

**A Study on Women's Empowerment through Open Distance Learning – A Case Study on
Dr. D. Y. Patil Vidyapeeth, s Institute of Distance Learning Pune**

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Abstract:

Distance Education is a global and rapidly growing phenomenon which offers formal learning opportunities to people who would not otherwise have access to schooling or college education. The special characteristic of distance education is that it is endowed with high flexibility and can meet the demands of education for all and 'continuing education' which the conventional education system is unable to meet. Further, distance education takes education to places and people hitherto unreached, transcending social, economic and geographical equality and thereby opens a new vista in our striving towards breaking the barriers of '**opportunity and equity**'.

In India about 48.5% of the total population constitutes women. But only 24% of the total productive force mainly because of women has lagged behind in professional education. Distance learning provided women with an opportunity to re-address the situation. ODL is a powerful platform with high flexible and mixture of blended learning, which can meet the demand of women of all persuasion, which conventional education system is unable to meet. Empowerment is an active multi dimensional process which enables women to realize their full potential in all spheres of life. The population of this study is Dr. D. Y. Patil Vidyapeeth Institute of Distance Learning Pune, women's alumni from Pune region.

Blended learning has influenced the empowerment of women through ODL Mode. The study is qualitative and used a sample of 100 passed out students from different parts of Pune. The study finds out that the use of Blended learning in Open distance learning has equipped women intellectually and empowered them through acquisition of skill and knowledge. Blended learning in ODL has rendered women more Informed and liberated. The study revealed that a significant

number of respondents were working married women with children who found open and distance learning framework more compatible with their multiple tasks; household chores, education, wage work, family, relatives and community at large. The findings showed that open and distance learning helped women to circumvent constraints of time, space, resources and socio-economic barriers thereby significantly contributing to their empowerment. A majority of women took a break to attend to their multiple duties either during or after undergraduate studies.

Key words: Empowerment, Blended learning, Open distance learning.

Introduction:

Open Distance learning (ODL) as a term that encompasses the open and distance learning. In which open means removing barriers of conventional face to face daily classroom method. Flexibility is an important aspect for student who need an alternative to the regular system and scale with equality. The term distance means a learner and a teacher has a space and time division. Flexible learning, E learning, Online learning, Blended Learning technology mediated learning which gives time, self paced learning easy accessible, multiple option like Audio, video, ICT, Mobile phone (Technology enabled).

Reaching masses seems uneasy with Conventional system. ODL seems to be the new strategy with high population and low per capita income country like India. The major focus should be on expanding the reach for Non formal education and higher education. Empowerment means a wide range of meaning, Interpretation definition and discipline ranging from Psychology and philosophy to highly Commercialized industry and motivational sciences. Empowerment for women is socially economically, educational empowerment, political and legal empowerment. "If you educate a man you educate an individual however if you educate a woman you educate a whole family women empowered means mother India empowered."

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.

In India total population 48.5% constitutes women but 24% of the total productive work forces are women. In which majorly are from age 15 years to 24 years women. The responsibility of being women to reproduce and family responsibility many are forced to leave education after matric. In urban areas the scenario is different. The women are given opportunity till graduation.

But many fails to complete their graduation or by graduation they get married. In higher and professional education the percentage is very low with changing economic environment and higher costs of living in urban areas have forced married couples to work.

In recent years the aim for better quality of life and, self dependent, better employment opportunity women have contributed economically towards family. Economic freedom for women can be possible only through Non formal education Mode. Where time, place and flexibility gives women complete her professional higher studies and acquire skill to sustain in this highly commercialized world. ODL has given a chance to empower women economically and reduce poverty and result in skilled manpower to the industry and boost up the overall process of national development. Economic Empowerment can be achieved when a women is totally independent and can take own decision in the family. A women economic contribution towards family can be achieved.

There are many universities established under UGC Act. Self financed universities are offering Modular courses as per the requirement of working women and men. The areas of the study are under Dr D Y Patil Vidyapeeth Deemed University's Distance Learning institute offering post graduate courses. To create a better work force and skilled managers in various specializations. The paper focuses on identify the role of ODL education in increasing women economic empowerment and their contribution towards family.

Objective:

1. To Indentify the role of ODL Education in increasing women economic empowerment
2. To explore the effect of ODL education on women's economic contribution to family.

Research Area:

Students of Dr D Y Patil Vidyapeeth distance Learning of Pune District

Population of study:

Female post graduate student passed out in 2016-17

Sampling:

A random sampling technique of 64 female students taken as study of passed out MBA Course.

Litreature review:

Nasimkhan,Syedimran(et all) 2014.open distance learning (ODL)and economic empowerment of women pathway for poverty reduction and national development ,Middle east J sci Res 22(I)153-161 2014.The study shows the women's economic empowerment through ODL in Pakistan through AIOU university. It is a major tools to reduce poverty and create opportunity for women in multiple areas and improves women condition to control over family resources by enhancing their capacity.

Jumani et all(2013) women empowerment through distance education in Pakistan.Http//oasis.col.org/bit stream/handle/11599/2015/2013. The study shows empowering women to overcome problems of female's disparity in higher education in Pakistan. AIOU Efforts to bridge the gap of gender quality and empower women through ODL and emphasis that more open university should be opened in different parts of Pakistan.

L.Nyaruwata(2014)Participation of women in open and distance learning in Zimbabwe : A case of commercial bank and NGO.The study shows the reasons for low participation in banking and NGO's in Zimbabwe and emphasis on flexible approach in Imparting distance course suitable for working women.

Bukhsh Q 2013 Empowerment of women through distance education .International women online journal of distance education Vol 2, article 03, April 2013.The study shows the gender disparity in Pakistan at primary secondary and higher education. It emphasis more on women empowerment through NON formal education in all stream of education can be done.

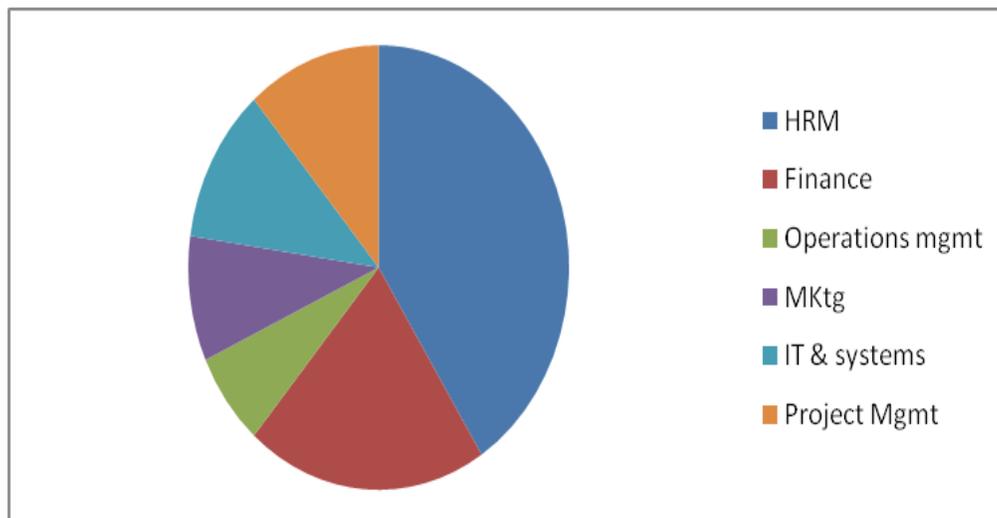
T N Jaya (2015) women empowerment through open and distance learning in Zimbabwe. The study shows that ODL has empowered women through flexi learning, self paced and less expensive while gaining confidence, self respect, social status, financially independent. It enables them with Employment opportunity and high earning jobs.

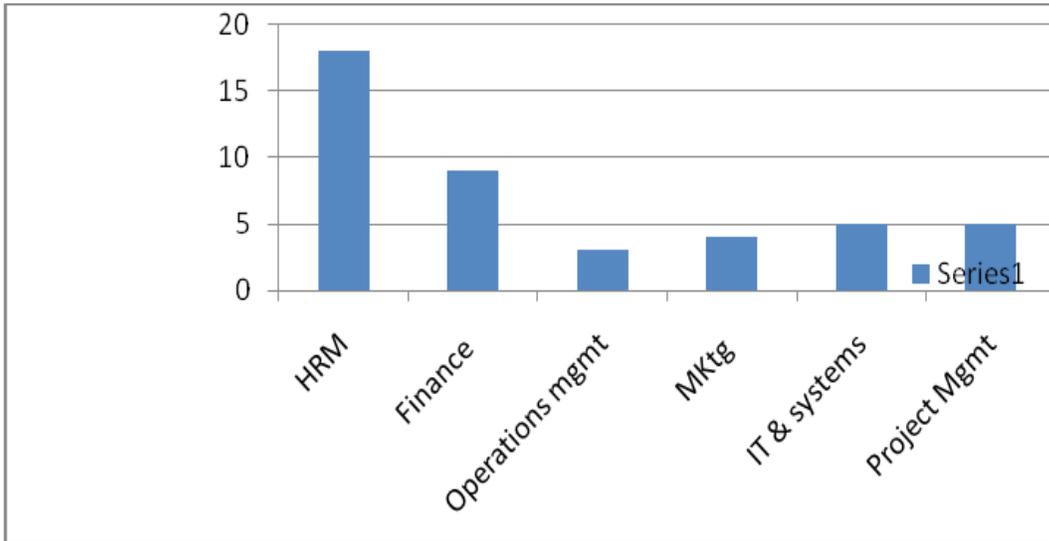
Ak Gaba 2011) Women empowerment through professional and technical programme. A case study of IGNOU. The study highlights the need to focus on women empowerment through ODL by fees waviers and collaborations and sharing of resources with special emphasis on rural areas. Professional course yields desirable jobs and other benefits in urban areas.

Olakulchin, fandojo, O(2006)Distance education as a women empowerment strategy in Africa “Indian journal of open distance learning Vol15,No 3,Sept 2006. The study shows the gender disparity in Nigeria and current scenario where distance learning can help them in poverty. reduction scheme, it can be used to sensitize women about family Planning issues, HIV/AIDS issues, issues relating to peace and governance within their societies,primary health maternal and infant mortality as well as environmentally sustainable practices.

Sukati, w 2006). The role of distance learning in Gender equality and in Empowering women-A Case study of Institute of distance education University of Swaziland. The study finding suggest that Distance learning education in Swaziland plays a crucial role in achieving Empowerment ,gender parity,increase literacy rate among women.ODL is more convenient for women, especially housewives and those who are employed.

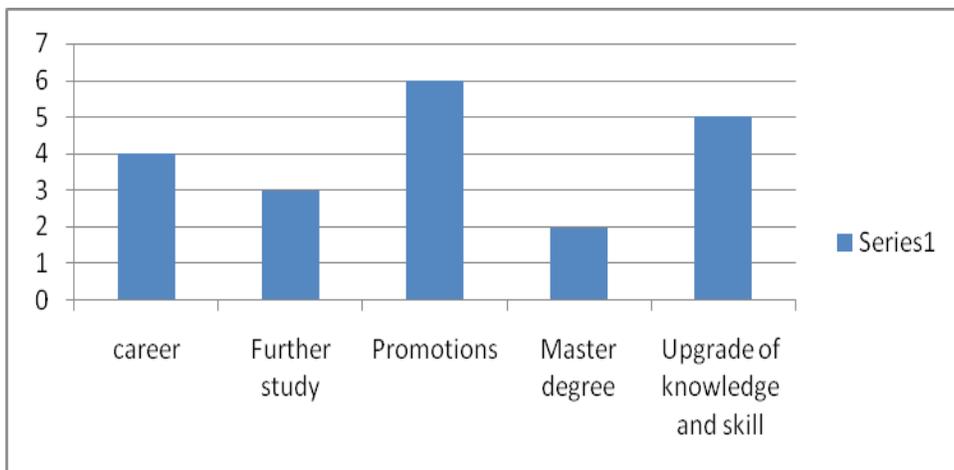
Data Analysis

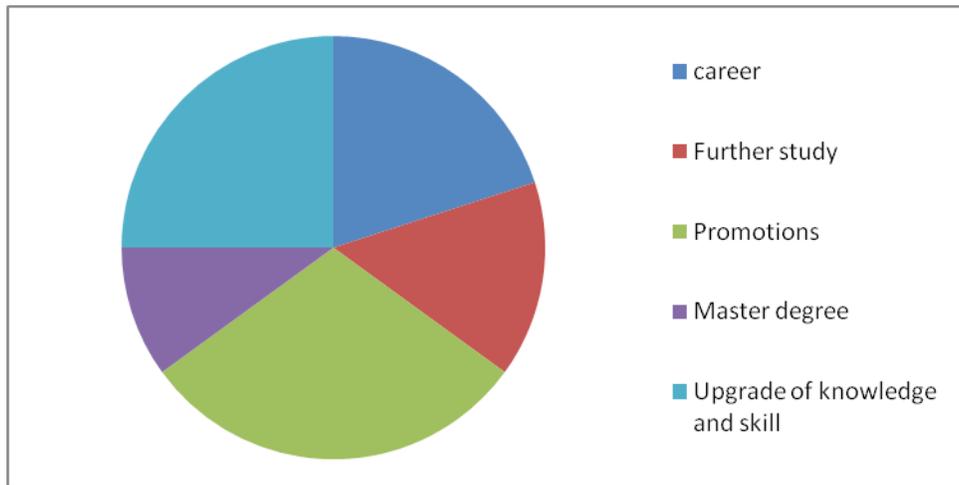




Interpretation : In response to question “ **Which Course or Specialization you are studying in** “ out of total 64 respondents maximum responded viz.20 were studying Hospital Management,18 Human Resource Management, followed by Finance Management, IT & Systems Management, Marketing Management and Operations Management being at the end.

From the above analysis, it becomes clear that majority of the students go for either Hospital Management or Human Resource Management and Marketing Management and Operations Management have not been chosen by many.

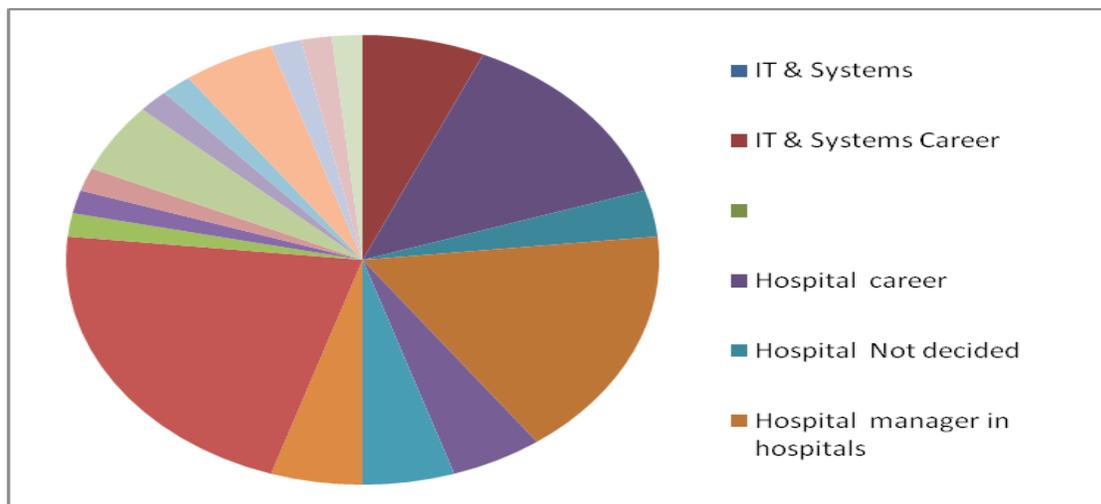
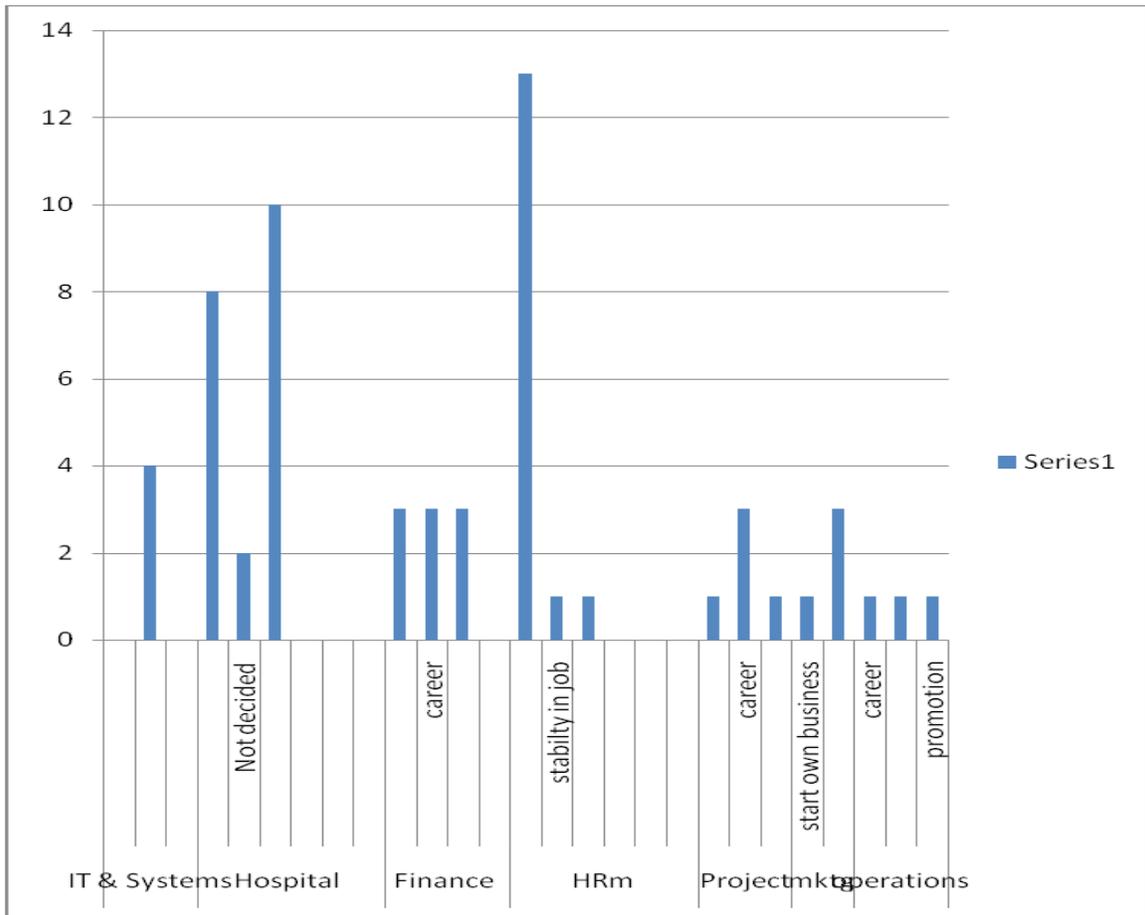




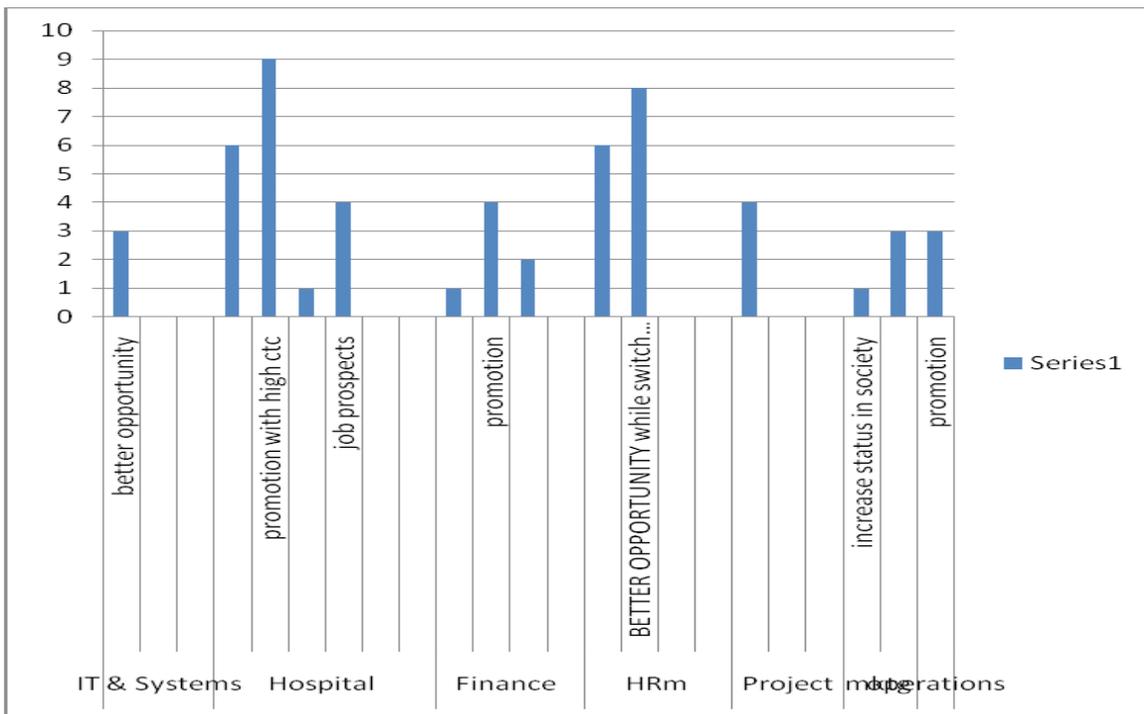
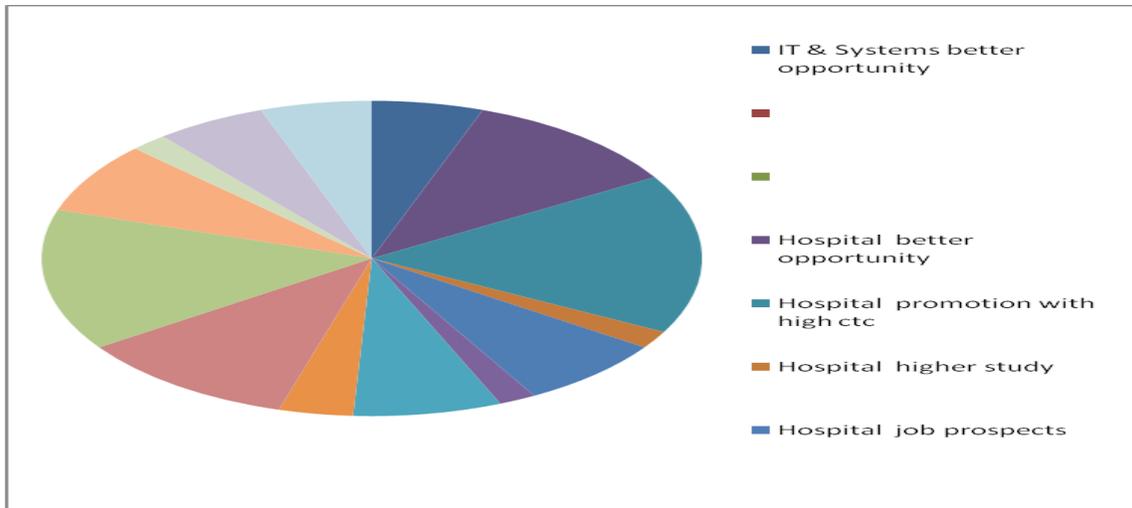
Interpretation: In response to the question "what is the motivation behind doing this course" out of 64 respondents, the maximum responded via 6 seeking Promotion & 5 upgrading knowledge skills, total 30% respondents were seeking promotion & 25% respondent wanted upgrading knowledge and skills.

Thus Further study and acquiring master degree are not motivating factors.

From the above analysis, it becomes clear that majority of students join the course seeking promotion in current job and upgrading their knowledge and skills is the major motivating factors.

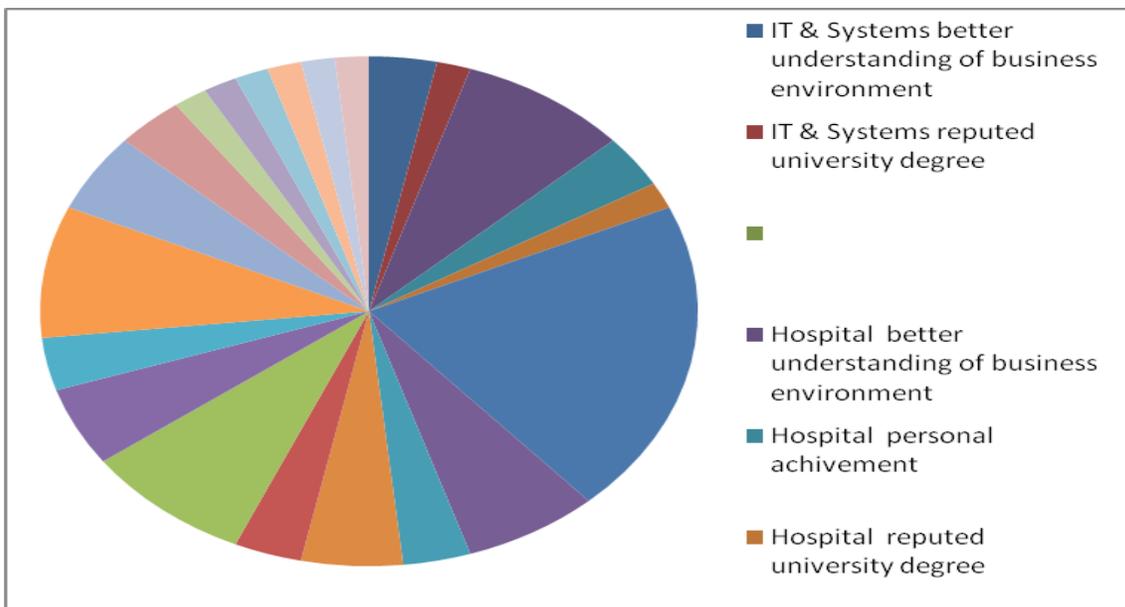


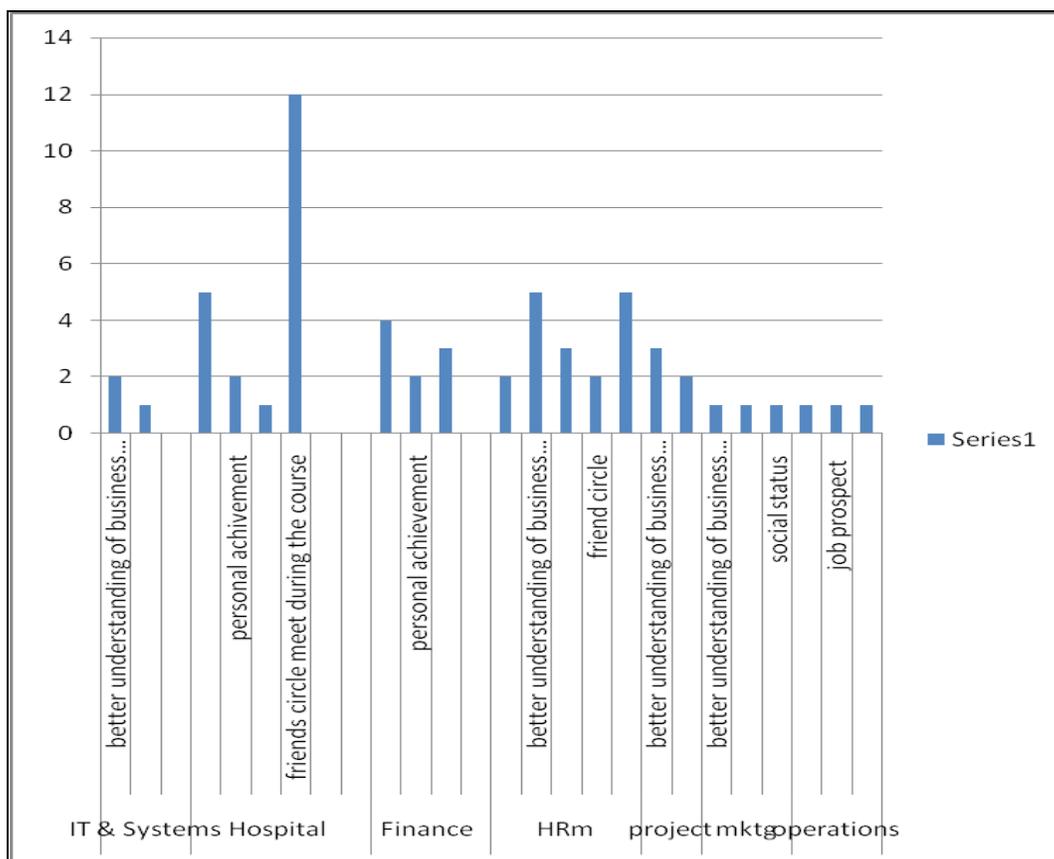
Interpretation: In response to the question “what kind of career aspirations do you have” out of 64 respondent Maximum responded via 13 HRM student stated that becoming a successful managers is the aspiration.while10 Hospital & healthcare wanted to be successful administrators in hospitals. From the above analysis, it is clear that HRM And Hosital Administration student wants to be successful managers ,while other aspirations like starting own business and promotions are comparatively low.



Interpretation: In response to the question “in what way this course is going to help you financially” out of total 64 respondents maximum responded viz 09 Hospital & Healthcare were expecting higher CTC with a promotion in the same job. Whereas 08 HRM students were expecting better package while switch over of job. Increase in status and job seeking prospectus were comparatively low.

From the above analysis, It is clear that majorly student goes for higher CTC with promotion and better package while switch over.





Interpretation: In response to the question” what other direct /indirect benefits do you forces after completing this course”. Out of total 64 respondents maximum responded viz 12 students seeks a good friend circle meet during the course. While better understanding of business environment and personal achievement are other factors.

It is clear those students are benefited by the friend’s circle they meet during the course. Personal achievement and social status of a degree is very less.

Conclusion: The Research shows that majorly the MBA Course has given platform for female working women as an empowerment tools to capacity building with better understanding of business environment. The aspirations of working women’s to fulfilling the dreams ,highly paid jobs in corporate and enhances their skill in different specialized areas and get financial and non financial benefits through Blended learning. The Study also shows that Networking and creating a friends circle while studying the course gives them the confidence and bond of friendship for a lifetime.