

EDUCATION: AN EMPOWERING TOOL OF DISMAYED WOMEN EMPLOYED UNDER COMPASSIONATE GROUNDS

PREETHI KEERTHI DSOUZA, P.V SUMITHA

Abstract: Families are totally distorted when adversities happen to the major or only earning member. The reason for this mishap in a family may be due to controllable or uncontrollable factors. When situations like these arise, families have lost their existence. One ray of hope for such oppressed families is the government scheme which provides employment under compassionate grounds if earning member now deceased was in government service. This is one scheme through which families have revived. But there are vivid cases wherein this benefit is not utilized fully when the surviving partner lacks education.

Education is the most powerful tool in the hands of every person be it male or female, but a girl child is deprived of making education as her weapon for self protection and prosperity. In the later years where these girls face life's challenges, as stated above, find it very hard to make needs meet of self and of their family members. Thus this paper is an attempt to study the cases of these dismayed women. The paper identifies cases where in due to lower or no education these dismayed women have lost their opportunity to utilize the scheme of employment under compassionate grounds to the fullest extent. Thus this paper emphasizes the role of education and validates that education is the only tool of empowerment in the hands of these dismayed women.

Keywords: Education, Dismayed women, Empowerment, Compassionate grounds.

1. Introduction: In the past, women were deprived from education as they were bound to be within the four walls. The traditional setup somehow ensured so called 'protection' of women by the father, husband and son at various stages of life. Proficiency in domestic work was the only education which they were supposed to acquire to lead a life which included taking care of children, chores of the household, staying at home, and being a submissive wife and a selfless mother. These customs made women totally depended on male counterpart. If in a family, when a disaster occurred, women suffered the most both economically and socially due to this dependence. Different religions had their own customs and these customs too made women to be confined within four walls which led to killing of her identity and lack of opportunities and confidence to even think aloud.

2. Reasons for being dismayed : Women are emotionally more vulnerable than men. When there are problems in a family, women suffer the most because they have prime interest of all family members and not of self alone. Every problem big or small makes woman agonizing. If a problem like untimely death of the spouse is faced by a woman she will be totally dismayed. On separation matters too, many a times the same uncomfortableness is experienced by her. There are many other causes for women to be dismayed. They are great financial crunch, chronic illness of any family member, problems with shelter, food and social security reasons. Every family will encounter these problems at some point or the other. In the past, society and

family set up did take care of some families and some families due to these occurrences have lost their identities. But in the present, women have to be strong and take care of their nuclear families, more so in the cities because the social support is limited. Education is one of the prominent empowerment tool in times of complexities. Education not only helps to provide regular sustenance but also helps to boost her self esteem in society.

3. Education an empowering tool: Educating women in the past was considered as a privilege to the selected few and hence the girl child was deprived of this basic right. This deprivation then has devastating effects now. If the girl child was given education in the past, we would now have been witnessing a more civilized society.

Education is the most powerful instrument for changing women's position in society. It is more important for the self-grooming of woman (Pearson, 2004). It gives her a sense of individuality which boosts her confidence. This has been realized now but, the impact of the girl child not been educated a few years ago is very vivid in the present society particularly among dismayed women (Alsop, R. and N. Heinsohn, 2005). When a women is educated the benefits of it percolate down to all the members in the family because women are the mothers of the future generation. If women are uneducated, the future generations will also have a negative impact. An educated woman gives an educated family and an educated family can make society better.

Empowerment means moving from enforced powerlessness to a position of power. Education is an

essential means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to fully participate in the development process (Endeley, 2001).

4. Employment under compassionate grounds: In the above said scheme an appointment is granted to a dependent family member of a government servant who dies in harness or who is retired on medical grounds, whereby leaving his family in penury and without any means of livelihood, to relieve the family of the Government servant concerned from financial destitution and to help it get over the emergency.

The compassionate grounds appointments are given to anyone of the legal heirs of the deceased government servant. The getting of appointment under this scheme is not a legal right of the dependent family member, but when the family of deceased government servant is in indigent circumstances the application for appointment is favorably considered. One of the documents to be submitted along with the application is the prescribed educational qualification certificates and genuineness of educational/technical qualification. When the dependent family member has the required qualification, the chances of claiming employment under compassionate grounds will materialize.

Dependent Family Member: The dependent family members who can be benefitted under the scheme are

(a) Spouse; or (b) Son (including adopted son); or (c) Daughter (including adopted daughter); or (d) Brother or sister in the case of unmarried Government servant or (e) Member of the Armed Forces referred to in (a) or (b) as above, who was wholly dependent on the Government servant/member of the Armed Forces at the time of his death in harness or retirement on medical grounds, as the case may be.

5. Literature review: Anita Arya (2000) highlights education on improved production technologies and methods, new products and markets, business skills, along with training on life skills such as health management, decision-making, self confidence, or conflict management are essential components of any strategy to improve agricultural, non-farm productivity and rural incomes which can make a big difference for many of the rural poor, particularly the women folk.

Malhotra, A. and S. Shuler (2005), analyses the impact of education and work in women's decision-making at Sri Lanka, finds that education and employment are important determinants of women's decision-making in terms of finances, but not in terms of household decisions related to social or organization matters.

Kamal, N. and K.M. Zunaid (2006), state that education is the imperative way to empower women. An educated woman is more aware of her rights and adopts to pay a job, which leads to increase empowerment of women.

Mukut Kr. Sonowal (2013) studies the impact of education in women empowerment among SC and ST women in rural areas of Sonitpur district. Study emphasizes that modern education and facilities have influenced women empowerment to a larger extent in urban areas whereas women of SC, ST communities are still lagging behind. Hence author concludes education is the key factor for women empowerment and rural development.

Vijaya Anuradha (2013), focused on the need for VET (VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING) for rural women. The authors highlighted that VET can make a big difference empowering rural women by improving household productivity, employability and income-earning opportunities and also for enhancing food security and promoting environmentally sustainable rural development and livelihoods.

6. Research methodology:

6.1 Statement of the problem:

Dismayed women face greater challenges when compared to other women while supporting their families. If these dismayed women are not having adequate education, then their difficulties only pileup. They become victims to all the social injustice and they cannot enjoy the basic rights too. If these women are educated then they find the challenges a little lighter to face when compared to less educated or illiterate dismayed women. This study is an attempt to project the relevance of education and to highlight the point as to how education was the major factor responsible for dismayed women whose spouses were government servants, to elevate their families in the time of grief and uncertainty. This study is carried out in a cosmopolitan city namely Mangalore where generally the freedom of women is not restricted. Both genders live in a secure environment and in a socially diverse culture.

6.2 Objectives of the study:

This research is an attempt to empirically test the connection between education, employment opportunities and women empowerment.

The objectives of the study are:

- To explore the reasons that causes uncertainty to women.
- To access the impact on families when they are struck in grief.
- To study the role of education in empowering women.
- To study the impact of the scheme of employment under compassionate grounds.

6.3 Scope of the research:

The scope of the study was restricted to women who have received employment under compassionate grounds. For this purpose two Government sector offices were selected namely the sales tax office and public sector bank both located in the city of Mangalore. The samples were selected from these two government offices. The primary data was collected through structured interviews and a questionnaire.

6.4 Research design:

The present study is exploratory in nature. This also includes the descriptive study which involved the researcher in collecting the primary data by making use of the questionnaires as a research instrument to a very large extent for the purpose of the study.

6.5 Sampling design:

Sample design is a plan for drawing the samples from the population. Following steps were followed in the sampling design.

6.5.1 Sample unit: Dismayed women from government sectors i.e., two government offices who were employed under compassionate grounds were the respondents for the study.

6.5.2 Sampling frame: The study was restricted within the city limits of Mangalore. Dismayed

7. Data analysis and interpretation

7.1 Socio-demographic background of study:

Age (years)		Present Status		Educational Level		Government Job Type	
Options	Frequency	Options	Frequency	Options	Frequency	Options	Frequency
<20	0(0%)	Widow	34 (79%)	7 th pass	9(21%)	Peon	8(19%)
20-25	2(5%)			10 th pass	12(28%)	Attender (Sub staff)	14(33%)
25-30	5(12%)	Divorcee	7 (16%)	PUC	11(26%)	Second Division Clerk (SDC)	16(37%)
30-35	7(16%)			Graduate	7(16%)	First Division Clerk (FDC)	5(12%)
35-40	12(28%)	Separated	2 (5%)	Post Graduate	1(2%)		
>40	17(40%)			Others	3(7%)		
TOTAL	N=43 (100%)	TOTAL	N=43 (100%)	TOTAL	N=43 (100%)	TOTAL	N=43 (100%)

Interpretation: Demographic profile of respondents highlights that larger sector of respondents in the sample were widows (79%) and only a very small percentage of the women were divorcees (16%) and separated (5%). Almost 40% of the respondents belonged to the age group above of 40 years, followed by 28% of women in the age group of 35 - 40 years. The distribution on education revealed that most women in the study were 10th pass (28%) followed by PUC qualification (26%). Regarding the type of job received based on compassionate grounds from the government sector, a larger percentage of them received second division clerk (SDC) job (37%) and 33% of them were attenders (sub staff).

7.2 Opinion survey findings: reasons that cause uncertainty : Women always face uncertainty and

women from government sectors who were employed under compassionate grounds were obtained from sales tax office and public sector bank being operational in Mangalore.

6.5.3 Sample size: As per the decided sampling frame, the sample size obtained for the study were 43 dismayed women who have received employment in these two above said offices under the compassionate grounds. 19 respondents were from the sales tax office and 24 were from the public sector bank (for confidentiality bank name is not disclosed).

6.6 Limitations and implications for future research:

The present study included dismayed women employed under the compassionate grounds. The study was conducted in Mangalore city in Karnataka only wherein the scope of the study was restricted to small geographical region. Thus this was the major limitation for the lower sample size and hence the results cannot be generalized to all metropolitan cities. As the study was restricted to only respondents belonging to government sector, there is a wide scope for including all dismayed women belonging to other sectors for better derived results.

due to this they get dismayed. The reasons that cause uncertainty as opined by the respondents are as follows:

- Death of Spouse:** The untimely death and even the natural death of the spouse cause uncertainties because in this male dominated society a widow finds it difficult to lead a normal life. Security and social needs are at stake. When these women have no social support from their families the uncertainties increase.
- Divorce/ Separation:** Even due to divorce and separation women mainly face uncertainties. When the divorce cases are fought for the trauma of facing all tensions is similar to death. With uncertainty, the stigma of not being a unfaithful and non submissive wife is also attached.

- **Financial Crunch:** when the family faces financial problems, women in the family are dismayed. Still they do their best to see that families revive from these shocks.
- **Chronic illness of family members:** The chronic illness of a family member will shatter a woman more than when she herself suffers from a disease. In these times a women gives her best care to see that the family member revives.
- **Problem with shelter, food, education & social security:** Women gets tensed very much when the family faces problems with regard to shelter, food, and education of children or for any social security reason. When a major problem comes and if the support system is not in place, women get dismayed.

7.3 Impact on families during times of uncertainties

The respondents opined that when the sole bread winner is lost due to any reason the family is in turmoil. Future seems to be very weak and they find it difficult to make needs meet.

- The basic needs cannot be met of the family members and mostly women suffer due to malnutrition.
- The education of children gets disturbed and they have to postpone their needs and work on budgets to make the smallest need meet.
- In times of uncertainties if there are medical emergencies then the family is mostly burned with debts and loans and they have to sacrifice on the health care issues too. Financially, families suffer and the debt cycle starts. Women and even dependents get exploited. Priorities in family change and education of children find a setback.
- Many families get duped in the process of receiving help. These distressed families are cheated of their basic rights too. A type of inferiority complex is developed by the dependents of the deceased. The religious ceremonies and the societal regulations still make the living of the dependents very difficult.

Thus families get adversely affected by the death of the head of the family and it becomes an irreplaceable loss.

7.4 Role of education in empowering women:

In the study the respondents opined that they have revived from uncertainties mainly due to education. They have received employment under compassionate grounds but it was not possible if they were not educated. Their education as young girls has now helped them lead a dignified life. The respondents quoted several examples wherein the survivors have not got employment under compassionate grounds due to lack of basic education. There were cases wherein the dependent family members were not given employment for not

be adequately qualified. Thus it is felt that education is the major empowering tool in the hands of dismayed women. Since the dismayed women in the study had some basic education, they got an employment opportunity. This opportunity has helped their families revive. If these women too did not have same basic education they would not have had faced life with the same courage and connection that they are doing now is what was opined by the respondents. They articulated that education is very essential for a woman because the future is uncertain. One most important factor of differentiation between a successful and unsuccessful woman is education. Respondents opined that they will educate their daughters and make them stronger to face the greater challenges and uncertainties of life.

6.5 Impact of the scheme of employment under compassionate grounds:

Respondents opined that their families have got a second life and they have revived. They need not fully depend on other social supports and they can support their families single handed. The scheme of giving employment under compassionate grounds have revived families and even elevated their standard of living.

Women have become self sufficient and have build courage and confidence to face life. They have become strong and are now self dependent. Majority of the children of these dismayed women have now started earning and are a support to their families. This was only possible due to the employment provided for these women during trauma times. The basic needs can be met and children are pursuing even professional education. Families have got a sense of security and have a feeling that they too can work hard and build society. The scheme has benefitted many but the process of getting employment under the scheme is tedious. One has to apply within three years of the demise of the government servant. However, there are all 43 families that have received and have reaped the benefit of the scheme. If this scheme was not in implementation, then the families of the respondents would not be having a dignified existence that they now have.

8. Conclusion: Across the world, discrimination of women from womb to tomb is well known. Either by law or custom, women are still denied the basic rights and sometimes even the right to live. Schooling is also a basic right which every girl child must get. Unfortunately this is also denied. The consequences of the girl child not been educated are having its impact on families and even the society. When women are not educated as the men are, they do not get equal rights and opportunities. Unequal opportunities between men and women hamper women's ability to lift themselves from poverty and to

also secure improved options to better their lives and their families well being. Education is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. Thus the paper emphasis the fact that dismayed women of the study were able to revive only because they were having some education. Hence education is the most powerful empowering tool in the hands of women. If the dismayed women of the study were better qualified as to what they are

now, they would be more empowered to find in new employment opportunities. They would not be at home even in the first instance within the four walls. If they can be competent after their spouse's death they were competent even before. If they were encouraged with good education at the beginning to take up jobs along with their spouses they would have been much more encouraged and empowered.

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Mrs. Preethi Keerthi Dsouza,
Assistant Professor
Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Commerce,
Mangalore University,
Mangalore, India

Ms. P.V Sumitha,
Assistant Professor,
Department of Business Administration,
AIMIT, St. Aloysius College,
Beeri, Mangalore 575022, India