



ATTITUDE OF FEMALE STUDENTS TOWARDS DISTANCE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Distance Learning has grown more and more popular by the day. It has led to a far-reaching impact on the education scene, specifically by broadening the horizon of opportunities. This study examined female students' attitude towards distance education. Distance education makes its place day by day. In busy and job oriented life, students prefer distance mode for getting degree. In this study to know the attitude of students towards distance education, the researcher collected data from 65 Hindu and Non- Hindu female students from Ratlam district and data were collected from 40 female distance learners of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and 35 female distance learners of Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University (MPBOU) following purposive sampling method. The findings revealed that female distance learners have positive attitude towards distance learning and no significant difference was found between the overall attitudes of learners from both universities. Mean, S.D., and z-test used for analysing data. The statistical significance level was accepted as 0.05 in the study.

Keywords- Attitude, Distance education, Intermediate, Graduate, Postgraduate, PhD students, Urban and Rural area.

INTRODUCTION: -

"A moment comes which comes but rarely in history when step out from the old to the new ". (Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru)

India is the second most popular and seventh largest country in the world. The population of India is 1,210,193,422, and literacy rate of Indian is 82.11 per cent males and 65.64 per cent females (census 2011). India's about three-quarters of the population live in villages and their main occupation is agriculture. In 1947 India achieved Independence and has adopted a parliamentary form of government based on entire adult authorization and a mixed economy. India had made prominent advances in various sectors, but still is a developing country. In India distance education has a history of nearly three decades. The concept of distance education has emerged as a result of man's search for education which could be provided to a person at home. "Necessity is the mother of invention" (Sharma, 2006) is too well known proverb to be elicited. In the days gone by education for a distance was never thought because teachers were available to teach those who wanted to quench their thirst for knowledge, Not everybody was interested in higher education or education for leisure or for enhancing in knowledge for future promotion in his job.

The first Indian open university is the Andhra Pradesh Open University (APOU). After the success of open education system in Andhra Pradesh at national level the government of India has laid foundation for the first national Open University and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was set up in 1985. IGNOU was the first University in India to promote correspondence courses and set the trend of Distance Education where as many other Universities started these programs as horizon increasing and

resource generating exercise. A comprehensive definition of distance education is proposed by Keegan (1980) who asserts that the following key features *characterize* distance education system.

1. Separation of teacher and students;
2. Use of technical media;
3. Provision of two way communication;
4. Absence of group learning;
5. Important role of an educational organization;
6. Participation in the most industrialized form of education;
7. Privatization of learning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: -

Ramzi, Nasser and Kamal, Abouchedid, (2013) conducted study on Attitudes and Concerns towards Distance Education. The study surveys 7 school directors and 112 school teachers unequally divided among fourteen urban and rural schools. School directors were negative about the possibility of distance education meeting the training needs of school teachers. In addition, they reported costly training and the purchase of technologies for distance education as inconceivable. On the other hand, teachers held a more positive view of distance education. Though more than 50% of the teachers reported little acquaintance with the specifics of distance education, they reported willingness to put forth the effort needed to familiarize themselves with the new technologies and practices.

Altameemy (2010) examined the attitudes of Middle Eastern faculty toward the use of *distance education* in the Middle Eastern state universities: A comparative study between the Middle Eastern faculty and USA faculty. The study involved 139 faculty members from the Middle East, who live and work in Yemen, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain; and 126 participants from the United States, who work at various universities and showed negative attitudes of Middle Eastern faculty members in the use of technology, culture and social, economic, location, policies, educational, academic achievement and availability of distance education tools factors. When compared to the faculty members in the USA, Middle Eastern faculty members showed more negative attitudes toward the use of distance education.

Nembiakkim and Mishra (2010) studied distance education research attitude and barriers and concluded that respondents were positively disposed towards research in distance education, and believed in the need for more research, that is quantitative and collaborative. Distance education can be more learner centered if distance educators are aware of the problems, needs, attitudes and characteristics of their learners.

Tripathi and Kanungo (2010) analyzed types of research published in Indian Journal of Open Learning from 2000 to 2009 and concluded that there were certain gaps in the research which had been reported in a ten year time period.

Tsokris (2010) showed that differences exist in faculty perceptions related to students' ability to interact with their classmates online, in the degree of opportunity students had to interact with the instructor, and on the type of feedback important to students. In addition, the study showed a number of faculties did not believe learning outcomes in online classes were similar to the learning outcomes in traditional classes.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:-

1. To study the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance Education in relation to their different levels of education.
2. To study the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance Education in relation to their rural and urban areas.
3. To study the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance education in relation to their high and low socio economic status.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:-

1. There was no significant difference in the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance Education in relation to their intermediate level of education.
2. There was no significant difference between the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance education in relation to their Graduate level of education.
3. There was no significant difference between the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance education in relation to their Postgraduate level of education.
4. There was no significant difference between the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance education in relation to their PhD level of education.
5. There was no significant difference between the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance education in relation to their high socio economic status.
6. There was no significant difference between the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance education in relation to their low socio economic status.
7. There was no significant difference between the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students women towards Distance education in relation to their rural areas.
8. There was no significant difference between the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance education in relation to their urban areas.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLE SIZE:-

A sample of 65 Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students was taken from district Ratlam Madhya Pradesh (M.P.) using simple random sampling technique.

Out of 65 respondents

1. 43 respondents were Hindu female students while rest were Non-Hindu female students.
2. 30 Hindu female students belong to High socio economic status while rest belong to Low Socio economic status.
3. 12 Non- Hindu female students belong to High Socio economic status while rest belong to Low socio economic status.
4. 23 Hindu female students were from Urban areas while rest were from Rural areas.
5. 12 Non-Hindu female students were from Urban areas while rest were from Rural areas.

STATISTICAL TOOL:-

Keeping in view the purpose of research endeavour, the investigator prepared a scale to measure the attitude towards Distance education. This tool was then standardized and reliability and validity was established. Socio economic status of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students was measured by socio economic status scale rural and urban developed by Beena Shah (1985). These standardized tools were administered on the sample.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: -**TABLE NO.01**

Comparison of the Mean Scores of Intermediate Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance education

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	F-Value	P-Value
Intermediate Hindu Female Students	10	28.56	3.28	2.186	0.0288
Intermediate Non-Hindu Female Students	05	23.48	4.65		

P<0.05

As clearly shows in the above table when the result of Intermediate Hindu Female Students was compared to the Intermediate Non- Hindu Female Students on the basis of the attitude towards distance education, the obtained z-value found significant at 0.05 level of confidence, The in-depth investigation concluded that there exists a significant difference in the mean values of Hindu and Non- Hindu Intermediate Female Students. Attitude of Intermediate Hindu Female Students have higher than Intermediate Non-Hindu Female Students towards distance education. Hence the null hypothesis H01 stands rejected,

TABLE NO.02

Comparison of the Mean Scores of Graduate Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance Education

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	F-Value	P-Value
Graduate Hindu Female Students	15	29.72	5.38	2.308	0.021
Graduate Non-Hindu Female Students	08	25.40	3.55		

P<0.05

Above table clearly indicate the obtained z-value was found significant at 0.05 level. The in-depth investigation revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean values of graduate Hindu and Non-Hindu Female Students and towards distance education. Graduate Hindu Female Students have higher positive attitude than Graduate Non-Hindu Female Students towards distance education. Hence the proposed **null hypothesis H02** stands rejected.

TABLE NO.03

Comparison of the Mean Scores of Postgraduate Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance Education

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	F-Value	P-Value
Postgraduate Hindu Female Students	10	27.94	3.59	2.606	0.0092
Postgraduate Non-Hindu women	05	21.55	4.86		

P<0.05

Above table that the obtained z-value) was found significant at 0.05 level of confidence. The in-depth investigation revealed that Hindu and Non-Hindu Female Students differ significantly on attitude towards Distance education. Hindu Postgraduate Female Students have higher attitude than Postgraduate Non-Hindu Female Students towards Distance education. Hence, the **null hypothesis H03** stands rejected.

TABLE NO.04**Comparison of the Mean Scores of PhD Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance Education**

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	F-Value	P-Value
PhD Hindu Female Students	08	29.16	3.98	2.261	0.0238
PhD Non-Hindu Female Students	04	22.88	4.79		

P<0.05

Above table that the obtained z-value) was found significant at 0.05 level of confidence. The in-depth investigation revealed that Hindu and Non-Hindu Female Students differ significantly on attitude towards Distance education. Hindu PhD Female Students have higher attitude than PhD Non-Hindu Female Students towards Distance education. Hence, the **null hypothesis H04** stands rejected.

TABLE NO.05**The Significance difference between the Mean scores of high Socio Economic Status of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance Education**

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	F-Value	P-Value
High SES Hindu Female Students	30	32.69	4.89	2.784	0.0054
High SES Non-Hindu Female Students	12	29.25	2.96		

P<0.05

While comparing the attitude of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance education in relation to their High socio-economic-status, It indicated that obtained z-value was found significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This confirmed that there existed significant difference between the attitude of high socio-economic-status of Hindu Female Students with high socio-economic-status of Non-Hindu Female Students towards distance education. Hence the **null hypothesis H05** stands rejected.

TABLE NO.06**The Significance difference between the Mean scores of low Socio Economic Status of Hindu and Non- Hindu Female Students towards Distance Education**

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	F-Value	P-Value
Low SES Hindu Female Students	13	31.77	5.65		

				2.680	0.0074
Low SES Non-Hindu Female Students	10	26.42	3.91		

P<0.05

The above table showed a comparison of low socio-economic-status of Hindu Female Students with low socio-economic-status of Non- Hindu Female Students, The obtained z-value was found significant at .05 level of confidence. This confirmed that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of low socio economic-status of Hindu Female Students with low socio-economic-status of Non- Hindu Female Students. Low socio-economic-status of Hindu Female Students have high positive attitude than low socio-economic-status of Non-Hindu Female Students towards distance education. Hence the proposed null **hypothesis H06** stands rejected.

TABLE NO.07

The Significance difference between the Mean scores of Hindu and Non- Hindu Rural Female Students towards Distance Education

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	F-Value	P-Value
Hindu Rural Female Students	20	34.60	4.88	3.627	0.0003
Non-Hindu Rural Female Students	10	29.51	2.79		

P<0.05

The above table clearly presented a comparison between Hindu Rural Female Students with Non- Hindu Rural Female Students on the basis of attitude towards distance education. It indicated that obtained z-value found significant at 0.05 level of confidence. It was therefore concluded that there was a significant difference between the attitudes Hindu Rural Female Students with Non- Hindu Rural Female Students towards distance education. Hence the proposed null **hypothesis H07** stands rejected.

TABLE NO.08

The Significance difference between the Mean scores of Hindu and Non- Hindu Urban Female Students towards Distance Education

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	F-Value	P-Value
Hindu Urban Female Students	23	36.33	4.80	5.208	0.0001
Non-Hindu Urban Female Students	12	29.76	2.66		

P<0.05

As exposed in the above table when the result of Hindu Urban Female Students Compared to the Non-Hindu Urban Female Students on the basis of the attitude towards distance education, the obtained z-value was found significant difference at 0.05 level of confidence.

The in-depth investigation revealed that there was a significant difference between the attitude of Hindu Urban Female Students and Non-Hindu Urban Female Students towards distance education. Hindu Urban Female Students have higher attitude than Non-Hindu Urban Female Students towards distance education. Hence the proposed null **hypothesis H08** stands rejected.

FINDINGS:-

1. It was found that Hindu and Non-Hindu female students differ significantly in their attitudes towards Distance education, in relation to their different levels of education. Whereas, Hindu Female Students were found better in their attitude towards distance education as their counterparts i.e. Non-Hindu Female Students.

(a). It has been found that intermediate Hindu and Non-Hindu female students differ significantly on the attitude towards distance education. Hindu female students had a more favourable attitude towards distance education than Non-Hindu female students in relation to their intermediate level of education.

(b). Significant difference was found between the attitude of graduate Muslim and towards Distance education. Graduate Hindu and Non-Hindu female students have higher attitude than that of graduate Non-Hindu female students towards distance education.

(c). It was found that postgraduate Hindu and Non-Hindu female students differ significantly on attitude towards Distance education, in relation to their postgraduate level of education. But, postgraduate Hindu female students were found better attitude than postgraduate Non-Hindu female students.

(d). Ph.D. Hindu and Non-Hindu female students differ significantly in their attitude towards distance education. Whereas, PhD Hindu female students were found more favourable attitude towards distance education than that of PhD Non-Hindu female students.

2. It was found that low socio economic status of Hindu and Non-Hindu female students differ significantly between the attitude towards Distance education. The attitude of High socio economic status of Hindu female students was higher than that of their counterparts.

3.. It was found that low socio economic status of Hindu and Non-Hindu female students differ significantly between the attitude towards Distance education. The attitude of Low socio economic status of Hindu female students was higher than that of their counterparts.

4. It has been found that Hindu and Non-Hindu Rural female students differ significantly between the attitudes towards Distance education. It shows that Hindu Rural female students have high attitude towards Distance education those Non-Hindu Rural female students.

5. It has been found that Hindu and Non-Hindu Urban female students differ significantly between the attitudes towards Distance education. It shows that Hindu Urban female students have high attitude towards Distance education those Non-Hindu Urban female students.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:-

The findings of this study are strongly pitted in favour of distance learning. This indicates, in general, that there are far more people keeping a favourable outlook towards distance learning as compared to those who oppose it and are unwilling to be benefitted by this trend. These findings are strongly emerging from the wide range of advantages and benefits offered by distance learning as opposed to its few limitations. Although this study is limited by the small size of sample, but still such researches will go a long way in highlighting the massive contribution distance learning provides to the society in general, and the field of education in specific. A general positive attitude is an indicator of wider social acceptance and higher chances of this mode of learning to be promoted and encouraged in the greater interest of society.

1. In the present study overall suggest that Hindu female students in general show better attitude as compared to Non-Hindu female students towards Distance education. Efforts should be made to give opportunities women to pursue distance education as well as to encourage women to enter in work force without having any guilt feelings.

2.. In general it has been reported by the present study that, Hindu female students have better attitude towards Distance education in relation to their age, than that of their counterpart i.e., Non-Hindu female students. There must be some special provision for Non-Hindu students to develop their awareness towards distance education; it has been found that Non female students are inferior to their Hindu female student's counterpart, in attitude towards Distance education. Therefore, parents, NGOs, and government organizations should be more concern towards need of distance education, so as to make full participation of Non-Hindu students in distance education.

3. Since socioeconomic factor plays an important role socioeconomic factor plays an important role in achievement gap between two communities. Therefore, there is an urgent need to minimize the disparities of socioeconomic condition among Hindu and Non- Hindu female students. Financial incentives should be provided for motivating Non-Hindu female towards distance education.

4. Difference in living place also affects the attitude of female towards distance education. The Hindu female students belonging to urban and rural areas showed better attitude towards distance education as compared to Non-Hindu female students. So again there is need for additional incentives to be given to Non-Hindu female students at both the urban and rural areas for motivating them towards distance education.

5. Make the Non-Hindu female students aware of the increasing value of distance education in higher education, through different channels such as media, educational conferences, and observation Non-Hindu female students perceived value of the internet based distance education had the greatest effect on their attitude towards distance education.

6. Provide Non-Hindu female students with development programmes and official training forward on the use of distance education in order to improve their technical skills.

7. Create an effective reward, incentives, and recognition programme for Non-Hindu female students to encourage them to teach in distance education environment.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:-

1. Research is a time bound programme so it is difficult to cover the entire geographical areas in a single study like the proposed one. Therefore, the present study is delimited to a population only on 65 women of Ratlam district.

2. The study is conducted only on the Hindu and Muslim (rural and urban) female students in district Ratlam.

3. Since collection of data from entire country is a tedious task the investigator limits her study to Ratlam district.

4. Only English medium female students were selected in this study

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