



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS)

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### Abstract

*Women employees of Higher Education Institutes desire to grow and scale new heights. The UGC provides opportunities for women to develop their career. Regardless of encouraging statistics on women access to opportunities provided by institutes, women still encounter obstacles when seeking to occupy key academic positions in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Participation of women in leadership positions is very rare and it is important that the institutes support their career path. Further, there is a scarcity of research on career development of women in Education sector. This study attempts a literature review and gathers data on main elements of career development of women in HEIs. The data was collected from the 80 non-technical women faculty in Pune, Maharashtra. The research has its own limitations of scope, time and perceptions of respondents. The research brings forth that institutions have a provision of special quota for women employees at recruitment level and observes giving scope to the women faculty to grow suggesting at empowerment of women. The study concludes that the institutes are supporting the women faculty in career development through special award and recognition for achievements, study leave opportunity for research and opportunity to rejoin after a career break.*

**Keywords:** Career Development, Higher Education Institutions, Career Advancement Scheme

## **Introduction**

### **HEI in India and Maharashtra:**

The education sector in India comprises pre-school, primary and higher secondary education. This is then followed by the higher education segment which includes professional and technical education. In addition the segment also comprises vocational training, coaching classes, distance education through e-learning platforms and the like. The University of Pune is the most popular educational centers in Pune, Maharashtra which houses 46 academic departments with 307 recognized research institutes and 612 affiliated colleges offering graduate and under-graduate courses.

### **Representation of Women in HEIs in Maharashtra and Pune:**

The regulatory framework governing higher education in Maharashtra is complex with both central and state governments sharing the roles and responsibilities. Inclusive workplace policies render women opportunities and fair rewards ensuring unbiased and prejudice-free work culture which has a positive impact on the self-efficacy level of women which can be validated through their performance. The role of women employees in higher education in Maharashtra and Pune has evolved with some interesting twists and turns since early 1800s. Even when female employees were rare in business settings, women found their niche in teaching in the HEIs.

### **Career Development of faculty in HEIs:**

Career Development as per Gutteridge is the outcome of actions on career plans as viewed from both individual and organizational perspectives. From this definition the researcher understands that career development is very important since it serves as a useful tool or even a launching pad for employees to obtain their objective which could be anything from getting higher pay or receiving incentives to achieving job flexibility, satisfaction and growth.

### **Opportunities for Career Development in HEIs:**

In Indian universities, academic positions are categorized into five levels: Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Lecturer and Temporary teachers (**Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 2016**). The opportunities to develop career are: **orientation/induction programs, refresher courses, workshops/seminars, skill development programs, faculty exchange opportunity, study leaves and university level exposure.**

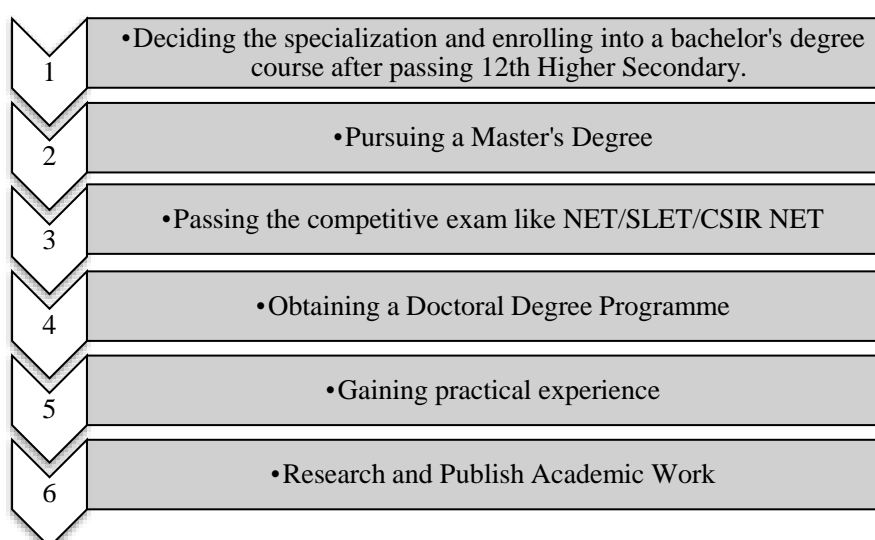
### **UGC benchmarks/ opportunities for Career Development in HEIs:**

To have a clear understanding about the regulations for academic staff of Pune University and Colleges, it is vital to know about UGC opportunities in HEIs:

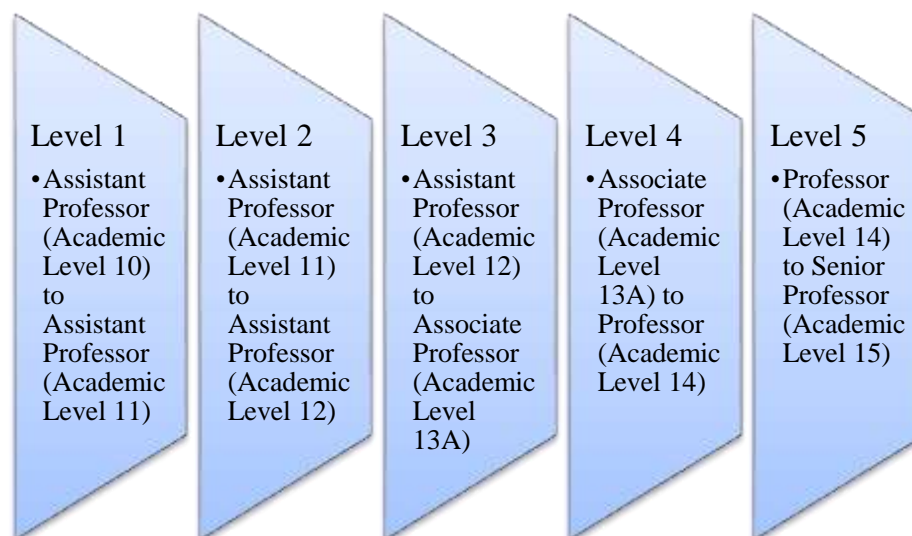
1. Faculty Improvement Program (FIP) - Enhancing the academic and intellectual environment in the institution by providing faculty members with enough opportunities to pursue research and participate in seminars/workshops for updating their skills.
2. Bilateral Exchange Programs - UGC has been implementing the provisions of bilateral exchange program in the field of higher education between India and various other foreign countries. During 2009-2010 UGC had implemented cultural and educational exchange programs with 44 countries.
3. Research Fellowship (JRFS) - Junior Research Fellowship for Indian National Under the scheme students/research scholars who have qualified national level test conducted by the UGC are awarded fellowships to pursue research leading to M. Phil/Ph.D. in various disciplines.
4. SAKSHAM Portal- UGC has developed SAKSHAM which is a dynamic portal that aims towards empowerment of women in campuses through creating awareness on opportunities, redressal mechanism and web resources in the form of United Nations policy documents for women.

Professors are responsible for providing high-level education and guidance in specific streams to students in colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning.

Following steps is the career path for Career Development in HEIs:



**The UGC proposes the career progression under its Career Advancement Scheme as seen in the figure below:**



### **Need and Significance of Career development of Women in HEIs:**

Recently, career development has come to be seen as a means for meeting both organizational and employee needs as opposed to solely meeting the needs of the organization as it had done in the past. Now, organizations see career development of women as a way of preventing job burnout, providing career information, improving quality of work lives and meeting affirmative action goals. Career Development of women helps in engaging teacher-practitioners in their contextualised practice, reflecting on innovative processes and outcomes which help to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge explosion taken at a furious speed. It prepares committed, competent and professionally well qualified faculty who can meet the demands of education system and develop a positive attitude, self confidence and proactive qualities.

Hence it is inferred that employees in HEIs have been the core of education and their career development is highly essential to develop knowledge, effective educational opportunities and other development activities.

### **Objective of the study**

1. To understand the concept of career development of women.
2. To identify the career development opportunities for women employees in the higher education institutions (heis).
3. To study factors influencing the career development of women in higher education institution (heis).

4. To study the challenges faced by women in the higher education institutions (HEIs).

### **Hypothesis**

The researcher is a post graduate working in the primary educational sector who aspires to get employment in Higher Educational Institutions. This interest of the researcher gets motivated to undertake a study of career development opportunities for women. The researcher designs the following hypothesis:

H0- Institutional support is not directly associated with Career Development of Women in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

H1- Institutional support is directly associated Career Development of Women in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

### **Review of literature**

A literature review is a survey of scholarly papers or sources that present the current knowledge including significant findings as well as methodological and conceptual contributions to a specific topic. The aim of the literature review is to ensure the data is read more and have in dept knowledge about the subject area in which the research has to be conducted.

**Kumari, Sucheta (2000) conducted a study on “Professional Growth of Teachers”** where the findings clearly indicate a high level of satisfaction towards the overall performance of the academic staff colleges in imparting knowledge through orientation and refresher programs. Undoubtedly the efforts made by the academic staff colleges were highly appreciated by great scholars **P.K.Jain (2017) in his paper “An empirical study of effectiveness of faculty development programmes in UGC Academic Staff Colleges of Rajasthan”** found out that on an average in one financial year 4 orientation programmes, 4-6 refresher courses, 4-6 short term programmes, 1 summer school, 1 winter school are projected to be organized. Other than this 1 principal meet and sometimes target oriented workshops may also be organized. **Kapur Radhika (2018) conducted a study research on “Challenges experienced by women employees in career development in India”** and examined that the women employees experience work life conflict because of their strong commitment to family responsibilities. Family responsibilities are fundamental, but career development of well educated women is also important and any kinds of responsibilities should not impose any barriers. **Desai Nidhi (2019) carried out a study on “Effect of career breaks on career development of working women in Gujarat”** which explains the main pressure factors for the career break of women in academic profession in Gujarat

where child bearing, marriage and type of family had significant influence on these factors for career break. **Shaito Fadel (2019) in his study “Career Development: An Overview”** investigated that many organizations and employees find it challenging to develop an effective career development strategy. He also addresses career and career development definitions, career development components and processes. **S. Vijaylakshmi, Pilli (2020) conducted a study on “Career planning and development a study with reference to college teachers of East and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh”** which explains that organizations are interested in career development realizing that improved efficiency, profitability, corporate growth and maybe even survival, increasingly depend on better use and development of talent.

### **Research methodology**

Teaching is one of the sectors that attracted a lot of people as compared to other professions as it creates an opportunity for better work conditions that is making teaching a more competitive and mainstream career choice for everyone. But, many women employees quit their jobs due to increased family responsibilities after marriage or lack of family support. Digital innovation can be identified as a factor that has reshaped the world of work and provides multiple opportunities for women to realize their economic potential for a brighter tomorrow.

**Research Design:** A qualitative research approach is adopted using a descriptive phenomenological research design for investigation to understand the career development opportunities to women in HEIs. Qualitative method is used to understand people’s beliefs, experiences, attitudes and behavior to generate non-numerical data. Descriptive type of research aims to accurately and systematically describe a situation or phenomenon.

**Population and Sample Size:** The population for the present study includes the **non technical women faculties** of Higher Education Institutions in Pune, Maharashtra. The sample size of the present study is **80 respondents**.

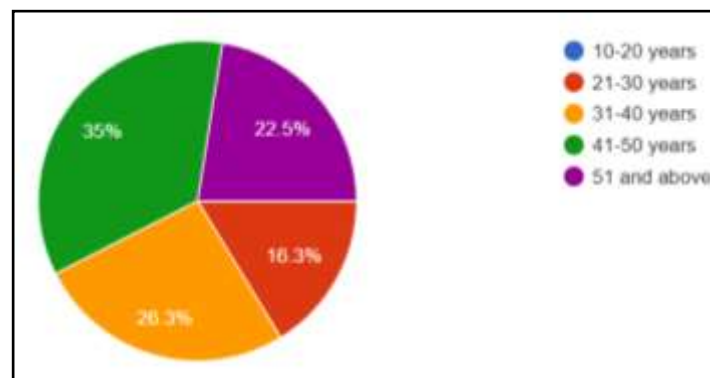
**Data collection method and instruments:** The researcher administered the questionnaire to the women faculty working in Higher Educational Institutions in Pune, Maharashtra.

**Questionnaire and nature of questions:** To conduct the research, the researcher designed a questionnaire including closed and open ended questions to collect data on various aspects of career development. Further, the questionnaire had demographic information, dichotomous questions, multiple choice questions, checkbox type questions and likert scale for collecting responses from respondents.

## Data analysis

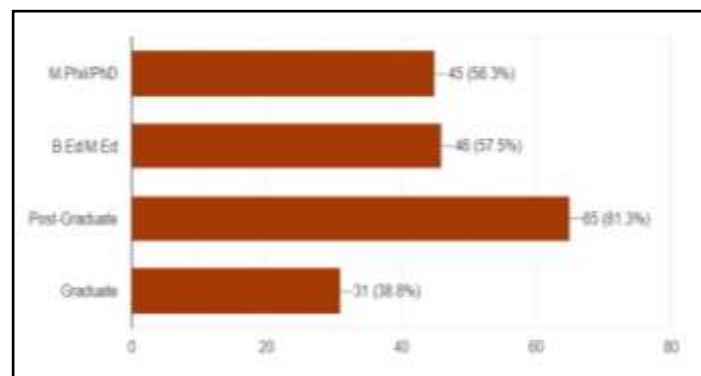
To understand the Career Development opportunities that the Women employees get in HEIs, the researcher designed questionnaire in the form of survey and floated it through all possible channels such as emails and social media (whatsapp). The data is presented through frequency and percentage along with the help of pie diagram and bar diagram according to the need of respective results. Analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the respondents according to each objective in the questionnaire are as follows:

### 1. Age Group



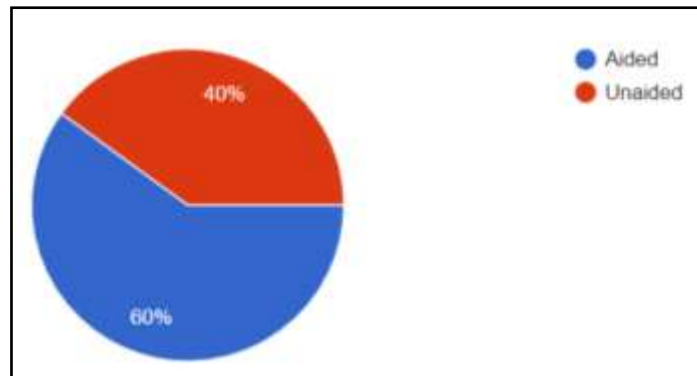
Analysis and Interpretation: As seen above, 35% of the respondents are from 41-50 years followed by 26.3% from 31-40 years, 22.5% are 51 and above and 16.3% are 21-30 years of age. Hence major respondents fall into the age group of 41-50.

### 2. Educational Qualification



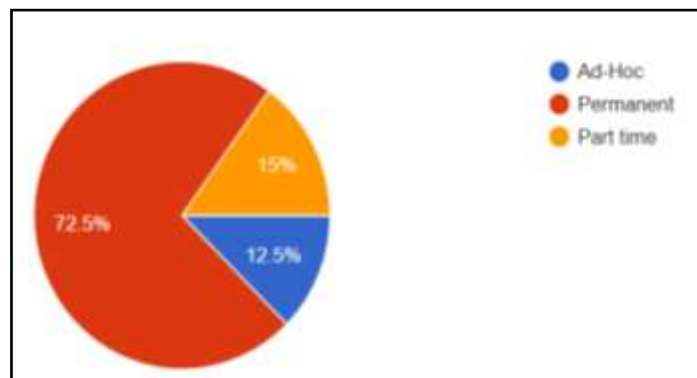
Analysis and Interpretation: It is seen from above that 45 out of 80 i.e., 56.3% respondents have M.Phil/PhD degree, 46 out of 80 i.e., 57.5% have a B.Ed/M.Ed degree. On the other hand in case of Post-Graduate degree, 65 out of 80 respondents i.e., 81.3% have given a positive response which is highest in number in comparison to all other degrees. It is inferred that more than 50% respondents have done their Post-Graduation and B.Ed/M.Ed degree.

### 3. Type of Educational Institution to which respondents belonged to



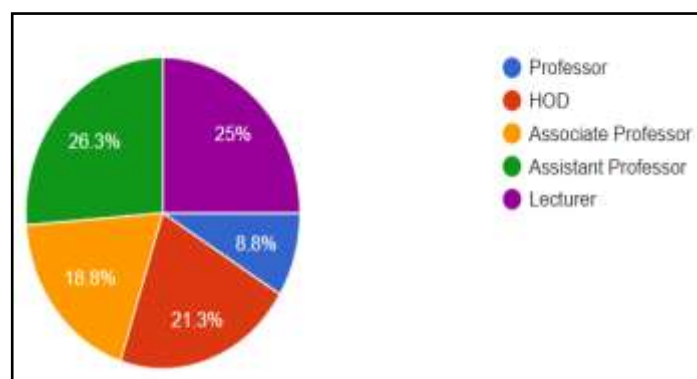
Analysis and Interpretation: The above pie chart represents that majority of respondents i.e., 60% work in aided institutions.

### 4. Data showing nature of appointment of the respondents



Analysis and Interpretation: As seen above, 72.5% respondent's nature of appointment is permanent followed by 15% is part time and 12.5% on ad-hoc basis. Hence interpret that majority respondent's nature of appointment is permanent.

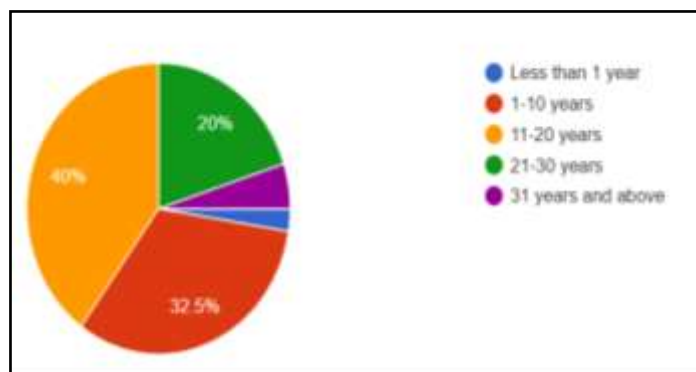
### 5. Data showing current designation of the respondents





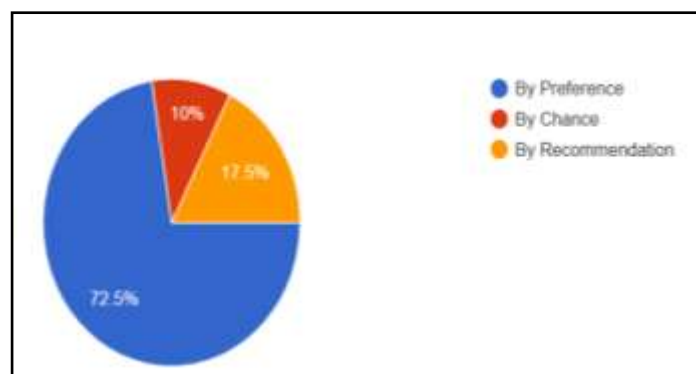
Analysis and Interpretation: From the above pie chart it is observed that percentage of respondents is high i.e., 26.3% in case of their current designation as an Assistant Professor.

#### 6. Data showing respondent's job tenure in current position



Analysis and Interpretation: The above pie chart clearly shows that majority of respondents i.e., 40% are working in their current job position from 11-20 years.

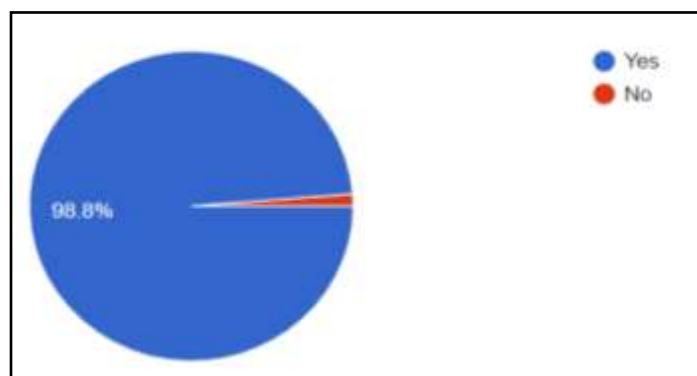
#### 7. Data showing the respondent's identification as a teaching faculty



Analysis and Interpretation: As seen above, 72.5% of the respondents have identified themselves as a teaching faculty by preference followed by 17.5% by recommendation and 10% by chance.

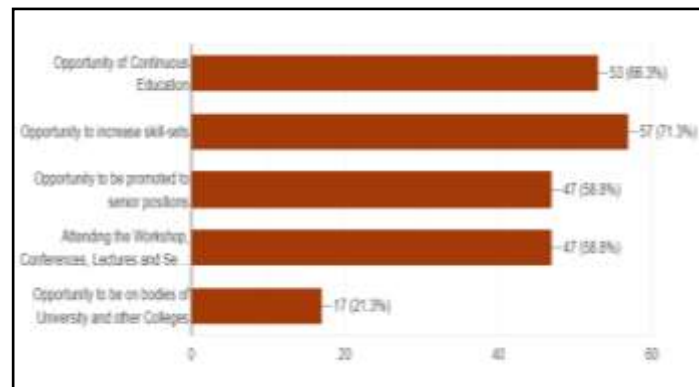
Hence interpreted that majority of the respondents i.e., 72.5% identified themselves as a teaching faculty by preference.

#### 8. Data showing the awareness of the concept of career development



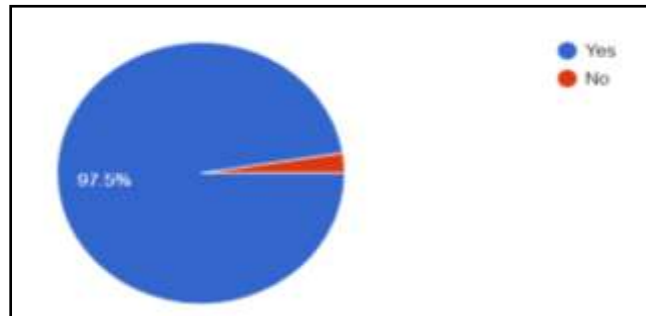
Analysis and Interpretation: It is clearly seen from above that majority of respondents i.e., 98.8% are aware of the conceptual understanding of career development.

### 9. Data showing career development as per the respondent



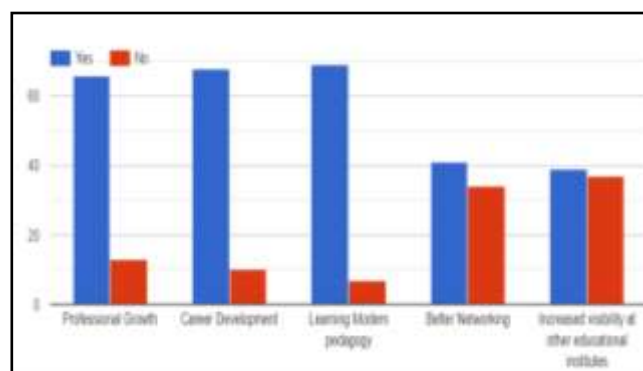
Analysis and Interpretation: It is seen from above that 57 out of 80 consider career development as an opportunity to increase skill sets. 53 agree that career development is an opportunity of continuous education followed by 47 who agree that it's an opportunity to be promoted to senior positions and attending workshops, conferences, lectures and seminars followed by 17 who agree that it's an opportunity to be on bodies of University and other colleges. Hence interpreted that career development is an opportunity to increase skill sets.

### 10. Data showing opportunity for teacher training programs provided by the institute



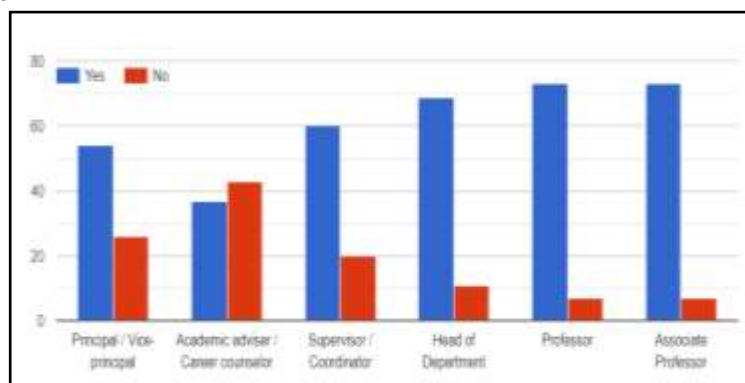
Analysis and Interpretation: It is clearly seen from above that majority of respondents i.e., 97.5% get an opportunity to attend teacher training programs.

### 11. Data showing the benefits received by the respondents by undergoing teacher training programmes



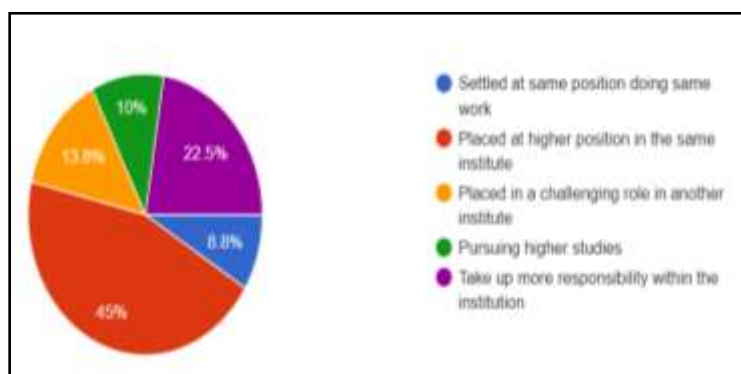
Analysis and Interpretation: From the above histogram chart, 66 out of 80 faculty benefit in professional growth by undergoing teacher training programmes. 68 benefit in career development, 69 benefit in learning modern pedagogy techniques followed by 41 who benefit in better networking and 39 with an increased visibility at other educational institutions. Hence it can be interpreted that majority of the faculty benefit teacher training programs as it helps in learning modern pedagogy techniques.

## 12. Data showing the opportunity that institute provides to achieve administrative and academic positions



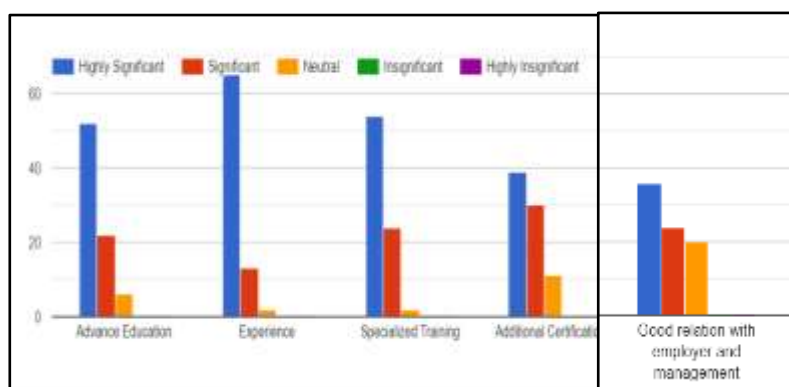
Analysis and Interpretation: In the above chart, 54 out of 80 respondents get an opportunity to achieve the position of Principal/Vice-principal. 37 get an opportunity to achieve the position of an academic adviser/ career counselor. 60 get an opportunity to achieve position of supervisor/coordinator followed by 69 who get an opportunity to achieve position of head of department and 73 have an opportunity to achieve the position of professor as well as an associate professor. Hence interpret that majority get an opportunity to achieve higher positions in their institute as a professor and associate professor.

## 13. Data showing the respondent's ability of seeing themselves in near future as



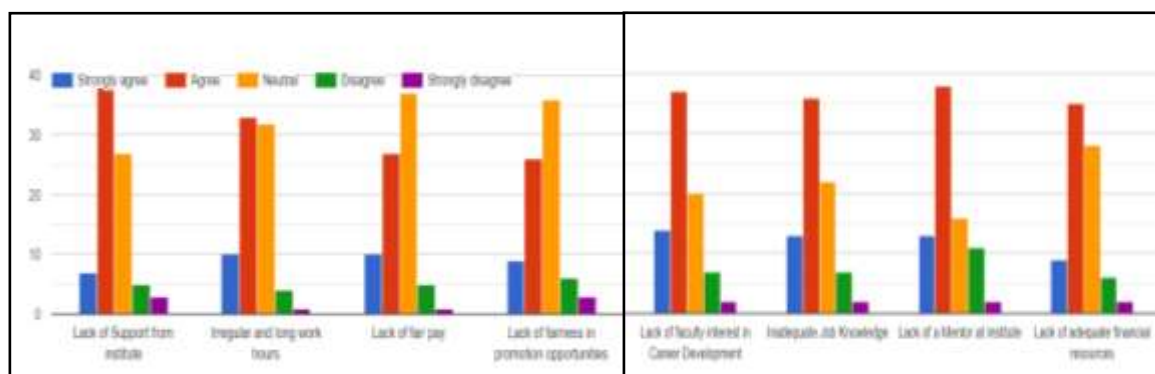
Analysis and Interpretation: The above chart clearly represents that 45% respondents see themselves being placed at a higher position in the same institute they are working in.

#### 14. Data showing the significance related to career development of women in HEIs



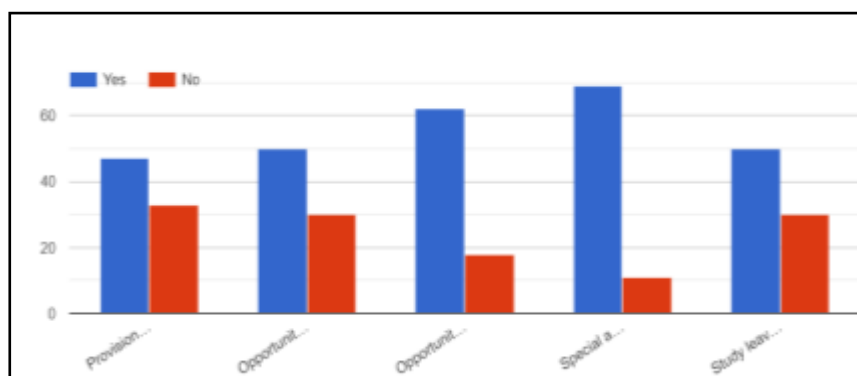
Analysis and Interpretation: From the above chart, more than 50 respondents out of 80 feel advance education; experience and specialized training are most significant factors for career development of women in HEIs.

#### 15. Data showing the level of agreement with the challenges that are experienced in HEIs



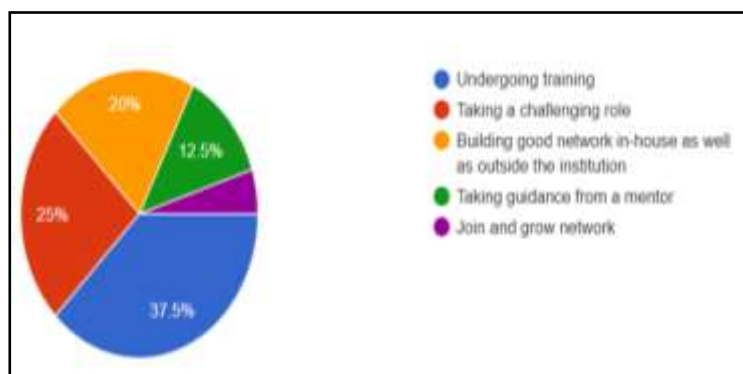
Analysis and Interpretation: The above histogram chart demonstrates that the challenge of “lack of support from institute” and “lack of mentor at institute” are faced more by women in HEIs.

#### 16. Data showing the facilities that the institute provides to the respondents



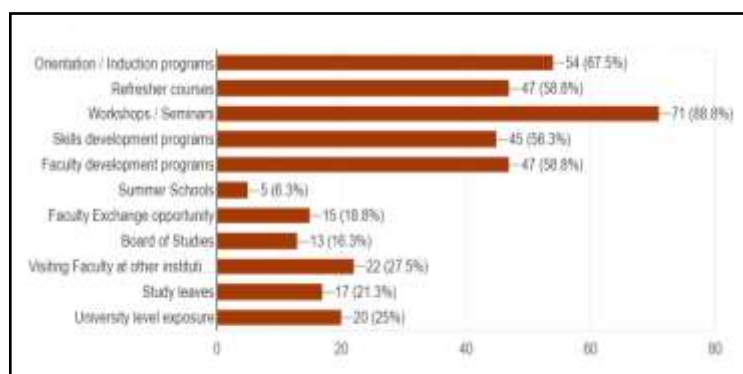
Analysis and Interpretation: As seen above, 47 out of 80 agree that there is provision of special quota for women employees at the recruitment level. 62 agree that there is an opportunity to rejoin after a career break. 50 agree that there is an opportunity to express grievances and their redressal. Further, 69 agree that there is special award and recognition given for academic and professional achievements and 50 agree that their institute provides them for study leave. Hence interpreted that majority of the respondents agree to get opportunity to rejoin after career break and special award and recognition is received for academic and professional achievements.

#### 17. Data showing the best way that the respondent can advance their career



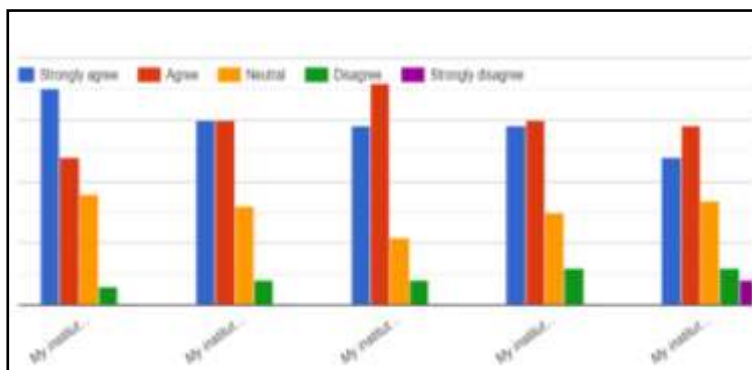
Analysis and Interpretation: The above chart represents 37.5% of respondents would undergo training program to advance their career. 25% would take a challenging role followed by 20% who would build a good network in-house as well as outside the institution. Further, 12.5% will take guidance from a mentor and 5% would join and grow their network. Hence majority of respondents would advance their career by undergo training.

#### 18. Data showing the opportunities of career development that are provided by their institution



Analysis and Interpretation: It is observed that more than 70 respondents get an opportunity to attend workshops/seminars provided by their institute which helps them in their career development.

#### 19. Data showing the level of agreement by the respondents on the given below factors



Analysis and Interpretation: The histogram reflects majority of the respondents agree that their institute's core values, goals and strategies are geared towards women empowerment. Further, their institute has mechanism in place to help employees identify career development and provide flexibility in working to balance personal and professional life.

#### Findings

1. It has been found from the study that majority of the respondents were of the age group 41-50 years.
2. Regarding the educational qualifications of the respondents it has been found that 56.3 % have a M.Phil/PhD degree, 57.5% have a B.Ed/M.Ed degree and 81.3% have a post-graduate degree.
3. The highest percentage of the respondents was Assistant Professors (26.3%) and most of them were working in the aided institutes (60%). 72.5% of them were working in permanent positions.
4. The tenure in the current positions of highest respondents were 11-20 years (40%) where almost 72.5% of them identified themselves as a teaching faculty by preference.
5. Another remarkable finding of the study is that 97.5% of the institutes provide their employees with teacher training programmes where the faculty benefit themselves by learning modern pedagogy.
6. It has been found that more than 70 out of 80 respondents get an opportunity to be promoted to achieve higher positions in the institute like Associate Professor, Professor and HOD.

7. The study has also found out that majority of the respondents agree that experience matters to develop career in HEIs.

8. It has also been found that higher education institutions provide special awards and recognition for academic and professional achievements of employees.

9. In the study it is noted that the respondents suggest the best way to develop a career is to undergo training.

### **Hypothesis testing**

Hypothesis testing is the process done after analysis where tests are done whether claims or assumption regarding a population is likely to be true.

In the questionnaire, Question no 12, 16, 18 and 19 administered to the respondents relates to the following hypothesis

**H0: Institutional Support is not directly associated with career development of women in HEIs:**

As per the analysis, 73 out of 80 respondents indicate that they get an opportunity to achieve higher positions in their institute as an Associate Professor and a Professor. This further indicates that educational institutions are providing a space to the teaching faculty to grow in their career by taking up higher positions provided. 47 out of 80 i.e., more than 50 % agree that their institute has a provision of special quota for women employees at recruitment level which states that the institution is working towards the empowerment of women by giving opportunity of direct recruitment at entry level and further opportunity to rejoin the institute after taking a break. The institutions are also providing special awards and recognition for academic and professional advancements.

It is observed by the researcher that the sample HEIs provide opportunities associated with Career Development as per UGC guidelines like Orientation/Induction programmes, Refresher courses, Workshop/Seminars, Skill Development and Faculty Development programmes, Study leaves and University level exposure.

An analysis of the HEIs Core Values, Goals and Strategies being geared towards Women Empowerment finds that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that institutes provides the much required flexibility in working to balance personal and professional life.

**Therefore, H0: Institutional support is not directly associated with Career Development of Women in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) stands rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) that institutional support is directly associated with**

**Career Development of Women in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) stands accepted.**

**Scope for future study**

1. In the future, to get better results, greater geographical areas can be captured to have a broader understanding, which may possibly possess certain demographic variations.
2. To have a different perspective of the study, it could be conducted with a higher sample size on a higher platform including women faculties of technical and management institutes.
3. Comparative study of various cities or regions can be done to understand the differences of career development of men and women in HEIs.
4. A qualitative study with both employees and employers would help in understanding career development opportunities to women employees. The insight of employers could be useful in understanding their experiences from a different angle.

**Discussion**

A career is not limited to just having a job and earning some income. It also means pursuing growth and better positions, especially in academic professions. It may be noted from the study that the institutes provide opportunity for achieving higher academic and administrative positions like Associate Professor, Professor, HOD, Supervisors and Principal positions.

The study reflected a positive indication that institute support the faculty for their career development like giving special award and recognition for academic and professional achievements, opportunity to rejoin after career breaks and providing for study leaves for research purposes. Along with this, Career Advancement Schemes (CAS) is adopted by the universities as per UGC regulations which are mandatory career progression scheme for faculty in HEIs. Hence being an obligatory aspect, there was no question based on which was included in the questionnaire to be asked to the respondents.

The study can be of a great help to contribute in many ways to the career development of women in HEIs and may be used by universities to support career development and give opportunities to women.

At last the researcher had a great learning experience which was a wonderful journey in itself. The opportunities gained in this process and the challenges faced helped the researcher to grow and believes that this study would be of great help for those aiming to



make better workplaces for women in today's time so the society can have more women climbing up the ladder of success in career.

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