerment in Pakistan: Perceptions of Post graduate Female Students of Allama Iqbal Open University(AIOU)]																								
For Official Use Only ↓	PART-1																							
	PLEASE TICK MARK YOUR CHOICES OR WRITE YOUR RESPONSES IN THIS COLUMN ONLY ↓																							
V1PRVRES	(1) What is your Province of Residence? i- Punjab ii- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) iii- Sindh iv- Balochistan v- Azad Kashmir (AJK) vi- Gilgit-Baltistan vii- FATA																							
V2ARERES	(2) What is your area of Residence? i- Rural ii- Urban																							
V3SBJECT	(3) Please encircle the subject for which you have been enrolled? (Names of Master degree programs are alphabetically arranged for your convenience): i. Agricultural Extension/ ii. Arabic/ iii. Business Administration Banking and Finance/ iv. Business Administration Executive/ v. Business Administration in Information Technology/ vi. Business Administration Marketing & HRM/ vii. Chemistry/ viii. Community Health and Nutrition/ ix. Dietetics for Dieticians/ x. Distance and Non-formal Education/ xi. Economics/ xii. Education/ xiii. Educational Planning & Management/ xiv. Environmental Design/ xv. Forestry Extension/ xvi. Gender & Women Studies/ xvii. History/ xviii. Islamic Studies/ xix. Library and Information Sciences/ xx. Live Stock/ xxi. Mass Communication/ xxii. Mathematics/ xxiii. Nutrition/ xxiv. Pakistan Studies/ xxv. Physics/ xxvi. Public Administration/ xxvii. Rural Development/ xxviii. Science Education / xxix. Sociology/ xxx. Special Education/ xxxi. Teacher Education/ xxxii. Teaching of English as a Foreign Language/ xxxiii. Urdu																							
V4REGOFC	(4) Tick Mark ✓ Your Nearest AIOU Regional Office? (Names are alphabetically arranged for your convenience) i. Abbotabad/ ii. Bahawalpur/ iii. Chakwal/ iv. Chitral/ v. Dadu/ vi. Dera Gazi Khan/ vii. Dera Ismail Khan/ viii. Dera Murad Jamali/ ix. Faisalabad/ x. Gilgit/ xi. Gujranwala/ xii. Hyderabad/ xiii. Islamabad/ xiv. Jhang Sadar/ xv. Kalat/ xvi. Karachi/ xvii. Lahore/ xviii. Larkana City/ xix. Mianwali/ xx. Mirpur A. K./ xxi. Mithi/ xxii. . Multan/ xxiii. Muzaffarabad AJK/ xxiv. Peshawar/ xxv. Quetta/ xxvi. Rahimyar Khan/ xxvii. Sagodha/ xxviii. Sahiwal/ xxix. Saidu Sharif/ xxx. Sakardu/ xxxi. Sialkot/ xxxii. Sukker/ xxxiii. Thatta/ xxxiv. Turbat/ xxxv. Zhob. xxxvi. Rawalpindi																							
V5AGERSP	(5) What is your Age? (in completed yrs.) i. Less than 20 yrs. ii. 21 to 30yrs. iii. 31 to 40yrs. iv. 41 to 50yrs. v. 50 yrs. and above																							
V6MRISTA	(6) What is your Marital Status? (If single go to Q#8) i. Single ii. Married iii. Divorced iv. Widowed v. Separated																							
V7AGECHL	(7) What are the ages of children living with you? <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 5px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 16.6%;">Children</th> <th style="width: 16.6%;">None</th> <th style="width: 16.6%;">Up to 5yrs.</th> <th style="width: 16.6%;">6 to 10yrs.</th> <th style="width: 16.6%;">11 to 15yrs.</th> <th style="width: 16.6%;">15yrs.+</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td style="text-align: center;">AAA</td> <td style="text-align: center;">BBB</td> <td style="text-align: center;">CCC</td> <td style="text-align: center;">DDD</td> <td style="text-align: center;">EEE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td style="text-align: center;">FFF</td> <td style="text-align: center;">GGG</td> <td style="text-align: center;">HHH</td> <td style="text-align: center;">III</td> <td style="text-align: center;">JJJ</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Children	None	Up to 5yrs.	6 to 10yrs.	11 to 15yrs.	15yrs.+	Male	AAA	BBB	CCC	DDD	EEE	Female	FFF	GGG	HHH	III	JJJ
Children	None	Up to 5yrs.	6 to 10yrs.	11 to 15yrs.	15yrs.+																			
Male	AAA	BBB	CCC	DDD	EEE																			
Female	FFF	GGG	HHH	III	JJJ																			
V8FMTYPE	(8) What is the type of family you are living in? i. Nuclear (spouse and children) ii. Joint (spouse, children and husband's parents) iii. Extended (spouse, children, husband's parents and other relatives)																							
V9OUCPTN	(9) What is your occupation? (If v or vi then go to Q# 11) i. Govt. service ii. Private Service iii. Business iv. Self Employed v. Student vi. House Wife vii. Any Other (specify).....																							

V10RINCM	(10) What is your personal income in Rs.....?
V11FINCM	(11) What is your family monthly income from all sources (in Rs....)? i. Less than 20,000 ii. 20,000 to 30,000 iii. more than 30,000 to 40,000 iv. more than 40,000 to 50, 000 v. more than 50,000 to 60,000 vi. more than 60,000
V12RRGST	(12) When you 1 st time registered for any AIOU educational programme? Please write the semester and year of registration.

PART-2

V13SKADM

(13) I would like to know that why females seek admission at AIOU?

“Female students take admission in AIOU courses because.....

Please state as to what extent you find the following statements to be agreed:

----- بہت سی خواتین علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی میں اس لئے داخلہ لیتی ہیں کیونکہ
[آئیے دیکھیں کہ آپ نیچے دئے گئے ہر بیان سے کس حد تک اتفاق کرتی ہیں؟]

SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree UNC= Uncertain DA= Disagree SDA= Strongly Disagree

V131DIFF

(i) It is difficult to seek admission in any other university.

انہیں کسی اور یونیورسٹی میں داخلہ نہیں ملتا

(1) SA	(2) A	(3) UNC	(4) DA	(5) SDA
1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5

V132HOME

(ii) AIOU offers the opportunity of education while staying at home.

وہ گھریلو کام کاج کے ساتھ ساتھ اپنی تعلیم جاری رکھ سکتی ہیں

2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

V133LFEE

(iii) AIOU charges lesser fee than other universities.

یہاں دیگر یونیورسٹیوں کے مقابلے میں فیس ادا کرنا پڑتی ہے

3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5
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V134SRVC

(iv) It provides an opportunity to study while in service.

وہ اپنی تعلیم کے ساتھ ساتھ ملازمت بھی کر سکتی ہیں

4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
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V135CONT

(v) AIOU educational system allows continuing of education after a certain period of time.

کسی بھی درجہ سے چھوڑی گئی تعلیم دوبارہ شروع ہو سکتی ہے

5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

V136EASY

(vi) It is comparatively easy to pass AIOU exams.

علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی سے امتحانات پاس کرنا زیادہ آسان ہوتا ہے

6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5
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V137EXTN

(vii) AIOU permits one to extend the completion period of a program.

علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی میں کسی بھی تعلیمی پروگرام کی مدت کو بڑھایا جاسکتا ہے

7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5
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V138MTRL	(viii) The materials provided in AIOU are self sufficient for their studies. علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی کی طرف سے طالب علموں کو فراہم کردہ درسی مواد کورسز کی تکمیل کے لئے کافی ہوتا ہے	8.1	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5
V139OTRU	(ix) Choices of conventional universities are limited. خواتین کے لیے روایتی یونیورسٹیوں کے بہت کم Choices ہوا کرتے ہیں	9.1	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.5
V1310AGE	(x) AIOU offers education with no age restrictions. 'علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی میں تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے لئے عمر کی کوئی قید نہیں	10.1	10.2	10.3	10.4	10.5
V1311PRO	(xi) To get promotion/ improve their employment status. تاکہ ملازمت میں ترقی کے مواقع مل سکیں	11.1	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.5
V1312OFR	(xii) AIOU offers a wide range of courses/ discipline in contrary with other educational institutions. علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی دیگر یونیورسٹیوں کے مقابلے میں زیادہ تعداد میں کورسز آفر کرتی ہے	12.1	12.2	12.3	12.4	12.5
V1313CLS	(xiii) They are unable or unwilling to physically attend the classes. کچھ خواتین نہیں چاہتیں کہ انہیں روز روز کلاسز attend کرنے کے لیے یونیورسٹی جانا پڑے یا ایسا کرنا ان کے لیے بہت مشکل ہوتا ہے۔	13.1	13.2	13.3	13.4	13.5
V14RRSON	<p>(14) Please state the number(s) that, in your own personal case, which of the above stated reasons as quoted in Urdu from i to xiv happened to be strongly true? (Please do mention if there are more than one reasons and specify if there is any other reason)</p> <p>سوال نمبر 13 میں بیان کردہ reasons میں سے کون سی وجہ علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی میں آپ کے اپنے داخلے کا سبب بنی؟ (ایک سے زیادہ وجوہات بھی لکھی جاسکتی ہیں صرف statement کا نمبر لکھیں۔)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>					

V15ECOEM	<p>(15) "Has the AIOU system of education been instrumental to the economic empowerment of women in Pakistan?"</p> <p>کیا آپ کے خیال میں علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی پاکستانی خواتین کی معاشی حالت سدھارنے میں معاون و مددگار ثابت ہوئی ہے؟</p> <p>— 1. Yes — 2. No</p> <p>Please state as to what extent you find the following statements to be true?</p> <p>آئیے دیکھیں کہ آپ نیچے دیے گئے statements سے کس حد تک اتفاق کرتی ہیں؟</p>								
V151ECOR	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>STATEMENTS</th> <th>1. To Some Extent</th> <th>2. To a Great Extent</th> <th>3. Not At All</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>i. Education through AIOU enhances women's access/control over family resources (i.e. income, household budget).</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی سے تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد خواتین کو اپنے گھریلو وسائل، آمدنی، بجٹ وغیرہ کے بنانے جیسے کاموں میں زیادہ کنٹرول حاصل ہو جاتا ہے</p> </td> <td>001</td> <td>002</td> <td>003</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	STATEMENTS	1. To Some Extent	2. To a Great Extent	3. Not At All	<p>i. Education through AIOU enhances women's access/control over family resources (i.e. income, household budget).</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی سے تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد خواتین کو اپنے گھریلو وسائل، آمدنی، بجٹ وغیرہ کے بنانے جیسے کاموں میں زیادہ کنٹرول حاصل ہو جاتا ہے</p>	001	002	003
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V152ECOJ	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>ii. Education through AIOU enhances women's access to employment opportunities.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی سے تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد خواتین کی ملازمتوں کے حصول تک رسائی ممکن ہو سکتی ہے</p> </td> <td>004</td> <td>005</td> <td>006</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<p>ii. Education through AIOU enhances women's access to employment opportunities.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی سے تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد خواتین کی ملازمتوں کے حصول تک رسائی ممکن ہو سکتی ہے</p>	004	005	006				
<p>ii. Education through AIOU enhances women's access to employment opportunities.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی سے تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد خواتین کی ملازمتوں کے حصول تک رسائی ممکن ہو سکتی ہے</p>	004	005	006						
V153ECOC	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>iii. Education through AIOU enhances women's economic contribution to family support.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی سے تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد خواتین اس قابل ہو سکتی ہیں کہ وہ اپنے خاندان کی کفالت میں مردوں کے ہمراہ برابر کی شریک ہو سکیں</p> </td> <td>007</td> <td>008</td> <td>009</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<p>iii. Education through AIOU enhances women's economic contribution to family support.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی سے تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد خواتین اس قابل ہو سکتی ہیں کہ وہ اپنے خاندان کی کفالت میں مردوں کے ہمراہ برابر کی شریک ہو سکیں</p>	007	008	009				
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V154ECOL	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>iv. Education through AIOU enhances women's ownership of family assets/land.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی نے خواتین کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ خاندانی وراثت کے حوالے سے زمین کی تقسیم و حصہ داری سے متعلقہ اپنے ملکیتی حقوق کی ازخود حفاظت کر سکیں</p> </td> <td>010</td> <td>011</td> <td>012</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<p>iv. Education through AIOU enhances women's ownership of family assets/land.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی نے خواتین کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ خاندانی وراثت کے حوالے سے زمین کی تقسیم و حصہ داری سے متعلقہ اپنے ملکیتی حقوق کی ازخود حفاظت کر سکیں</p>	010	011	012				
<p>iv. Education through AIOU enhances women's ownership of family assets/land.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی نے خواتین کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ خاندانی وراثت کے حوالے سے زمین کی تقسیم و حصہ داری سے متعلقہ اپنے ملکیتی حقوق کی ازخود حفاظت کر سکیں</p>	010	011	012						
V155ECOP	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>v. AIOU education enhances women's ability to make small or large purchases independently.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی کی تعلیم نے عورتوں کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ ایسی خرید و فروخت جو پہلے صرف مرد حضرات کیا کرتے تھے اب ازخود کر سکتی ہیں</p> </td> <td>013</td> <td>014</td> <td>015</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<p>v. AIOU education enhances women's ability to make small or large purchases independently.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی کی تعلیم نے عورتوں کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ ایسی خرید و فروخت جو پہلے صرف مرد حضرات کیا کرتے تھے اب ازخود کر سکتی ہیں</p>	013	014	015				
<p>v. AIOU education enhances women's ability to make small or large purchases independently.</p> <p>علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی کی تعلیم نے عورتوں کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ ایسی خرید و فروخت جو پہلے صرف مرد حضرات کیا کرتے تھے اب ازخود کر سکتی ہیں</p>	013	014	015						
V16RRSON	<p>(16) Please state that, in your own personal case, which of the above statement(s) in main question # 15 above happened to be true?</p> <p>مندرجہ بالا statements میں کونسا statement آپ کی اپنی زندگی میں کسی حد تک سچ ثابت ہوا ہے؟</p>								

- 1. None
- 2. Quoted against statement number i.
- 3. Quoted against statement number ii.
- 4. Quoted against statement number iii.
- 5. Quoted against statement number iv.
- 6. Quoted against statement number v.
- 7. Any other

(17) "Is there any influence of AIOU educational system on political empowerment of women?"

V17POLEM

آپ کے خیال میں علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی کے طریقہ تعلیم اور
خواتین کی سیاسی چنگلی کے حوالے سے کوئی تعلق بنتا ہے؟

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Please state as to what extent you find the following statements to be true?

آئیے دیکھیں کہ مندرجہ ذیل بیانات سے آپ کس حد تک اتفاق
کرتے ہیں؟

Statements	1. To Some Extent	2. To a Great Extent	3. Not At All
i. AIOU education enhances women's knowledge of political systems. AIOU سے تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد خواتین کو ملک کے سیاسی معاملات سے آگاہی حاصل ہوتی ہے	016	017	018
ii. AIOU education enhances women's domestic support for their political participation. AIOU سے تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد خواتین نہ صرف سیاسی سرگرمیوں میں حصہ لے سکتی ہیں بلکہ اس کے لئے انہیں اپنے خاندان والوں کی حمایت بھی حاصل ہو جاتی ہے	019	020	021
iii. AIOU education helps women to exercise their right to vote. AIOU کی تعلیم خواتین کو اس قابل بناتی ہے کہ وہ بذریعہ دوت اپنا حق رائے دہندگی استعمال کر سکیں	022	023	024
iv. Education through AIOU enhances women's participation in community level decision making process. علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی کی تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد خواتین کمیونٹی کی سطح کے فیصلے کرنے کے قابل ہو سکتی ہیں	025	026	027
v. Education through AIOU enhances women's chance of getting affiliated with some political party/group. علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی کی تعلیم نے خواتین کو یہ موقع فراہم کیا ہے کہ وہ سیاسی طور پر ہاشعور ہونے کے بعد اپنے آپ کو کسی سیاسی پارٹی سے منسلک کر سکیں	028	029	030

V18RRSON	<p>(18) Please state that, <u>in your own personal case</u>, which of the above statement(s) given in the above table (Q#17) happened to be true?</p> <p>مندرجہ بالا statements میں کونسا statement آپ کی اپنی زندگی میں کسی حد تک سچ ثابت ہوا ہے؟</p> <p>— 1. None — 2. Quoted against statement number i. — 3. Quoted against statement number ii. — 4. Quoted against statement number iii. — 5. Quoted against statement number iv. — 6. Quoted against statement number v. — 7. Any other</p>			
V19SOCEM	<p>(19) "Is there AIOU educational system has effects on social empowerment of women?"</p> <p>کیا AIOU کے نظام تعلیم نے خواتین کو سماجی طور پر empower کیا ہے؟</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p> <p>Please state as to what extent you find the following statements to be true?</p> <p>آپ کے دیکھیں کہ درج ذیل بیانات سے آپ کس حد تک اتفاق کرتی ہیں؟</p>			
V191SOCA	<p>Statements</p> <p>i. Through AIOU education women become prestigious and receive attention/ respect from others.</p> <p>AIOU سے تعلیم کے بعد اکثر خواتین یہ محسوس کرتی ہیں کہ اب انہیں معاشرے میں نہ صرف عزت کی نگاہ سے دیکھا جاتا ہے بلکہ اب انہیں وہ مقام حاصل ہے جو پہلے نہیں تھا</p>	1. To Some Extent	2. To a Great Extent	3. Not At All
V192SOCM	<p>ii. Education through AIOU enhances women's freedom of mobility/ movement (i.e. access to market).</p> <p>AIOU سے تعلیم کے بعد اکثر خواتین یہ محسوس کرتی ہیں کہ اب وہ مارکیٹ میں خرید و فروخت اور سماجی سرگرمیوں میں حصہ لینے کے لئے گھر سے باہر پہلے کی نسبت زیادہ آزادی سے آجاسکتی ہیں</p>	031	032	033
V193SOCI	<p>iii. Education through AIOU enhances women's positive image in society.</p> <p>AIOU سے تعلیم نے اکثر خواتین کو مثبت انداز میں اپنی سوچ کو فروغ دینے اور اپنے ملک کی بہتری کے لیے ان کے اپنے اہم رول سے آگاہی بخشی ہے۔</p>	034	035	036
V194SOCC		037	038	039

V195SOCF	iv. AIOU education enhances women's participation in social activities at community level (i.e. marriages, eid, mela etc). علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی نے خواتین کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ کمیونٹی کی سطح پر جاری سرگرمیوں (شادی، عید، میلے وغیرہ جیسی تقریبات) میں بلا خوف اور بغیر کسی جھجک کے از خود شمولیت کر سکیں	040	041	042
V20RRSON	v. Education through AIOU enhances women's ability to avail basic facilities of life (i.e. health care, education etc). علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی نے خواتین کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ حکومت کی طرف سے فراہم کردہ بنیادی سہولتوں (مثلاً صحت اور تعلیم وغیرہ) سے پوری طرح سے فائدہ اٹھا سکیں	043	044	045

(20) Please state that, in your own personal case, which of the above statement(s) in Q# 19 happened to be true?

مندرجہ بالا statements میں کون سا statement آپ کی اپنی زندگی میں کسی حد تک سچ ثابت ہوا ہے؟

- 1. None
- 2. Quoted against statement number i.
- 3. Quoted against statement number ii.
- 4. Quoted against statement number iii.
- 5. Quoted against statement number iv.
- 6. Quoted against statement number v.
- 7. Any other

(21) "I would like to know your opinion whether AIOU educational system enhances women autonomy?"

کیا AIOU کی تعلیم خواتین کو اس قابل بناتی ہے کہ وہ اپنے نیلے اب خود کر سکیں؟

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Please state as to what extent you find the following statements to be true?

آئیے دیکھیں کہ درج ذیل بیانات سے آپ کس حد تک اتفاق کرتی ہیں؟

Statements	1. To Some Extent	2. To a Great Extent	3. Not At All
i. Education through AIOU gives women their own identity as an independent individual. علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی نے خواتین کو اپنی ایک شناخت دی ہے اور اب انہیں کسی کی بیٹی یا بہن کہہ کر نہیں پکارا جاتا بلکہ اب ان کے اپنے نام سے	046	047	048
ii. Education through AIOU enhances women's self confidence.	049	050	051

V213INDS	AIOU کی تعلیم نے خواتین کو پہلے کی نسبت زیادہ خود اعتماد بنادیا ہے			
V214INDE	iii. Education through AIOU enhances women's self esteem (i.e. feeling & expression of pride & value in their work). AIOU کی تعلیم نے خواتین کو نہ صرف ان کی اپنی ایک identity دی ہے بلکہ یہ احساس بھی کہ وہ بھی مردوں کے ساتھ ساتھ معاشرے میں اپنا ایک مقام رکھتی ہیں	052	053	054
V215INDR	iv. Education through AIOU enhances women's self-efficiency (i.e. improvement in outcome of different tasks). AIOU کی تعلیم نے خواتین کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ اپنے روزمرہ کے کام کا پہلے کی نسبت زیادہ بہتر طریقے سے کر سکیں	055	056	057
V22RRSON	v. Education through AIOU enhances women's ability to better perform different social roles (i.e. mother, sister, daughter, wife, community member etc) علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی نے خواتین کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ بحیثیت ایک ماں، ایک بہن، ایک بیٹی، ایک بیوی اور کیونٹی کے ایک فرد کے اپنے اپنے مختلف رول بخوبی ادا کر سکیں	058	059	060
V23FMLEM	(22) Please state that, in your own personal case, which of the above statement(s) in the table (Q#21) happened to be true? مندرجہ بالا statements میں کونسا statement آپ کی اپنی زندگی میں کسی حد تک سچ ثابت ہوا ہے؟ — 1. None — 2. Quoted against statement number i. — 3. Quoted against statement number ii. — 4. Quoted against statement number iii. — 5. Quoted against statement number iv. — 6. Quoted against statement number v. — 7. Any other			
V231FMLD	(23) "Up to what extent do you agree that AIOU educational system enhance female status within family?" AIOU کی تعلیم کیا خواتین کو اپنے خاندان والوں کی نظروں میں بھی ایک عزت کا درجہ دیتی ہے؟ — 1. Yes — 2. No Please state as to what extent you find the following statements to be true? آئیے دیکھیں کہ درج ذیل بیانات سے آپ کس حد تک اتفاق کرتی ہیں؟			
	Statements	1. To Some Extent	2. To a Great Extent	3. Not At All
	i. AIOU education enhances women's participation in domestic decision making.	061	062	063

V232FMLD	AIOU کی تعلیم کے بعد خواتین کو گھریلو معاملات میں مختلف فیصلے کرنے کا زیادہ اختیار حاصل ہو جاتا ہے			
V233FMLG	ii. AIOU education enhances women's ability to avoid domestic conflicts. AIOU کی تعلیم کے بعد خواتین اس قابل ہو جاتی ہیں کہ وہ گھریلو لڑائی جھگڑوں جیسی برائیوں سے از خود نمٹ سکیں۔	064	065	066
V234FMLR	iii. Education through AIOU decreases chances of gender based discrimination against women within family. AIOU کی تعلیم کے بعد خواتین اس تعصب کا شکار ہونے سے بچ جاتی ہیں جو عام طور پر اس معاشرے میں عورتوں کے خلاف روا رکھا جاتا ہے	067	068	069
V235FMLI	iv. Education through AIOU increases chance of right to choice for selection of their spouse as well as of their children. علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی نے خواتین کو نہ صرف اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ اپنی شادی سے متعلقہ پتا دو کے بارے میں خود فیصلے کر سکیں بلکہ یہ بھی کہ شادی کے بعد ان کے کتنے بچے ہونے چاہئیں	070	071	072
V24RRSON	v. Education through AIOU enhances women's ability to deal with routine issues of children (i.e. behavior, health, schooling etc). علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی نے خواتین کو اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ وہ اپنے بچوں کی دیکھ بھال (مثلاً ان کی تعلیم و تربیت، صحت وغیرہ) کا بہتر خیال رکھ سکیں	073	074	075
V25SLFLR	<p>(24) Please state that, in your own personal case, which of the above statement(s) in the given table (Q#23) happened to be true?</p> <p>مندرجہ بالا statements میں کونسا statement آپ کی اپنی زندگی میں کسی حد تک سچ ثابت ہوا ہے؟</p> <p>— 1. None — 2. Quoted against statement number i. — 3. Quoted against statement number ii. — 4. Quoted against statement number iii. — 5. Quoted against statement number iv. — 6. Quoted against statement number v. — 7. Any other</p> <p>(25) In your opinion, to what extent the self learning method of AIOU, which is mostly without the help of a teacher, has equipped you with the skills to independently seek information/ knowledge, utilize the same in your every day life and then to disseminate this information and your experience to others?</p> <p>AIOU کی تعلیم نے جو عام طور پر کسی استاد کی مدد کے بغیر طالب علم خود پڑھ کے حاصل کرتے ہیں آپ کو کس حد تک اس قابل بنایا ہے کہ آپ اپنا علم مختلف ذرائع سے از خود نہ صرف تلاش کر سکیں بلکہ اپنی عملی زندگی میں اسے استعمال کرنے کیلئے ساتھ ساتھ دوسروں تک بھی اپنے ان تجربات کو پہنچا سکیں</p> <p>— 1. To some extent — 2. To a great extent — 3. Not at all</p>			

V26CMUTY	<p>(26) How many other women in your community, if you know, have taken up the AIOU courses? (not necessarily of post graduation level)</p> <p>آپ اپنی کمیونٹی میں ایسی کتنی خواتین کو جانتی ہیں جنہوں نے علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی میں داخلہ لے رکھا ہے؟ [ضروری نہیں یہ وہ خواتین ہوں جنہوں نے آپ کی طرح پوسٹ گریجویٹ لیول کے کورس لے رکھے ہوں]</p> <p>— 1. None — 2. Just a few — 3. Many — 4. Don't know</p>																																																							
V27PSKIL	<p>(27) As a student of AIOU self-study courses which of the following personal skills you have been able to learn? Please indicate the extent of their learning: (ignore the alphabets A,B,C etc. These are for data operator.)</p> <p>آپ کے اپنے ذاتی اندازے کے مطابق بحیثیت علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی کی طالبہ کے، مندرجہ ذیل مہارتوں میں سے کن مہارتوں پر آپ کو اب کسی حد تک عبور حاصل ہو چکا ہے؟</p>																																																							
V271SKLO	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Skills</th> <th>1. To some extent</th> <th>2. To great extent</th> <th>3. Not at all</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>i. Organizing your own study plans</td> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> <td>C</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ii. Reading</td> <td>D</td> <td>E</td> <td>F</td> </tr> <tr> <td>iii. Preparing your own lessons</td> <td>G</td> <td>H</td> <td>I</td> </tr> <tr> <td>iv. Self assessment of your own written work</td> <td>J</td> <td>K</td> <td>L</td> </tr> <tr> <td>v. Communicating with other women class mates who are doing the same course</td> <td>M</td> <td>N</td> <td>O</td> </tr> <tr> <td>vi. Helping younger school going members of the family to do their home work</td> <td>P</td> <td>Q</td> <td>R</td> </tr> <tr> <td>vii. More confidently taking part in outdoor community activities if any</td> <td>S</td> <td>T</td> <td>U</td> </tr> <tr> <td>viii. Using theoretical knowledge learned from books in your work situation (may be in home or in an office where you work)</td> <td>V</td> <td>W</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ix. Actively participating in decision making process at family or at community level</td> <td>Y</td> <td>Z</td> <td>AB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>x. Advising and guiding others to take up AIOU courses</td> <td>AC</td> <td>AD</td> <td>AE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>xi. Making your own personal independent judgments about political and other issues concerning the nation</td> <td>AF</td> <td>AG</td> <td>AH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>xii. Any other</td> <td colspan="3">AI</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Skills	1. To some extent	2. To great extent	3. Not at all	i. Organizing your own study plans	A	B	C	ii. Reading	D	E	F	iii. Preparing your own lessons	G	H	I	iv. Self assessment of your own written work	J	K	L	v. Communicating with other women class mates who are doing the same course	M	N	O	vi. Helping younger school going members of the family to do their home work	P	Q	R	vii. More confidently taking part in outdoor community activities if any	S	T	U	viii. Using theoretical knowledge learned from books in your work situation (may be in home or in an office where you work)	V	W	X	ix. Actively participating in decision making process at family or at community level	Y	Z	AB	x. Advising and guiding others to take up AIOU courses	AC	AD	AE	xi. Making your own personal independent judgments about political and other issues concerning the nation	AF	AG	AH	xii. Any other	AI		
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V2712SKO																																																								
V28SMTRL	<p>(28) How do you rate the study materials received from AIOU?</p> <p>— 1. Poor — 2. Fair — 3. Good — 4. Excellent</p>																																																							
V29TUTRM	<p>(29) How do you rate the effectiveness of tutorial meetings?</p> <p>— 1. Poor — 2. Fair — 3. Good — 4. Excellent</p>																																																							
V30COPRO																																																								

V31EXMST	<p>(30) How do you rate the cooperation from AIOU regional offices/ campuses?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 1. Poor — 2. Fair — 3. Good — 4. Excellent
V32CHCDG	<p>(31) How appropriate is the examination system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 1. To some extent — 2. To great extent — 3. Not at all
V33SUGTN	<p>(32) If you had the choice, would you undertake your first degree via AIOU system of education?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 1. Yes — 2. No — 3. Uncertain
V34CASSTD	<p>(33) What do you suggest the suitable measures to the improvement of AIOU's teaching learning components/procedures which in your opinion need to be improved?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>(34) Please write down on this page, if not about yourself, about any other woman student of AIOU, whom you know (and of course without mentioning her name) and who after having completed some university courses was able to improve her family's socio-economic status. You can write this brief case study in your own words in Urdu if you like. In case the project finds it as an interesting story of someone's success in life, after acknowledging your name for this contribution, it would certainly be included it in its final research report.</p> <p>اس صفحے پر اگر آپ چاہیں تو کسی ایسی خاتون کے بارے میں ایک مختصر سی کہانی [case study] لکھ سکتی ہیں جسے آپ جانتی ہوں اور جس نے علامہ اقبال اوپن یونیورسٹی سے تعلیم حاصل کرنے کے بعد اپنے گھریلو معاشی حالات کو بخوبی سنوارا ہو اور اب ایک کامیاب اور خوشحال زندگی گزار رہی ہو۔ ضروری نہیں کہ آپ اس خاتون کا نام لکھیں۔ اگر یہ case study اس قابل ہوئی تو اسے یقیناً آپ کی اس contribution کو سراہتے ہوئے اس ریسرچ رپورٹ کا حصہ بنایا جائے گا۔</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PART-I

Q # 01: What is your age? (in completed yrs.)

Q # 02: What is your marital status? (if single then go to Q # 04)

Q # 03: How many children do you have?

Male: _____

Female: _____

Q # 04: What is your family type?

- i. Nuclear
- ii. Joint
- iii. Extended

Q # 05: What is your occupation? (if v or vi than go to Q # 07)

- i. Govt. Service
- ii. Private
- iii. Business
- iv. Self employed
- v. Student
- vi. House wife
- vii. Any other

Q # 06: What is your personal income in Rs. _____?

Q # 07: What is your family income from all sources in Rs.
_____?

PART-II

Q # 08: Why you have taken admission at AIOU?

Q # 09: Do you think AIOU empowering women through its educational system?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

Q # 10: Do you think AIOU is helping women through its education in getting economically empowered?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

Q # 11: If yes, please tell how? (in detail)

Q # 12: Is AIOU helping you to become economically empowered?

- i. If yes, how? Give details.
- ii. If no, why? Give recommendations.

Q #13: Do you think AIOU through its education influence political empowerment of women?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

Q #14: If yes, please tell to what extent AIOU has the role? (in detail)

Q #15: Does AIOU play any role in your political empowerment?

- i. If yes, how? Give details.
- ii. If no, why? Give recommendations.

Q #16: Do you think AIOU education has effects on social empowerment of women?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

Q #17: If yes, how AIOU is effecting? (in detail)

Q #18: Does AIOU education plays any role to make you socially empowered?

- i. If yes, how? Give details.
- ii. If no, why? Give recommendations.

Q # 19: Do you think AIOU education has role in enhancement of women autonomy?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

Q # 20: If yes, please tell me how AIOU enhances women autonomy? (in detail)

Q # 21: Does AIOU through its education influence your personal autonomy?

- i. If yes, how? Give details.
- ii. If no, why? Give recommendations.

Q # 22: Do you think that AIOU education is helping to increase the status of females within families?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

Q # 23: If yes, what is the role of AIOU? (in detail)

Q # 24: Does AIOU through its education improve your status in family?

- i. If yes, how? Give details.
- ii. If no, why? Give details.

