

Chapter Six

Case Studies

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Introduction

Case studies are particularly useful in depicting a holistic portrayal of a client's experiences and results regarding a program. For example to evaluate the effectiveness of a program's processes, including its strengths and weaknesses. Case studies are used to organize a wide range of information about a case and then analyze the contents by seeking patterns and themes in the data and by further analysis through cross comparison with other cases.

A case study is an essential method to reveal the depth of the phenomenon through related details. It is an intensive study of a single person, group, incident, or community. Other ways include experiments, surveys, multiple histories, and analysis of archival information.

Normally, names of respondents are not mentioned in the process of data collection, especially those which related to personal information. In this study names were mentioned according to their desire.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the role of open learning program in socio-development of women in Palestine through Al-Quds Open University (QOU) Jenin district and India through Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Baroda district. The researcher selected sixteen case studies of women who associated with or graduated from open learning program, eight case studies from Palestine Al-Quds Open University (QOU) Jenin district and other eight case studies from India Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Baroda district. They talked about their experience in open learning program, their motivation to join open learning system and what changes or developments that were benefited from open learning in addition to background of their lives.

From Palestine; **Eman. N** wanted to improve her qualification, social status and to continue higher education. **Eman. D** wanted to increase family income and to improve her individual and social situation. **Taroob** desired to participate in social activities and to run her kids affairs in good way. **Dawlat** wished to develop her status and to satisfy her ambition in life which is higher education. **Feda'** wanted to face the challenges of her daily life, develop her status and to find source of income. **Khitam** wished to improve her qualifications and to continue her higher education MA and PhD. **Eba'** desired to face the challenges of life, increase family income and develop personal and social situation. **Nawal** wished to improve source of income, share in religion activities and educate illiterate women.

From India **Archana** wanted to increase the income of the family, improve her qualification, to know better ways to take care of children and achieve her dream higher education. **Mona.M** wished to achieve her dream, a permanent job and higher pay scale. **Monika** wanted to improve her qualification, to get a suitable job and to get experience to deal with and raise children. **Rekha** desired to get B.A and to up grade qualification. **Renu** wished to get bachelor of education B.Ed to work in teaching and to increase the income of the family. **Mona.S** desired to specialize in early childhood care and education, to deal with children more efficiently and to achieve more education. **Jissy** wanted to get permanent job in teaching which needs Diploma in early Childhood Care and Education after that she desired to get Certificate in Computer.

Each case has its own aims and every case has its specific conditions, this chapter expose to details of these cases.

Eight Case Studies from Palestine.

Eman. N

Eman Nazzal was born in the town of Qabatiya, in 1964 to the family of a Palestinian farmer with 8 members in an environment that is ruled by the customs and traditions.

Eman spent her childhood playing with her brothers and sons of her uncles in the street. There were no centers for children in her area. She continued to play her childish games up to the third preparatory grade (ninth grade) without paying attention to others' comments. Then, she found a new thing for her to do: she volunteered to buy kerosene, meat and other goods for the relatives, friends and neighbors from the neighborhood far from her family home.

Due to her spontaneous childhood, Nazzal gained a wide range of democracy in her early years. She said: "In the olive harvest season, we gathered, the children and I, after our return from school to join our families in the fields, helping them with little hope of olives to sell and buy some sweets and food. She continued to tell the details of her memories of school, remembering how she participated in resisting the occupation. She reveals some of the secrets and says"

"I was in first secondary grade, I was responsible for raising the Palestinian flags, which were banned in those days despite warnings from my mother and the school director and relatives in order to avoid this work for my life, I rejected all these tips and continued my protest against the presence of the occupation."

Nazzal received her education in primary and lower secondary schools in the town of Qabatiya but the high secondary school was in the schools of the nearby city of Jenin. After her success in the General Certificate of Secondary Education, she moved to study at the collage of Al-Najah

National University in 1985. The students of this college were awarded a diploma and the duration of the study was two years. Her ambition was to study at a University that awards a bachelor's degree. But in those days, the perception of female education and the negative impact of the prevailing customs and traditions continued to suggest that the duration of the study at the university which is 4 years in Palestine and the fact that university education was mixed-gender all these reasons were obstacles for parents to send their daughters to the University. Nazzal was the first woman in her family to continue her study after high school.

She accepted this option since even this option was not available for many girls. She chose her specialization in the management of academic libraries and documentation. It was a qualitative change in the phase of her life and personality during which she gained her self-confidence. She says, "Since my first days in college, I got the membership of the Conference of the political party I belong to and that added more confidence in myself and helped me to play new roles consistent with my principles to help my country and my people."

She graduated and got married to Imad Abu Hantash, and gave birth to three sons (Mohammed - Tayseer -Sharaf). Still, marriage did not prevent her of thinking about how to achieve her dream of holding a university degree. Yet, that was not possible!! She lived in extended family (joint) and had links to broad social relations and to take any decision, even if personal, was not easy. Besides, Nazzal was a part of the fabric of these relationships, which required additional time.

Fortunately, unlike many of the families (the family of the husband) the husband and his family were the backbone of the most supporters who helped her to move forward to achieve her objectives. This option was available only through the education system, Al-Quds Open University (QOU). Nazzal did not hesitate to join Al-Quds Open University in 1992

despite the fact that this system of education was at the beginning of its application had not proved its success. The prevailing idea was that this system of education was negative and many doubted the certificate granted by this system and, accordingly, its benefit. However, Nazzal stepped forward and joined the social work specialization. She continued to advocate for the rights of students to the university administration and to contribute to raising the level of the university and its reputation in social circles.

When asked about the reasons behind joining the Open Learning System (QOU) she said: "It was not possible in the circumstances in which I live to enroll in regular universities. I am married and the consequent responsibilities of being a mother of three children and a part of the extended family - a joint - were obstacles to continue my study. In addition, I had a part time job, so these reasons prevented me from being a student in the traditional education system and at the same time I wanted to work on developing my abilities and raising my qualification in addition to my dream of the completion of my senior and this is only possible through my degree and this is what made me interested in passing this test. I started working hard and I had to organize my different activities entrusted to me - taking care of children and teaching them - and at my university - my work as coordinator for the crew of women's affairs - and at home a lot to do with family obligations that do not end. I used to wake up at five o'clock in the morning and didn't go to sleep before midnight ". She continues to confirm that her husband who had been cooperative and supportive to her was to take leave from work in the Arab League, the American Dental Technician to assist in taking care of the children I was encouraged to attend courses and workshops relating to the rehabilitation, especially those sessions that were held outside the city or even outside the home. He encouraged her to participate actively in the

events and activities at the community level which has contributed to her position in the establishment of a broad network of relationships with academic and social milieu.

Thus, Nazzal obtained a bachelor's degree in Social Work from Al-Quds Open University. Because of her love for her job, she had the post of Project Coordinator for the empowerment of rural women (Sanabel) one of the crew of Women's Affairs, which aims to strengthen the groups of rural women as leaders of social workers.

She discovered through her work as coordinator of women's groups in Jenin area, the willingness of women to develop themselves and how they gather their energy for their societies. She recognized the importance of her national and social role, not just the post and salary.

Concerning her contribution in training and employment for women in the crew, she, now, can tell many stories and achievements of women such as the opening of women's centers in several villages surrounding the city in order to empower women and improve their situation.

Nazzal participated in many courses in local and international conferences in Egypt - Cairo - and a course in conflict resolution in Jordan and Turkey and she submitted a work sheet on the impact of the apartheid wall built by Israel on Palestinian women in Italy - Rome -. Nazzal candidated for the elections of the Legislative Council to serve the issues of women and society and to access decision-making positions. She continued to attribute her success to the open education system represented by Al-Quds Open University. She says:

"Al-Quds Open University has opened up opportunities for everyone and especially women in Palestinian society, where political and economic conditions deteriorating and the presence of the occupation and its practices against the constraints of education and the prevailing customs and traditions which impede and limit the access of women to

have the opportunity to education, I feel proud to listen to other women's achievements in front of me and I feel that much more waiting for me to do.

Eman. D

Eman Disi was born in 1973 to a family consisting of 12 members. The father worked in the past in the construction and then as a grocer. The mother and children helped him. The father was able to secure a decent life for his family and despite the fact that the father and mother were uneducated; interest in education was the hallmark of the family.

Throughout the school years from first grade to twelfth grade (Tawjihi) her grades were excellent. In addition, she had the characteristics of leadership among students at her school by doing activities for the school radio. She, also, had national interests like many of the Palestinians despite the fact that women's interest in the national issues was not welcomed in those days and there was the social fear of the parents to their daughters against the repressive practices of the occupation and its impact on their future.

Unlike the traditional arrangements for marriages at that time, Eman's marriage was different. She knew her husband, Hisham, before getting married despite the customs and traditions which prevent or limit the mixing between males and females, especially in the rural community. But the years of the "Intifada" and the escalation of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation in 1987 gave young men and women the opportunity to know each other through collective action and the national popular resistance against occupation. The fact that Disi was an activist as well as Hisham and being from the same village, each knew the other and then got married in 1993.

Despite her happy marriage, which is the supreme value and the opportunity for females in the Palestinian community, she did not expect

that marriage would affect her interest in education. But because of the burdens of marriage and family building under the influence of economic conditions and financial difficulties, she was not allowed to continue her study, especially after the birth of her first child.

With all that, education remained a dream and she hoped to complete her study after the third year of marriage. She was influenced by the experiences of other women who found the opportunity to complete their studies through Al-Quds Open University, the only one which work within the philosophy of open education.

Disi says: "I wanted to finish my studies and develop our personal and social status through improving our economic situation and helping my husband specially that his income was limited as well as to help my children at school, especially my husband was unable to complete his education.

According to Disi, completing her education was because of the spouse, parents and friends. She also says: "Thanks to the open education system represented by Al-Quds Open University. Because I am married and have children and because the family's economic situation and the political situation in Palestine, all of these reasons did not help me to complete my study within the conventional education system."

Disi successfully passed her studying of history and despite her responsibilities for her family; she shows happiness and vitality for what she did. She pointed at the changes caused by the open education in her life as well as her family. At the personal level she says:

"Open education increased my self-confidence and I knew and understood life during studying at Al-Quds Open University specially that this system helps students to rely on themselves, as well as it improved my status in my society since it highly values education and educated people. I manage my family's responsibilities more than before.

After obtaining the post of a History teacher in the Palestinian Ministry of Education, I contributed to increase my family's income, which led to an increase in the standard of living of the family and this was one of the objectives behind the completion of the study. "

Disi says that they cooperate in the scope of family relations, especially the husband as he was happy for her, particularly because she gained excellent grades. He used to help her at home, also her family and her husband's family contributed to decrease the burden on her for example they took care of her children so that she could study well.

The impact of education reflected clearly on Disi's social life so she participated in social, cultural, educational and political activities in her community in which she lives, as well as in her country. She says:

"Socially, I have a distinct role in the sessions of professional development to train others. At the level of the country, I participated in many workshops. Also, I participated in many educational activities in the school which I work in. There are many national and social activities that I contributed to through my students of all ages and I had a contribution to the research on the impact of the Israeli-built wall on the villages adjacent to the wall in terms of the volume of land being taken by the wall and was confiscated by the occupation forces which belongs to Palestinian farmers. "

Disi spoke about her experience in the open education system and added that she had obtained excellence degree and that she was the first in her specialization – history. Accordingly, she had a good employment opportunity in the Palestinian Ministry of Education as she was ranked No. 1. As a result of this success, she had the desire to complete her Master's studies. If this program was introduced in Al-Quds Open University.

Disi concludes by saying: "I am happy and proud that I completed my studies after I had almost lost hope. Unless there was an educational system based on the philosophy of open education, I couldn't do it. Al-Quds Open University played a crucial role in changing the course of my life to the better, as I indicated before. I feel also happy when I listen to my students' words of praise for me and that they will join the university as I did. In fact, many of my students continued their education in Al-Quds Open University.

Taroob

Taroob grew up in a large family consisting of 15 members, her father passed away at an early age. Her mother carried the burdens of her family. Taroob was the ninth in her family. The family showed interest in education, so that children were able to complete their studies: a doctor, an engineer and a pharmacist etc.

Taroob attended primary as well as secondary school in her town (Ya'abad), about 10 kilometers southwest of the city of Jenin. Taroob was a distinguished student and she had both literary and scientific interests. Since education in high school was not available in the Palestinian countryside, where she lived, Taroob moved to the city of Jenin and studied in the Secondary School of Jenin for Girls, which is one of the oldest and most prestigious schools in the city. Because of her academic excellence, she was allowed to complete high school. She had to travel daily to the city and that was not common for most Palestinians especially in rural areas as they used to believe that girls eventually are to get married and will therefore remain at home. Socially, it was not accepted and was not allowed for women to work outside the home, particularly in rural areas.

Taroob successfully passed high school examinations (Tawjihi). Her average was 94.5 and she was the ninth in the order of the scientific

section at the level of females in the Palestinian Territory. A "Tawjihi" examination is held at the national level and determines the future of the students in their transition to university level.

Taroob had an acceptance in the Jordanian universities and some scholarships in other Arab countries which provided such scholarships for Palestinian students as a support and assistance. But, it was unacceptable for females in the best to study abroad. Therefore, she chose to study at the University of Jordan at the expense of her family. After the completion of the first year and because of social and economic circumstances experienced by the family and since the majority of her brothers were still at school and the high cost of education and social bias exists in the community of the primacy of male to female education and the opportunities for marriage, which is in the opinion of parents and society the most important for women. Taroob got married to Annan who was a merchant in the city of Jenin. So, she moved to live in Jenin and left the university and lost her opportunity for education.

She gave birth to three sons and then engaged in the upbringing and taking care for them and the concerns of family life throughout that period. However, the emergence of the idea of the open education system in Palestine and that Al-Quds Open University was able to obtain recognition of the certificate granted by it and the fact that it started to open branches in different cities of the Palestine including the city where she lived in 1991, all those factors encouraged Taroob to think about studying again. Through reading the brochures issued by the university, which illustrated the idea and the philosophy adopted by the educational policy pursued by the idea of making the study available to more people, Taroob decided to do it.

She says: "I had begun to feel that I need to return to school to retrieve the information I had obtained over 13 years of schooling and with the

entry of our child to school, I decided to step forward. The system of open education was the best solution for households specially that I could not travel and be absent from home for a long time, especially that there was not a university in the city of Jenin.

She started as if she hadn't been stopped and showed excellence in the university and in all courses. She chose to study computer science, a new specialization in Palestine at the time, and of course, there were many job opportunities for graduates of the computer science.

"I felt at the beginning that there was a change in my life on a personal level and at the level of the family, I felt I was doing a great thing and I was waiting for the future opportunities. I invested my free time with a good thing to do for me and for my family. The community began to appreciate and respect me for what I do as that was a new thing in our community."

Taroob was a distinguished student so she had honor and grants from the same university and then made new relationships with educated people in her area. She received the financial and social support from her family, respect and appreciation of the relatives and the people, especially the husband's father and mother. One of the most important supports was that her family took care of her children during the study period, especially during the examinations. Also, her father in law bought her a computer when she was in the third year as it was necessary to have one at that stage with the knowledge that it was difficult for students to buy such a device in those days.

Here emerged clearly the role of open education system as she graduated with bachelor's degree with honors because she was the first student at the Open University in Palestine and that had the greatest impact on her life. Taroob got a post in the Palestinian Ministry of Education, in Jenin as teacher, in the same school that she had studied in,

also she did not need to move and travel to remote villages, as is the case of the appointment of a new employees.

Therefore, Tarooob expressed her thanks and gratitude to Al-Quds Open University to make it possible for her to reach her dreams and got the appreciation and respect from everyone. Her contributions were not only for her family but also for her community. Now, she had additional job at a center in Jenin, which offers courses in computer training. Tarooob says: "It was my job that led me to establish a center for teaching computer courses and I worked after school. Many people attended these courses especially female. That gave me high self-confidence and increased my acquaintances, but my social activities were limited because of my work day and night. "

Because of her success, Al-Quds Open University offered her a post. Hence, she began to think about the Master's degree which was not available in the same city. That would force her to travel to a city 100km away from her city. This distance is considered too far in Palestine because of the Israeli of harassments on the roads through the checkpoints and the intentional delay of the Palestinians so that a person sometimes can not access to this distance and return on the same day. Nevertheless, she joined the Masters program at the University of Al-Quds-Abu Dees – and received such acceptance because of her average in bachelor's degree. There was room for a limited number of students according to their grades. She says:

"It was not possible for me to reach this status of education without the golden opportunity provided by Al-Quds Open University which helped me to continue learning without affecting my family needs and social life. I was about to finish the master's degree when I obtained the post of Director of Personnel Affaires in Al-Quds Open University in Jenin. I now feel proud, I reap the benefits of work I have done during those

years. Each one of my colleagues in the university has a story with Al-Quds Open University. It was the only way to achieve my ambition to complete my study and to engage in the labor market, the service of family and community rather than staying at home as housewives. I am now a woman who contributes in building her family and society. "

Dawlat

Dawlat, who was born in 1973, was the youngest daughter to a rural family of 8 members working in the cultivation of the ground. Activity at work was a salient feature of the family. As the father was working as a tailor in the town of Jenin, his work was continued in the village in the evening to ensure a decent life for his family members.

Dawlat began her school years in her village - Jalama - and passed the general secondary examination "Tawjihi." The social customs prevailing at that time, especially in her conservative family, did not allow her to attend university. In fact, the Palestinians in rural areas did not easily allow their daughters to go to universities because of the mixed-gender. Therefore, she was obliged to study in a non-mixed college and joined the Women Community College which was established by the UNRWA. This college provided free education assistance to the Palestinians after the "Nakba" in 1948 - Israel's occupation of Palestine and the establishment of Israel- in which the Palestinians lost their land and their homes and source of income. Since that time, UNRWA has provided humanitarian assistance and educational services specifically for those who had been forced to leave their homes. Dawlat chose to specialize in sewing and fashion design. This specialization allowed her to work away from other jobs, which are usually mixed.

The duration of the study was two years and after graduation, Dawlat obtained a certificate that qualifies her to work in the field of sewing and fashion in 1993, at the age of 20. Because of the lack of employment

opportunities in this area she preferred to practice sewing at home and for the neighbors. Her job began to expand so she bought simple hand-sewing machine. Dawlat worked hard and with the passage of days she developed social relations with the people of her village and sometimes with people in the surrounding villages. She met her customers at home and in the presence of her parents. That made it possible to expand the work which started to become a source of income for her and for the family. She became highly respected and appreciated by her parents and society as a result of working for long hours to meet the needs of customers and gain their trust.

Her brothers and sisters got married and she took care of her mother after the death of the father. Dawlat says:

"I felt that in spite of my high income, it did not satisfy my ambition in life. I remembered how I was not able to complete my bachelor's degree. Today, I am able to do it specially that I have enough money to spend on education. Because of the open education system I can manage my business together with my university. "

Because of her economic strength and self-reliance in accordance with her contribution in the expenditure on the family, that had increased her participation in family decisions and decisions of her own life. She decided to enroll in Al-Quds Open University in 2001 because it suited her circumstances. She summarizes her decision by saying:

"Because I believe that leaning can not stop at a certain stage or at a specific age and because learning is a continuous process as long as people are breathing and because my job hasn't satisfied my ambitions, though its high income, I decided to complete my study. I am convinced that the milestone to improve the status of women is in education which is the key to the empowerment of women and their development.

Dawlat studied history at university and she was able to coordinate between her creative work and her study. She graduated in 2005 as the first member of the family who holds a bachelor's degree. Happily, she says:

"Sewing gave me the independence and power to take decisions concerning my future. This was not possible in the past when I studied at the community college for girls. The Open Learning System gave me the opportunity to combine work and education and because of this I was able to complete education".

She speaks with confidence and enthusiasm about the changes she experienced after graduation. She feels she understands life more than before and has new relationships with new people. Dawlat insists that despite her success in tailoring, the social status that was obtained by education was more important at social level. She says:

"Education gave me great opportunities to move forward so that I am doing my master's degree at Al-Najah National University in the city of Nablus which means that I have to sleep in Nablus for few days every week which was not accepted and allowed before. I am now a confident well- educated woman and everyone trusts and respects me. I am about to finish my thesis in Al-Najah National University.

She concludes by saying: "I really value the important role of open education – Al-Quds Open University – to increase the number of university students in the Palestinian community in general and women in particular who were not fortunate enough to complete their education because of their economic, social and political conditions.

At a personal level, this system allowed me to get my bachelor's degree and, more importantly, opened the way for me to complete my master's degree and for that I am proud of what I have done and grateful for the education system, which otherwise I could not get it done.

Feda'

Feda' was born in 1972 in the city of Jenin for a family of 7 members. After obtaining the General Certificate of Secondary Education "Tawjihi". Her family preferred her marriage to education according to their conviction that marriage is more important than education. That was a result of the values prevailing in the past, which was beginning to change. Those values gave priority for males' education because the females at the end of the day will stay at their homes as nannies for their children and they will serve the rest of the family. Marriage, according to their values, meant reassuring females' future.

Feda' got married when she was 19 years old and gave birth to one daughter, as if she knew that her marriage would not last long and that happened after two years of dispute between the couple. After attempts by the parents and relatives to prevent divorce, especially by her parents, however, those efforts failed and the case of divorce happened, which meant, socially, the most difficult choice for women and their families since the word "divorced" had an absolute negative perception in the Arab community in general and Palestinian society in particular. To explain this point, Feda' says:

"Before going into the details of the reasons behind divorce, and even after the presentation of its logical causes, the community bears women the responsibility and they are pre-viewed with suspicion and contempt as if they committed a sin. So, as a patriarchal society, there are many popular sayings ready to accuse divorced women. Hence, many women prefer to stay "married", despite the lack of harmonization than to be "divorced". Therefore, says Feda', I was under pressure in order to avoid the option of divorce".

After 5 years of divorce, Feda' couldn't stand being in her family's house without a job, like all divorced women. Perhaps this is another

factor that forms the negative perception of divorced women by the community. Despite the parents' care for her and her daughter, however, she wanted to have a role in the family, especially when her daughter attended school and that required special care and extra costs. She realized her need to get a job in order to contribute to the expenses of her family and the raising of her daughter. Here, she faced opposition from all, since it was unacceptable for women to work in social terms, except in the area of education. She says:

"My parents did not agree to work in any domain and considered that to be a detriment affecting their social status specially that I am "divorced". That added more complexity to my life. Yet, after discussion, my parents finally allowed me to work only in teaching and they knew that such a job or work needs university degree."

As it was necessary for Feda' to find a job, she began seriously considering a return to school despite the difficulty that she would attend university after seven years of leaving school. But, the decision was also to her parents who supported her choice to attend university. Their condition was that she was not to study in conventional universities for various reasons, including that she was "divorced". In addition, she needed to be close to her daughter to manage their affairs and therefore the suitable option was to enroll the system of open education. Explaining why she decided to study at Al-Quds Open University, Feda' says:

"I wanted through the completion of my education to develop my personality and increase my knowledge as well as my social awareness and, most importantly, to face the challenges of life and provide a better life for my daughter. All of these could only have been done through open education system so I could stay close to my daughter as she needed me, as well as my parents who refused joining conventional university, particularly as it requires absence from home for many hours and

sometimes for days and that was not suitable for me and for my family, too."

Feda' attended university in 1998 in Jenin Education Area and chose the social work specialization and passed successfully till she graduated in 2002.

One year after graduation, Feda' was able to obtain a new job as an educational counselor in a private school and two years later, she was able to get a government job in the schools of the Ministry of Education as an educational counselor.

Open Education System gave Feda' an exceptional opportunity, she says:

" Open education system has developed my personality and increased my social awareness. It has given me new life skills that I haven't got before and it has raised my self-appreciation and self-confidence. Also, I have become an independent woman because I have a job now and I can contribute to increase my family's income and provide a balanced life for my daughter after I was dependent with no personality. All of these were objectives and motivations for me to achieve."

She indicates that the change in her life was clear especially in her significant role in the family. More importantly, her family was pleased, especially her mother, to get a university degree which is now considered as a guarantee for the individual's life and that is what her mother became convinced of. Open education system has changed her negative perception of life after years of suffering and losing hope in her personal development. Now, she shows her satisfaction which is a result of what she has achieved both on a personal level and even at the level of raising her daughter. She says:

"I made for myself the place and the role that I wanted in the eyes of others who were looking at me with suspicion and doubt as they didn't

believe I can manage my own life. I graduated with an excellence degree and that granted me respect and appreciation from the community: professors and relatives and that also gave me an employment opportunity."

Feda' has participated in many voluntary programs: social, educational, cultural and political. She worked in collaboration with (NGOs) organizations to assist people with special needs and to provide rehabilitation programs for the disabled people. She, also, attended seminars and workshops on women issues that cover the development of women awareness and as well as their education. In addition, she participated in a volunteer campaign to provide awareness on the importance of women participation in elections, choosing and voting for their candidates independently. Feda' had many experience certificates of appreciation in areas where she volunteered.

In 2006, she got married which was unexpected for divorced women in the Palestinian society. Education may be the reason behind that since it enables divorced women to work in wider social space and to interact with more people. She obtained a driving license a year ago which is not easily obtained, especially that a women to drive a car is a new social phenomena emerging in the Palestinian society. She bought a car and became one of few number of women drivers in the city of Jenin.

Speaking about her experiences, Feda' says:

"Open education system has its important and significant role in paving the way for different segments of society to complete their education. It gives those who have been deprived of the opportunity to study due to social, economic, cultural and political causes to prove their presence in life and achieve their psychological, social and economic stability. Today, I am proud of completing my education and getting a job at the Ministry of Education of Palestine as an educational counselor. Also, I am proud

of achieving success in my career which I love and my ambition now is to complete my studies and obtain a master's degree.

Khitam

Single, 41-year-old, ranked among the family members as No. 12. Khitam was born in the town of "Ya'bad" which is about 10 km south of the city of Jenin. She studied in her town till she chose the scientific branch to study in high school, so she had to go to the city of Jenin because there was not a scientific branch for females in her town "Ya'bad". In 1986, Khitam obtained a general certificate of secondary school "Tawjihi" from Jenin Secondary School for Girls, the only secondary school in the city and the region that provided this specialization.

Khitam was a distinguished student in "Tawjihi". She was among the top ten male and female students at the level of the Directorate of Jenin (the city and its villages). Unfortunately, the political situation at that period, during which Khitam finished her study, was characterized by an escalation of Israeli actions against the Palestinians and the escalation of Palestinian resistance of these actions. Palestinians, at that period, suffered compelling conditions due to the absence of social and economic security because of pressure from the Israeli occupation on the Palestinians to stop them from their demands for independence.

The previously-mentioned conditions had their impact on the unwillingness of Khitam's family to let her study at any university. At that time, universities were centers of Palestinian resistance and the targeting of Israeli occupation so studying at universities was risky. That was why the family had chosen the College of Ramallah for Girls as it was less risky and the duration of the study was only two years. However, Khitam rejected that and felt that it was a kind of injustice as she was one of the best students in Jenin and at least she wanted to have a Bachelor's

degree. Due to the lack of other options, she was forced to join the College in the last day of registration. Therefore, she couldn't choose the specialization that she wanted and finally had to study science.

Khitam graduated from the College of Ramallah for Girls, despite the repeated Israeli closures of educational institutions as a practice used by the occupation on the Palestinians. In 1992, she passed a comprehensive examination for college students and obtained the first place at the national level. She was employed by the Directorate of Education - Jenin – as a science teacher. In the same year, Khitam decided to join Al-Quds Open University in Jenin in order to study the specialization she wanted in the past (Methods of Teaching Mathematics). She says:

"After the death of my father I had to rely on my own to provide the premium for the university. Being educated and employed has helped me in joining the university especially that it is near my job and that made it easier for me to communicate with others and attend some events related to my job. More importantly, the dream of completing my study couldn't be achieved unless I got my bachelor's degree.

She adds: one of the factors that helped me joining the university was my family's encouragement, specially my mother's, as they know that their daughter deserves to have better education. Another factor was the appropriate premium compared to conventional universities.

Khitam graduated from QOU with a degree in methods of teaching mathematics. She adds:

"The certificate I obtained from the university has qualified me to move forward on two major issues:

1- It opened the door for me to complete my postgraduate specialization in methods of teaching mathematics.

2- I was upgraded to be an educational supervisor noted that if I did not get a bachelor's degree I wasn't able to be appointed in this position."

Khitam attended Al- Najah National University for a master's degree, because open education system in Palestine does not grant a master's or doctorate degrees. In 2003, she passed that stage of her life successfully, and therefore, was able to work in Al-Quds Open University as a part-time supervisor in addition her occupation in the Directorate of Education. She says:

"Studying at (QOU) had a positive impact on my life in several areas, including that it has given me various job opportunities which is reflected in prominent social status. Now, I work in QOU as a part-time supervisor and that has given me more self-confidence and high appreciation from the community and the Department of University which I work in. In addition, my income has improved significantly, and therefore my standard of living has also improved. Now, I have more opportunities to work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as (CARE) as a trainer, so I have the ability to design training materials and participate in the preparation and training of others such as courses in scientific research - measurement and evaluation - active learning - child friendly school - life skills – educational drama.

Now, Khitam is in the final stages to obtain the PhD degree in Egypt, methods of teaching mathematics, for in Palestine there isn't any university that awards a PhD degree in any specialization. Hence, open education system has added another positive step in her life as, now; she can travel freely, alone and for a long period of time to another country which was not normal for women in the Palestinian society.

Khitam concludes by saying that:

"Without the opportunity given to me by the Open Education System (QOU) as it is the only Open University in this area, I couldn't have corrected the course of my life, including my ambitions and the achievement of my goals in higher education".

Eba'

Eba' was born in a Palestinian family of 12 members: father, mother, 7 males and 3 females. She lived in a modest house in Jenin refugee camp, an emergent resident for Palestinians who have been displaced, by force, from their land by Israel in 1948 in order to establish their state in conjunction with the end of the British Mandate. The Palestinians settled in these areas as an emergency and temporary situation till their return to their homes, as they believed. These gatherings were held in crowded areas and often lack the basics of stable and secure human life.

The Palestinians rejected the Israeli offers to improve their living conditions for political reasons as Israelis tend to make these camps permanent settlements and Palestinians' final option, in addition to prevent any opportunity for international attempts to find a solution for Palestinians and compensate them for years of injustice and suffering. This is what is known as the Refugee Problem, which is one of the most complex issues for which the negotiations are held by the international auspices.

Her father was working in his shop in the camp assisted by his wife. Eba' says:

"Education was my parents' most important goal as most of the Palestinians since education means a lot for the Palestinians in general and to those who lost their source of income and their land and homes, in particular. Palestinians' refugee experience had proved that education is an investment that is more guaranteed than land and money since it is always there under any circumstances. That exactly happened with us as Palestinians. Those with a scientific background were able to face the harsh conditions more easily than others. Nothing is more difficult than being uprooted from one's own land, home, source of livelihood and social life. "

She studied in primary and junior high schools in the camp, run by UNRWA, as stated in the talk of education for Palestinians in the second quarter. Education in the camps has been the responsibility of the United Nations and it has been financed by them as a result of Palestinians' displacement in 1948 as a kind of international responsibility towards the Palestinians. However, these services are stopped at the lower secondary grade (ninth grade). Then, students in the refugee camps are to study at public schools for the upper secondary grade. Therefore, Eba' had to complete the secondary school in the nearby city of Jenin and that overlaps with the camp.

She passed the general secondary examination (Tawjihi) and attended university to study law in Jordan University. During the early years of university study, she got married as a result of her parents' desire since they believed, at that time, that marriage was more important than education. Despite her parents' and her husband's promises to allow her complete studying at university after marriage, the reality was different. It was difficult for Eba' who is married now to travel to Jordan and stay away from husband and family. But after that hope began to fade in the completion of the study, there was the idea of completing the study in Al-Quds Open University. She says:

"I had the experience and my husband and my mother were cooperative with me. As I had made the decision, we had two children Laith and Mohammed. The reason for my decision was that my husband had promised to help me in the completion of the study as well that my husband had been wanted and chased by the Israeli occupation because of his resistance. He wanted to reassure our children's future by obtaining a university degree, which is a weapon, as he believes, by which I can carry my responsibilities and the burdens of life, and that has been the case with many of the Palestinians."

Eba' started to study and her results were excellent and had access to excellence in each semester so she was exempt from premiums. Her daughter, Sarah, was born while Eba' was still a student. She graduated with excellence degree and began working. She has worked in various places, including a volunteer with the YMCA / NGOs till she was able to obtain a formal job in the UNRWA, relief and social affairs section in the camp, as a social specialist.

Her husband read an announcement that Al-Quds Open University opened the door for students to apply for Master studies in Egypt in Social Work for the university's need for teachers in this field. She, as a result, submitted an application and 6 months later, she was chosen by the university and had the approval of a grant to study at the University of Helwan in Egypt.

Eba' traveled to Egypt alone to complete her study when it was not normal for women to travel alone within the values and social customs prevailing at that time. Her husband's desire and support were the most important reasons to accept the idea. So, she left three sons with their father and her mother in Palestine. Nothing was more difficult than leaving her children and at the same time the grant was offered only for her without her family. Plus, it was difficult for the rest of the family to travel and stay in Egypt and begin a new experience. Eba' overcame all the difficulties, specially being away from the husband and children. She says:

"Al-Quds Open University had the greatest impact in changing the course of my life for the better. I am currently working as supervisor and teacher in Al Quds Open University and that was a condition of the grant. I can't express my feelings but it sufficient to say that open education system gave me a great opportunity for achieving self-confidence and obtaining a social prestige in my society. Now, I have an important role

that I feel I am doing now in the camp, where I was born and lived. In addition, I improved my economic situation and my income made me more independent and as a result, I contribute in my family's life more than before.

She adds, there are clear changes at family level among males and females, especially my nieces as they perceive me as an ideal person and want to be like me. Talking about her husband and his support, she says:

"The credit is to my husband who facilitated my task in both the bachelor's and master's degrees. He was cooperative and supportive at two levels:

- He is open-minded, which encourages her to complete her study, especially outside Palestine, despite the community's and relatives' criticism.

- His cooperation in many aspects defined as the tasks carried out only by women and males are not supposed to do these tasks within the norms and values prevailing in the Palestinian society, such as preparing food, cleaning the house, ..., etc. "

At a local level, she provides special cultural and educational activities in the UNRWA schools and some community organizations such as the Center for Autism for those with special needs and the local committee for the rehabilitation of the disabled and other committees. In addition to her main career as a supervisor in social work in Al-Quds Open University in Jenin, she holds 3-4 seminars in conjunction with local community organizations and these activities are financed by QOU.

Nawal

Nawal was born in 1951 for a rural family in the village of Jalama, 5 km north of Jenin, in a village characterized by its fertility and its people's interest in agriculture and developing it. Her father was one of the leading people in the development of agriculture and its modern

techniques. He had established cooperative associations with other villagers in the early fifties of the last century as a result of their members' belief in the development goals of those associations and, more importantly, the emergence of the "Nasiriyah" movement in Egypt which had its influence on the Palestinians who were strongly in favor of this national movement.

Nawal is the fourth daughter in a nuclear family, composed of 13 people, the father, the mother, 7 females and 4 males. Nawal studied primary school in the village. But at that time the secondary education was not available except in the city, and that was a reason to deprive many girls to complete secondary education because it required traveling everyday to the city which was not acceptable at that time in the majority of Palestinian villages because of the customs and the difficulty of maintaining the means of transportation at that time. Yet, her village was different since some families allowed their daughters to complete secondary school in the city. Those families were criticized by the people of neighboring villages because that was considered as a departure from the customs, values and norms.

After the general secondary examinations "Tawjihi" in 1970, and immediately before the results and in less than a week, Nawal's marriage arrangements were prepared. Nawal had not known her husband before that, like other women at that period. Despite people's encouragement of their daughters' secondary education in Nawal's village, females were only allowed to finish the junior high or high school but they were rarely allowed to study after that stage. Nawal remembers that one of the females in the village received a university education at that time as her father, who was working in Kuwait since the fifties of the last century, believed in the importance of females' education.

Nawal and her husband traveled to Saudi Arabia where he was working there. During that period, she gave birth to her sons, Ashraf - Mohamed – Finnan, Ahmed and We'aam.

When her youngest daughter, We'aam, was only 8 years old, Nawal's husband died and therefore, the family left Saudi Arabia and returned to Palestine. Here, she tried to work as a teacher. However, that was not available in Palestine because one of the conditions for being a teacher is to obtain a university degree or a diploma. Also, working outside the domain of education has not been socially accepted.

Nawal's family, at that stage, depended on the family's savings from years of working in Saudi Arabia. And at that period, her elder son joined a university in the United States and was funded and assisted by his uncle, who lives there.

Nawal lived in a house near the headquarters of Al-Quds Open University in Jenin. Once, one of her friends advised her to follow-up study in this university. Nawal says:

"It was not a suitable to think about studying because of the difficulties experienced by the family, but I studied the possibilities closely and decided to complete my education. Therefore, I consulted my children who did not object and told my brothers, as is the case in the Palestinian society, but they did not agree, especially that I was a widow, I was about fifty years old and I had the responsibility of managing my family's life alone. Yet, these same reasons made me eager to study. So, I decided at the beginning of 2000 to start, and I was 50 years old and this is what made others fight the idea of my education, believing that education does not fit in such an age and that this decision was crazy and unrealistic."

Nawal began to study supported by her children and her friends who encouraged her to proceed with her decision. Ashraf - her elder son - provided financial support to Nawal which was not too much because of

the low costs of education and because she lived near the university so that she will not need to travel to other cities.

Nawal attributed the completion of her education to God, who gave her determination despite the difficult circumstances she had experienced, and to open education system (QOU) which provided her an opportunity to study. Without such a system, she says, it was impossible even to think about it.

Nawal chose to specialize in Islamic education because as a religious woman, she wanted to have a role in clarifying the teachings of Islam, especially for women. She says:

"Open education enhanced my self-confidence and increased others' trust in me. Other women who had not completed their education decided to complete their studies as I did. In fact, I have become an example to other women so even women without a General Secondary Examinations, who stopped in the ninth or tenth grade, decided to apply for the General Secondary Examinations which is particularly difficult test for the women who dropped out of school for a long time, but to pass this examination is a prerequisite for entering the university."

After her graduation from the University, she undertook an examination by the Ministry of Education to get a job as a religion teacher in 2006 and she was 55 years old and that what made her happy and proud.

Today, Nawal is known in the community where she lives at the level of the city and the villages. In addition to her family special duties as a widow, Nawal has involved in many social, religious and educational activities. She also helps some of illiterate women to enable them to read and write. Nawal says:

"Open education system (QOU) has given me an active role of great importance in my life since it moved me to a wider area rather than being only a mother and a housewife. I have become a better citizen with a

productive role in order to serve my society, especially women. And this makes me feel satisfied and proud because of what I have achieved at this age, specially that many did not believe that I could do it."

Implication:

These eight case studies showed how these Palestinian women could carry out their aspirations through open learning system in Palestine which Al-Quds Open University presented. These women spoke about different obstacles faced them such as marriage taking care of children like Eman.N, Eman.D, Tarooob, Iba', Fed', Nawal. For others open learning was best solution for social conservative norms that have positive trends toward male against females. Specially Khitam, Dawlat, Fed' and Nawal.

Observing these case studies we can notice that :-

Four case studies continued their graduation after marriage such as Eman.N, Eman.D, Tarooob and Iba', two case studies were single (Khitam and Dawlat), one case study was divorced (Fed'a') when she joined QOU. And one case was widow (Nawal).

All of the case studies joined open learning QOU in old age specially Nawal who joined QOU when she was 50 years old.

Six case studies out of eight couldn't continue their university education because of marriage although two case studies joined conventional universities for one year and couldn't continue because of marriage – Tarooob and Iba'-.

Three women out of eight work as tutors in Al-Quds Open University like Khitam, Tarooob and Iba'.

No one from the Palestinian case studies could have university certificate before joining QOU.

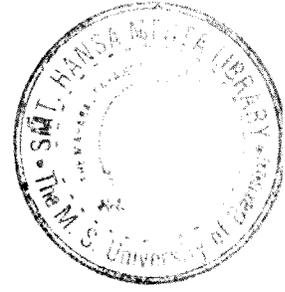
All of the Palestinian case studies belong to big families in their parents' while it can be noticed that the size of their own families is smaller for

example Taroop's family 15 members, Nawal's 13 members, Khitam's 12 and Iba's family 12 members Eman's.D family 12 members. All of these families are nuclear families. The smallest was Fida's family which is 7 members. These were their parents' families but if we have a look at their own families it can be noticed a decrease in the number of family's members for example Tarooob's family 5 ,Eman's is 5 , Nawal's 6 ,Eman's 5 , Iba's 5 members.

Also it can be noticed the role of open learning QOU in joining Palestinian women in higher conventional education. Five out of eight women continued Master degree in conventional education one of them is doing her PhD in Egypt and here it is important to mention that QOU is the only university which adapt open learning system and it gives B.A degree only –there are serious efforts to open Master program. The rest of the case studies are looking forward to continue their higher education if these efforts could success in opening master program in QOU.

Finally, five of these women have a job because of the certificate that they got from QOU while two case studies Eman.N and Khitam improved their qualifications and got better situation in their work because of the certificate from QOU.

Eight Case Studies from India.



Archana

Archana was born in 1975 and grew up in a family of five children. She was the 4th child among her brother and sisters. Her father was in Naval force so she did her schooling in kendriya Vidyalaya. Central Board of Secondary Education (C.B.S.E.) board. At the age of 10 she lost her father so they had to move to their hometown village in (North India). Her uncles were opposing of their studies and allowed only brother to continue his studies as girls have to get married eventually and look after the family but since her mother didn't get the opportunity to study she had a great desire for her children to study so she took up a step and decided to educate all her children.

As lack of Educational guidance Archana didn't her perform so well in her school days but was very hard working child. She completed her 12th grade successfully. Since they had financial problems too as her two elder sisters got married Archana & her sister had to earn for the family. So she joined a school as a teacher of K.G. children & enrolled herself in the nearby college & completed her graduation. She came across husband in one of the school where he was a teacher and they decided to marry after two years they went to Mumbai for court marriage, she was 21 years old, and after she got married she moved towards Gujarat with her husband. She had two daughters and was busy in bringing them up.

Archana had good knowledge about open and distance learning system specially what related to its advantages that enable students to gather between studying and working through flexibility in time (after job time) and place that students can study at home and not required to attend classes regularly. So she started the query about the university and how

they can register after an initial opposition by the husband who believed that it was impossible for her to do that with her responsibilities toward family. Fortunately, she was able to convince him by showing him the importance of this step for their family and children. After she persuaded him she did Higher Diploma in Computer Science as the Children were very small. After completion when asked about the reasons behind joining the Open Learning System (IGNOU) she said: "I had to join a school as a teacher as my husband was also a teacher and financially condition was not so good. Since I started working with younger children and two daughters at home I got interested to know better ways to take care of the children in the school to know their cognitive, physical and motor development which inspired me to study and hence came across with open university". She read about the different courses and enrolled herself in child development course she got the full support from her husband and secured 75% which further motivated & inspired her to study she then while teaching her own children at home felt the need of studying how to teach mathematics in interesting ways. She joined another program called CTPM (Certificate in Teaching Primary Mathematics) and scored good percentage. This was not enough for also her self-confidence and self-esteem was also getting increase. The community especially the parents of the students, with students and colleagues she could relate in a much better way with heavier good understudy since to earn for the family, no in-laws (expired) no third (extra) members to help in house chores it was very difficult to manage along with little daughters.

Husband's support also turned toward declination so she had to give a break to her studies but her spirit to study more & more was still in her. After the break of five long years till her daughters reached grade 4th and 6th she once again cleared her entrance exam and enrolled herself for the

Bachelor's degree in Education In spite of the unwillingness of her husband and his relatives she promised that she will not give up the job, will still earn, do her all other duties of working after the children, household work and side by side study also. Her husband refused to help her physically and financially in studies but that too didn't deter her determination with her cool, calm and patience she started studying once again and A grade during the workshops. Her second year will complete after four months. She concluded by saying:

"Open learning not only encouraged and motivated me for up gradation of qualification but also developed my personality. The modular (books) not only provided me with knowledge but helped me to build up my self-confidence and self-esteem. I feel worth of myself and can walk with confidence. As once one of my relative has mentioned 'studying is not your cup of tea'. It is now seeing my excelling in my studies".

Her daughters get inspired with her as they too say "When our Mumma can manage and do so many things why can't we study and prove that we too are like our mother". She is so much inspired with open learning, she added "because there is no age bar you can study as per your requirements & situations. Since women have plenty of responsibilities on their own pace of time. I am so inspired with open learning that I have enrolled myself again and going to do my Masters in English (MEG) and further plans to do my M. Ed and PhD from open learning". Not only does she motivate her children but also others who are studying.

Mona.M

Mona. M was born on 28 May, 1962 the eldest daughter in her family, her Father worked with the Forest Department as an officer and

her mother was a home maker. Her Father had a passion for music and was recognized as a legendary musician in her city.

They were 4 siblings, 3 Sisters and 1 Brother. They all lived with their parents in the Government Quarters, As her father's job was transferable, she studied in vernacular medium till 12th. Being eldest in her family she had to shoulder the responsibilities of taking care of her brothers and sisters and also handling household chores.

Mona was married at an early age of 20 years to her husband who was an engineer by profession. This caused a break in her study and she did not get an opportunity to pursue higher education, she longed to study after marriage but her responsibilities doubled as they lived in a joint family and after getting her first child. It was all the more difficult to take up studies.

Since, then as she said:" I dropped the dream of completing my degree, a few years passed as I was living a happy married life with my two children, life played dice and I was shocked to come across the death of my beloved husband. My kids were very small then and there was not much in savings that could help me sustain the education of my kids". She took up a job as secretary in one of the companies juggling between house and office work which she had never done. It was hard in the beginning but with the help of her Maternal relatives Mona could ensure her kids were taken care of while she worked.

Years, passed Mona changed many jobs also started house business of sewing to ensure she earned more to have enough to provide the best education possible to her kids. Mona said with bitterness:" times I never saw my children due to shift duty. During these days the dream of completing my degree resurfaced it gave me hope for a better job a higher pay scale. While working at different places, I realized the importance of a degree in education. By the time my kids had grown up and they were

mature enough to look after themselves". This gave her a chance to fulfill the dream of getting a degree in education. She started talking to her friends and relatives regarding her wish of completing her education. So one of her friend, who had obtained a degree from IGNOU, suggested her to consider the same option. This is how, she took up the distance education course offered by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

Explaining why she decided to study at open university (IGNOU) Mona said:

"The course gave me the flexibility to work, attend to my kids and study together, however I had to put gaps between the papers due to commitments to my sons when they came in boards. Eventually years passed and I never realized that my sons have grown up to sustain themselves, I was relatively free and seriously pursued my career goals, I completed a short course on child development gave me impetus to push further to complete my degree in Arts. Which I successfully completed, this second milestone gave me confidence to move ahead and with the coaxing from friends and relatives I enrolled in the B.Ed. course offered by IGNOU. I'm currently in 1st year of the course and look ahead to successfully completing the course".

The reason, she has opted for B. Ed is that she is already working as a teacher in the very reputed Convent of Jesus and Mary Girls' High School, Vadodara. Under taking this course will help her to enhance her potentials as a teacher and will help her to perform her duty as a teacher more efficiently and more effectively. At present, she is working as a teacher in the Primary section of the school but she said:" I intend to teach in the Secondary section as well, which is only possible if I have a B. Ed degree".

Open learning improves her life whether in her personality that changed her attitudes towards life after many years of hard life full of difficulties. Open learning gave her more self confidence and satisfaction, or on the family level since she thinks that open learning system has increased her level of understanding and more relaxed in managing the home affairs, in addition, she has increased her family's income so she feels more confident as a person. Also in her job as a teacher she feels comfortable when she hear her colleagues talking about her success and the respect from her students and their parents as they perceive her an ideal person.

The open education system has opened window to Mona to work, devote time to her family and study simultaneously. As IGNOU has the option of not attending all the classes compulsorily it becomes very easy for the people who are working to accomplish their left-behind studies. Mona concluded:" As in my case I am pursuing my B. Ed and at the same time working as a teacher. I highly appreciate the initiative of distance education offered by the IGNOU and would wish many others benefit in the way I have. This option is very favorable for women like me, who could not complete their studies due to some reason or the other, can accomplish their dreams of possessing a degree in any field of their choice which gives them a bright and a secured future ahead. IGNOU provides me an opportunity to EARN and LEARN at the same time".

Monika

Monika grew up in a small, nuclear family mainly consisting of her father who was a bread earner of the family, her mother who was a homemaker and her younger sister. As her father was mainly on tours her mother only took care of both the sisters and hence both the girls were more attached with their mother.

Monika started her schooling with one of the reputed High School of Baroda "Baroda High School, Baggikhana (Sr. 1)". She completed her

Nursery, Primary Section, Secondary Section and Higher Secondary Section from the same school. Monika was academically a good student. She was not only good in her studies but she actively took part in interschool sports competitions. Also she was a participant in singing competition which was held in her school. But when her mother found that Monika was showing more interest for classical dance she admitted her for Diploma in Bharat Natyam in MSU of Performing Arts near Sursagar lake. She was first in 8th Std. during that time. She visited her dance classes regularly after her school hours. She completed her two years of dance - but during her 3rd year her 10th classes were getting affected. As it was an important year of studies for her she was forced to leave her dance classes in between. But it did help her as she was able to clear her 10th Std. with flying colors during that time. She took science stream after her 10th Std. As it was a lengthy stream she was unable to continue with her classical dance and hence how to permanently leave them. Also her parents wanted her to be a good doctor or engineer rather than a good dancer. After completion of 12th Science course she immediately got admission in "Polytechnic - MSU, Baroda. She did her diploma in Electrical Engineering from there. Diploma course is three years long course. After completion of her diploma course she intended to carry on with her job, but during meantime her father got transfer orders and the whole family shifted from Baroda to Ahmedabad.

Ahmedabad was a new and big city for Monika. But it proved to be the luckiest place for her as her career got boom in this city. When she told her father about her future plans he readily agreed for her job. Like her father she was also interested in line of sales. She appeared for the interview for one of the MNCs "ICICI PRUDENTIAL". ICICI Prudential is a multinational company which deals with insurance. Insurance was a new line for the Monika as now she had to deal with commercial line and

that too finance. But her sincerity made everything easier for her. Also it required hard work but after a hardcore training and her six months efforts she became number one Sales Executive of her company. It was a great achievement for her as her efforts had at last rewarded with handsome incentives from her company's side.

Meanwhile her mother started searching for a suitable groom for her. But Monika started rejecting them. When many such were rejected her parents reasoned her. She told them that during her college time she liked a Gujarat-Brahmin boy, the same was from his side. She also told them that his parents have agreed for their relationship and are willing to make her their daughter-in-law. When Monika's parent's heard this they showed anger towards their daughter as both of them wanted that she should be married to a boy of their caste i.e. Maharashtrian Brahmin. But Monika told them that she would like to marry the same guy she liked (now her husband). Months passed and finally for the sake of their daughter they agreed for the marriage.

Monika's husband was also a good boy - a Mechanical Engineer, and belonged to high class Gujarati Nagar family. Whole family was one of the reputed family in the society. After the agreement from both side Monika was married to her dream boy and was shifted back to Baroda.

After a month or so she told her husband that she wanted to continue with sales as her job again. Her husband agreed but he also told her that sales may prove to be quite tedious job after marriage as she will have to manage with her household chores and her insurance customers both, so another job is more suitable especially education or social work that she can deal with and raise children. He suggested her to carry on with her studies. Monika liked his suggestion and immediately took admission in "Indira Gandhi National Open University" a distance learning course of

social work. Her in-laws also supported her and encouraged for her studies.

Meanwhile it was found out that she was conceiving. It was difficult for her to carry on with her studies and her pregnancy. But her in-laws and her husband supported her a lot for the same. Also during her exam times her mother-in-law took charge of whole house-hold chores and told Monika to concentrate only on her studies and to take care of her and her unbounded baby child. She told her not to worry and be happy. She encouraged her for her exams. Monika gave her 1st year exam for BSW Course, she successfully completed all her papers and practical.

Now Monika was totally busy after her baby child and household chores. But during her 2nd and 3rd year exams her mother-in-law always took charge of everything. Hence she cleared both years' exams successfully. Everyone was happy with the results.

When Monika told her husband that she intended for further studies, he readily agreed. Monika wanted to do her course for HRM (i.e. Human Resource Management). Her husband made enquiry for the same and she got admission for the course of Human Resource Management in Adult Education, MSU Baroda. Monika is now continuing with this course. She is willing to do job in any MNC Company in H.R. Sector. She is just waiting for her course to get completed. Meanwhile her daughter will also get mature enough to understand everything.

Monika's journey with IGNOU started in 2007. She was a regular attendant of her classes. When asked about the reasons behind joining the Open Learning System (IGNOU) she said: "The main, plus point of IGNOU, as a distance education, was that the time for the classes was suitable to everyone. The time was basically after office hours i.e. from 6 to 8. So even housewives (as a student of IGNOU) and those who come under service or working people class could attend their classes".

Due to support of her lecturers she was able to cope up with her practical. Hence distance education learning had shaped down her carrier.

Monika has successfully cleared down her first year, second year and third year exams. Her T.Y. results are yet to be declared. But she hoped that they will be better this time.

It was bit difficult for Monika to cover up with her exams, but her husband, in-law, and clarity of lecturers made her task easy.

Hence distance education has proved to be blessing for her. Without education she thinks herself to be a normal as those ordinary ladies. Monika thinks that education is an important part of the life. Education helps an individual to stand with pride in the society. One can easily know whether a person is educated or not from the personality he/she holds. An educated person has a powerful personality and sometimes the appearance only demarcates whether the person has undergone the education or not.

Monika has always promoted education. She supports the statement "Each One Teach One". She added: "I want every educated individual to teach an uneducated one. This will decrease the illiteracy rate and increase the prosperity of the nation. Distance Education or one can say IGNOU has been started with the same purpose. Due to distance education, many of the people who were unable to complete their studies, have got another chance to accomplish their studies. Distance Education has proved to be boon for such people".

Rekha Nagpal

Rekha Nagpal was born in 1963 as eldest daughter in her family. She belongs to a Punjabi family. she has two Brothers and a Sister. Her father was serving in Railways and was on transferable job. Every two to three years he was transferred from one station to another. Sometimes, in villages too which was hindrance in his children's education. Her father

managed and overcame by doing long hours up & down but never stopped their studies.

Rehka studied till 10th standard and then after completion of 10th standard in second division, She took admission in Government Polytechnic and studied there in Commercial Practice for three years and completed it with first division.

Immediately after completion of Polytechnic course, Rehka got a job. she started serving and in the meantime she got married in a joint family at the age of 24 years. She has three sisters-in-law and one Brother-in-law. Nowadays, the personal preferences of the young people are given greater importance and families accept the children's wish to get to know the potential spouse before making a commitment. Given the fact that marriage in India represents a very strong, lifetime commitment and society accepts divorce only in the most extreme circumstances, this is a very understandable wish. she was also given such an opportunity by her parents.

As in every society, Punjabi society has its traditions to mark every stage of life from birth to death. After they made up their mind to marry, the first step was a simple ceremony called rokai or thaka. Her father, accompanied by some friends and relatives, visited her would be in-law's house and presented sweets and a small gift of money. The engagement ceremony, took place when the in-laws family returned the visit and in the presence of friends and relatives the intended marriage was announced. Prayers were said at that time, and exchanged gifts.

Rekha was blessed with a son who presently is doing his Masters Degree in Management.

As she did not have any Bachelor's degree with her, Rekha said:" I always felt something lacking in me as if I am semi-illiterate. A few years of life were consumed in doing job, bringing up my little son, his studies,

his problems, taking care of my husband, his routine work etc. apart from my work. When my son started his graduation, I started getting some free time for myself. I thought of resuming my studies. My husband and son also encouraged me So, I was wondering which College / University Institute/ I should go for. I had some restrictions imposed on me like lack of time, class hours, office work, household work, social obligations etc. I wanted such University whose study hours suited me".

Then she came across an advertisement of ' Indira Gandhi National Open University' in local Newspaper. She along with her husband visited the office of IGNOU and was very impressed by the working and co-operation extended to them by the staff members. Besides this, the study centre is in Baroda and the study hours during the four days of the week also were very convenient and comfortable for her as it was after office hours. The fee charged is also very reasonable. She joined 'Certificate in Computer (CIC) which is a certificate course of six months in Computers and successfully completed it securing 72%.

Now, Rekha has joined Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in IGNOU which is still continuing, so open learning gave her another chance to achieve her dream in higher education.

Showed her satisfaction which is a result of what she has achieved she says:

"Open learning opened the opportunity for me to achieve my dream completion B.A certificate to improve my qualification and that gave me better situation in my work, since I have more prominent roles in work. Open learning bestowed me better income and revealed my abilities and creative potential which was reflected on my status in household I notice an increased participation of my husband in housework and affairs. Also in my work colleagues appreciate my efforts and I think that wouldn't happen without open learning".

She added: "though, there are other Open Universities in our India, her personal favor to IGNOU is because it is an endeavor by beloved ex-Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi who understood the whole concept of Indian traditions, role of Indian woman in Indian society, problems they encounter etc. and especially when woman is not encouraged to take up further studies but to pass her life in household chorus. Taking all these factors, in mind, she started this endeavor which is called Open University so that nobody is neglected from obtaining Education at any phase of life apart from age, geographical conditions, personal problems etc. This system of Open University is tailored in such a manner that it suits everybody who is unable to get education in standard education pattern".

As Rekha is working and always in short of time but she had an eager desired to study, so she joined IGNOU. Studying in IGNOU is encouraged by her superiors at her work place and they also set an example of hers to other colleagues.

Rekha concluded:" It is due to IGNOU that I have obtained a Certificate in Computer besides keeping my job going on and also keeping up the household chorus with the help of my husband and son. Though, IGNOU has given me an additional educational qualification, it has also developed an ultimate sense of co-operation, adjustment and understanding among my family members. So, it is not only an educational institution but a social institution too. I personally feel that IGNOU is a boon to all education lovers".

Renu Jadeja

Renu was born in Udaipur, Rajasthan one of the most beautiful cities in India often known as the Venice of East. She was born in 1972 in a

very traditional and conservative Rajput family, but had a very good background in education. Her family originally was from Dhand (near Jaipur) where they still have their ancestral home. Her father being the eldest son was the Thakursaheb or the head of the village. He had five sisters and a younger brother who used to stay at the village. Her father was very respected by all the locals at the village. All of them used to come to meet him whenever he visited and he also used to take active part in the developmental work of the village.

Renu's father was a very forward looking person and well educated, he had done his PhD and was a professor in Agriculture College at Udaipur. Her Mother was educated at Sofia Convent in Ajmer. Renu had two elder brothers and she was the only sister to them. She was brought up with lot of love and affection as she was the only girl and also was the youngest. She studied up to Std X in St May's Convent at Udaipur and her brother used to study at St Paul School Udaipur. There was a lot of emphasis on education in their family. After Std. X she joined five year integrated course in Home Science, she was very much interested in Fashion Design. Renu had a dream of joining NIFT, but as her family being very conservative would not allow her to go outside Udaipur for studies. So she had to content with Home Science, which also she enjoyed.

After graduation there was a real problem, Renu missed out the entrance exam for post graduation of Home Science in Udaipur as they had gone to their village from some social obligations and she could not give the entrance exam. Renu was really disappointed, and then she wanted to do the entrance exam in the M. S. University of Baroda. But her family though wanted her to study further but was not ready to send her out of Udaipur. Somehow Renu convinced them and came to Baroda to give the entrance exam with her mother and elder brother. Though she passed the exam with good marks and was called for the interview, her

Mother was not at all ready to send her to Baroda for higher studies. Renu was sad but had to face the realities of life.

She still wanted to pursue her post graduation, and as she had missed the entrance of Home Science Udaipur, her father convinced her to join post graduation in Psychology, or at least give it a try for one year as otherwise she had nothing else to do. Reluctantly she joined though frankly she was never really interested in the subject. As girls, it is common to make such compromises in conservative community. After that Renu was engaged and then married in accordance to the wishes of her family. Her husband stayed in Baroda so she came to Baroda after marriage and gave the final exams of her M.Sc. Psychology after her marriage. Luckily she passed, though she didn't have much time to prepare!

Renu was married also to a traditional Rajput family. She had to take on all the responsibilities of the family. But still she wanted to do something on her own, for her own satisfaction. People advised her to do bachelors of education B. Ed so that she can get a good job as a teacher, but she felt it was very boring to become a teacher in school, so she gave a try to her favorite subject, Fashion Designing, she joined a Diploma Course in Fashion Design. She was very much enthused, and worked very hard with a lot of passion. It was a real difficult time as she had to do the course while taking on all the responsibilities of the family. Some how she completed the Diploma .

Then Renu had a son and so she had very little time for anything else till he grew up, and she did not want any compromises for him. She was ready to happily sacrifice her career for him. After he grew up and started going to the school Renu thought of doing something for herself again clarified:" I thought of doing something for myself and also I wanted to contribute something for the family and society as a whole. A full time

job or business was out of question as I would have a feeling of guilt for not giving sufficient time to my kid or family. I started thinking of taking up teaching profession where I thought I can take care of my profession as well as family and do justice to both, though earlier I thought that being a school teacher was a very boring profession. Looking at the circumstances I felt that being a teacher was a very practical profession as it would leave me with sufficient time for my son and family, also I would have a feeling of contribution towards my family and society as a whole".

Renu started looking for a job, she thought being B.Sc (Home) and M.Sc (Psychology) would be enough for getting a job as primary teacher. But she soon realized that teachers without B. Ed. are paid very little and are exploited by schools. So Renu decided to do her B. Ed first. Joining full time college at the university was out of question as she did not want to make compromises with her son and family. Then IGNOU came up as a very viable option, but to get admission experience was required. She did a few odd jobs as teacher in different schools to qualify to IGNOU, she gave her entrance and got admission easily.

Doing a distant learning course is difficult, as you have to do a lot of work on your own and have to go to college every Sunday for a few classes. And doing the course and taking care of the family is all the more difficult. Renu clarified: "Students had to do a lot of field work and had to go to different schools for practical training. But all this gave me a lot of exposure, broadened my thinking and the most important thing was that I could meet different people from various backgrounds and could learn a lot from this wonderful experience. Also if IGNOU course was not there, then I would never be able to do my B.Ed and take up respectable job in a good school".

After completing the course Renu had a feeling of completeness, immediately after graduating she got a job at Bright School with a decent salary. This gave her a lot of satisfaction. And the good thing about the job was that she could return at 12:30, well before her son who returns from school at 13:50. She can spend the rest of the day with her son and family taking care of the studies and other household work .

Renu added: "the fact that I am contributing financial health of my family, partnering my husband in sharing financial responsibilities and adding to family savings gives me a great deal of satisfaction. This has boosted my confidence a lot. It gives me a feeling of being independent, but with a lot of responsibility towards myself, family and society".

Renu concluded: "I feel that B. Ed. from IGNOU has played a vital role in boosting my self confidence and being financially independent, which gives me even more confidence to face the realities of life".

Mona. S

Mona Sule was born in 1974 in a family of 21 members. The father was a bank officer and was earning well. The male members i.e. her uncles were also working well and earning sufficient. Her cousins were elder than her and were studying. Females in her family looked after children and were housewives only. She was brought up with care and love. The family was well settled and happy.

Through out her schooling she was an average student. She participated in all the activities during the year in school like debates, quiz, dramas etc. She was favorite among the teachers. She had many dreams to move on for her future. Whenever she used to see or talk with her teachers. She was inspired to become a teacher and lighten the minds for better education / higher education.

After completing her high secondary education as all Indian parents and family in concern to give their daughters better family and best

husband, her marriage took place immediately after completing her F.Y.B.Com from M.S. University. It was an arranged marriage prepared by the two families, Mona hadn't seen her husband before she says: "Before marriage I didn't know my husband and this type of marriage is common in India specially in rural areas. I believe there are some changes nowadays. I married in early age I was eighteen years old".

Her husband was mechanical engineer in Surat so Mona transferred to her new house. Her all dreams were shattered as she didn't achieve her goal. She got married in the year 1995 Jan. She lived in nuclear family and immediately she was blessed with a daughter. Unfortunately the daughter could not survive. She was under tremendous shock due to her daughter's death but her husband was very kind and smart. He inspired her to complete her remaining education and thus she could be relieved from the shock. She completed her graduation in commerce from South Gujarat University.

Meanwhile her husband got transferred from Surat to Baroda. He again inspired Mona to join some education institute. But with kids and household responsibility it was some difficult to join some full time institute. Some of her friends gave information about open education learning.

She talked about this to her husband and he gathered information and came to know that IGNOU is such institution where her dreams can be fulfilled along with responsibilities.

Mona says: "I joined IGNOU in 2004 for Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education. I cleared it with First Grade. Based on this got the job as 'Teacher' in the school. This was really a proud for me as I joined as a teacher in the same school where I completed my schooling moreover my kids were also in the same school. I was overjoyed with

happiness as some of the teachers were same under whose guidance and teaching I studied. It was proud for me to work with same teachers".

Mona wanted to achieve more education. So she went for Environment Studies from IGNOU. She completed with higher second class along with household responsibilities and profession of teacher.

Mona expresses her opinion towards open learning and says: "I am very much thankful to Open Education System by IGNOU as due to this I could achieve the goals in my life".

The doors of NGO's were also opened but she was happy with the profession of teaching.

In 2005 her husband got a good job opportunity in United Arab Emarits (UAE). He moved to (UAE) to work as an engineer and this required to stay there for long time, at the beginning he used to have a vacation of a month yearly.

This situation made running the family affairs so difficult for Mona to manage alone she had to takeover the whole responsibilities, her job, taking care of her children and managing the household arrangements was not an easy task. This forced Mona to give up her favorite job for a while because she realized that looking after children is more important than her job.

Mona is now successful in taking over her responsibility towards her family in general and taking care of her children and their achievement at school in particular. Mona illustrates:

" Open Learning has not just given me a certificate and a qualification, but also experience and knowledge in taking care of my children understanding their needs. I feel proud and confidence that I carried out the responsibilities successfully specially in the absence of my husband and in the views of others mainly my husband.

Meanwhile again she went for graduation in English literature from IGNOU as she was fond of studies and IGNOU was such an institute where counselors were very much co-operative and the way counseling sessions were conducted was very much convenient for her.

She says "Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is envisaged as an institution for the Entire Country. One of the principal objective of this University is to provide education to those who have been denied opportunity for higher education, either they live in remote or rural areas or because of any other handicap, including financial constrains and family obligation. The 'study centers' with audiovisual and library facilities are an important part of the University. Here students can meet their academic counselor and discuss their difficulties support from radio and television in an important in distance learning.

Arti Solanki

Arti was born in Dahod a small town in Gujarat in 1979. Her father was from M.P. He was Draftsman and mother was also educated, when she was five years old her mother was died due to serious burnt at home. She has one elder brother also. After her mother death she and her brother came to Dahod at her Mama's house (Mother's mother). It was joint family she took admission in convent school and till 11th she studied in Dahod. Thereafter one day her father came and took them with him along. So she did her 12th in M.P. After that during vacation her brother got ill and then again they came back to their nanny's house. When she completed her 12th standard. She got married. The marriage was an arranged one as a general custom. Arti didn't know her husband before and within few days every thing was arranged, the wedding procedures was as an Indian custom, the wife pays the dowry to the husband.

She didn't get any time to complete her studies she wanted to become Aeronautical Engineer. So she has chosen subjects like Physics,

Chemistry and Maths. After her marriage she wanted to complete her graduation B.Sc. so she selected IGNOU, Arti took BDP course in IGNOU B.Sc. major Maths. She completed her 1st year successfully. Also she was continuing her job in an overseas company as Front Office executive. During this time she was having a five month child with her.

Every thing was going well except education so because of marriage she couldn't continue her higher education as all those who get married in early age in spite of that Arti decided to continue her education and then address for this opportunity was available through open education so Arti enrolled herself in IGNOU since her aim was to secure her future ,develop her abilities to manage the affairs of her children and share her husband life responsibilities.

For the sake of continuing studies she joined Open Learning Program. So she took BDP course in IGNOU, BSc major Maths. She completed her first year successfully meanwhile she was working in an overseas company as front office executive. During that time she was having a five months child with her. Arti says:

"The flexibility of learning system that gives the students the opportunity to choose what suits them, Free time of specific appointments, the cost for a student is lower than traditional universities then open learning enables who are in duty to learn along with their affairs, facilitates on learners and gives them the opportunity to gather between learning and working. So I am able to learn under these circumstances without leaving my house for long times and this what happened with me".

Arti's husband got transfer to mother's city. Bharuch there the family were alone (nuclear family) so was not able to complete the studies and have to leave it. After three years her husband got transfer to Kutch there they spent one year and he got sick. They went to different doctors but

nobody was successful in curing her husband's fever and at last we decided to come back to Baroda native place of husband. Arti says:

"Here again due to my husband's illness. I decided to work and started my career and after 7 months my husband left me with 2 children elder was seven years old and younger was three years old".

Later Arti found herself in a miserable situation and shattered widow. Many questions needs answers as Arti says: " How can I feed my children? Who will help me? What can I do? Would I be able to take this responsibility? Questions remain unanswered for Arti.

Arti didn't shattered for long time started answering all these questions and more so she kept her job as it is priority, she worked hard both in her job and her house as managing affairs of children is not easy so in this but some people were kind, her parents in law helped her. After managing her new situation. She thought of continuing her higher education to improve her financial and professional position in order to raise her children well. So she decided once again to complete her graduation and took readmission in the same university. Arti says: "In this Open University one benefit we have is we can learn while working, like we can continue the job also during our studies"

After continuing her further studies she got good opportunity in a big Pharma Company and now she is trying to complete it as early as possible.

IGNOU represented real blessing for Arti since she passed through hard circumstances but still IGNOU was the only choice to surpass her crises and this was actually achieved.

Open learning keeping her job and continuing her education at the same time. She was before this experience without university degree Arti says: " Despite my hard condition after the death of my husband and being 'widow' with two kids and having no qualifications open learning

gave me much on the individual level, gave me satisfaction, confidence, comfort and self esteem. Today I am more relaxed in managing the home affairs, increased my income and this was reflected on my children. So I feel that I am a human being with dignity and self respect.

At the social level open learning gave me respect from other people specially my parents in law and my colleagues finally, I owe a lot of gratitude for IGNOU that granted me this wonderful opportunity.

Jissy

Jissy was the second child of her parents. She had an elder brother. Her educational life was shaped by her mother. Her mother had 5 sisters and one brother. Her grandmother favored her eldest daughter when it came to education. She had keen interest to study and wanted to become a doctor but she was not allowed to study after tenth standard. This made her think that her children should get the best possible education. It was because of her insistence that Jissy continued with her higher studies.

Jissy did her post graduation (Master of Arts in History) from M.S. University Vadodara.

Jissy is a single and has decided not to marry like his brother since her parents didn't get along well as they used to fight and argue in front of them. Her brother and she finally decided not to marry and give their full time love and attention to their mother as they know very well how their mother has struggled and suffered a lot. Now Jissy is around 32 years old and her brother is 40 years old.

After her completion of M.A Jissy got a job in Claudine's Pre- Primary on a temporary basis. She taught the kids of Play School and Kindergarten sections (two and a half year to five year old children). Initially, she was hesitant to work with small kids but over a period of time she developed a rapport with them.

Because she did not have any qualification to teach, it was not possible for her to get a permanent job. She had to opt for a course from a regular college, she would have had to leave the job. To support her mother and the house, she considered a financial independence to be important. Her brother did a higher diploma in Computers and got a job in the same school where Jissy is also working so that's how they plan to be together in the same school.

So, after giving it a thought Jissy opted for DECE (Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education) from IGNOU. As she was teaching in the Pre- Primary section already, she could do the Practical for this course very easily. She was ably guided by one of the senior teachers of Pre-Primary section.

Jissy found some difficulties in open learning system related to methods of learning as she used to study in traditional education with different curriculum through regulation lectures. But later she could go on successfully. She found out open learning system provides her with time to do other activities along with her studies.

As she continued with the course, she realized that the course was of great help. She got to learn about new concepts and methods of teaching. She also learnt about how to deal with the psychological aspects of children. This course has helped her to become a better teacher.

Before doing this course she was very impatient with children and at time didn't know how to handle them and understand them but after studying this course she got an insight and developed patience with children and handling them has become much more easier now.

As Jissy is fond of reading general knowledge books she took the initiative to conduct and organize Science and Maths Olympiad on National level in her school. Her work and dedication has been appreciated by the principal of the school. Jissy says:

"Although I have M.A degree but the real benefit I earned was from IGNOU which has given me confidence and made me feel proud as I have upgraded my qualification and hence I decided to do Computer Course also through IGNOU as my brother too knows computer very well".

Now Jissy teaches computers to the students of grade fourth till grade seven and she also teaches social science in grade five.

For the parent teacher meeting or the school annual function Jissy prepares Power Point presentation of the academic year successfully. She has gained confidence to talk to the parents of the students when they come her asking child's progress in their studies.

Jissy explains:

" Open Learning has changed my life where I used to find dealing with younger children very difficult now interacts very well with them , understands them better and has gained confidence in interesting even with parents".

At present Jissy is financially independent, lives with her mother and brother and working in the school as computer and social science teacher and liked not only by the students but also by her colleagues and obtains better situation in her job. Jissy concludes:

" Open Learning System has developed my personality and increased my social awareness. It has given me new life skills, that I haven't got before and it has raised my self-appreciation and self-confidence. Also, I have become an independent woman because I have a permanent job and increased my income."

She indicates that the change in her life was clear especially in her significant role in the family. More importantly, her family was pleased, especially her mother, to get a permanent job which made her mother contented about her future. Jissy added : " Open learning has given a new

direction to my life. Hence I encourage Open learning and suggests people to complete their education as Open learning is the best way where you can carry on with your job along with your studies - hence Open learning should be promoted. Open education has given the opportunity or can say second chance for those who are willing to continue their education again. Also the fees offered for the courses are affordable by the normal person.

Implication:

These eight Indian case studies explained how open learning system through IGNOU enabled them to develop and empower themselves. They talked about their variety aims which were to increase their incomes, achieve better qualifications, interest to specialize in specific fields related to treating with children. And about choosing open learning system IGNOU they clarified that they weren't able to join conventional universities because of their jobs like all of the case studies except Monika and because of their responsibilities toward their families, household affairs specially their children so that require them to be with their children like All of them except Jessy. Some women in the Indian case studies aspire to continue their higher graduation in master and PhD such as Archana,.

Observing these eight Indian case studies it can be noticed that :-

Five women out of eight from case studies are married such as Archana, Monika, and Mona. S, Rekha and Renu, two case studies were widows, Mona. M and Arti, and one case is single, Jessy.

All of the case studies joined open learning IGNOU in old age specially Mona. M and Rekha.

All of these case studies had got certificates before they joined IGNOU except Mona.M, and Arti. Since Monika and Rekha got Diploma degree, Renu, Mona. S Archana got B.A degree while Jissy got M.A degree.

Some case studies focused to have B, Ed certificate which is required to be able to work in education with better income. Because they likes to spend less hours in their job to be enable to return home early so they can manage household affairs easily.

The size of these Indian women's families small in comparison to Palestinian's in general between (4- 8) members. Except Mona's. S family which was 21 members as a joint family. Also it can be noticed that the size of the families members decrease when we compare between their parents' families with their own families, for example the number of Archana's family decreased from 7 members to 4 members, Renu from 5 members to 3 members, Rekha from 6 to 3 members, Mona. S from 21 to 4 members, Monika from 4 to 3 members, Mona. M from 8 to 4 members.

All of the women in Indian case studies working except Monika who is expected to get a job very soon. Although some of the case studies were working before joining IGNOU nevertheless it enabled them to improve their job situations through increasing their incomes and choosing more suitable jobs.

All of the women feel comfort and satisfied from open learning system specially IGNOU which enabled them to achieve their aims and aspirations.

Conclusion

After the researcher commented on the Palestinian and Indian case studies separately through clarification their aims for joining open learning system through IGNOU in India and QOU in Palestine and presented the most important issues related to these obstacles that faced

them in their life and prevented them to achieve their aspirations through conventional education.

This conclusion came to compare between Indian and Palestinian women in these case studies to investigate the role of open learning system in India(IGNOU)and Palestine (QOU) in three aspects (individual and household level), (community &civic participation) level and (national and political) level through showing similarities and differences which can be summarized in:-

The case studies in both India and Palestine revealed the patriarchal nature of both Indian and Palestinian societies since there are discriminations against women specially in higher education this was clear in preferring male education to female education and sometimes prevention them as all Palestinian case studies since no one from these cases could achieve university degree before joining QOU even some of them got distinction in their study at local and national level.

In Indian case studies too, Archana, Mona M, Arti and Rekha were prevented from higher education according the same reasons.

- Both Indian and Palestinian women were similar in proving their abilities and determinations to over come the difficulties and obstacles which prevented them to achieve their aspirations through open learning system.
- Marriage was the main obstacle in both Indian and Palestinian societies which prevent these women to achieve their aspirations in traditional higher education.
- Both Indian and Palestinian women in the case studies are working the difference was that Indian women who work before open learning certificate more than Palestinians since two case studies only Khitam and Eman.N were working before they got open learning certificate. This may be one the reasons which revealed

the role of open learning in Palestine in higher degree in socio-development and empowerment of women.

- No one in Palestinian case studies got university degree except through open learning (QOU) and this may be another reason which revealed the role of open learning in Palestine in the development and empowerment women in a high degree.
- Most of Indian women in the case studies, six women out of eight got certificate before joining open learning system (IGNOU).
- The case studies revealed difference in size of family since Palestinian families are very big 5 out of 8 families have more than 12 members although they are nuclear families. This refers to their parents' families but in their own families it can be noticed a similar observation which is the decrease number of family's members specially in Palestinian case and this support what mentioned in previous literature that when women's education go up the size of the family decrease.

Open learning opened the opportunity for these women to continue their higher education Master and PhD specially for Palestinian side five out of eight women continued Master degree in conventional education one of them is doing her PhD in Egypt. the rest are looking forward to continue their higher education if these efforts could success in opening Master program in QOU. Also it can be noticed the political dimension in their lives as a result of occupation and this explain their interest in political activates.

After talking about Indian and Palestinian women with regard to similarities and differences in descriptive view through previous observations and to have a deeper understanding to the role of open learning system in socio-development and empowerment of Indian and Palestinian women according these case studies we have to reveal that

role in the three domains which are: Individual and household Level, Community & Civic Participation and National and Political Awareness.

Both Indian and Palestinian women in the case studies revealed similar results at Individual and Household Level as those appeared through interview schedule in chapter five with more details since it can be noticed that clarity of the role of open learning system in socio-development and empowerment women in the individual and household level as all women in the case studies appreciate that role with high degree and here are some quotations explained that:-

Archana says: "Open learning not only encouraged and motivated me for up gradation of qualification but also developed my personality. The modules (books) not only provide me with knowledge but help me to build up my self- confidence and self-esteem. I feel worth of myself and can walk with confidence".

Her daughters get inspired with her as they too say "When our Mumma can manage and do so many things why can't we study and prove that we too are like our mother".

Mona.M concludes:" As in my case I am pursuing my B.ed and at the same time working as a teacher. I highly appreciate the initiative of distance education offered by IGNOU and would wish many others benefit in the way I have. This option is very favorable for women like me, who could not complete their studies due to some reason or the other, can accomplish their dreams of possessing a degree in any field of their choice which gives them a bright and a secured future ahead. IGNOU provides me an opportunity to EARN and LEARN at the same time".

Arti says: " Despite of my hard condition after the death of my husband and being ' widow ' with two kids and having no qualifications open learning gave me much on the individual level, gave me satisfaction, confidence, comfort and self esteem. Today I am more

relaxed in managing the home affairs, increased my income and this was reflected on my children".

Dawlat explains: "At a personal level, this system allowed me to get my bachelor's degree and, more importantly, opened the way for me to complete my master's degree and for that I am proud of what I have done and grateful for the education system, which otherwise I could not get it done.

Feda' reveals: " Open education system has developed my personality and increased my social awareness. It has given me new life skills that I haven't got before and it has raised my self-appreciation and self-confidence. Also, I have become an independent woman because I have a job now and I can contribute to increase my family's income and provide a balanced life for my daughter after I was dependent with no personality. All of these were objectives and motivations for me to achieve."

Nawal assures: "Open education system (QOU) has given me an active role of great importance in my life since it moved me to a wider area rather than being only a mother and a housewife. I have become a better citizen with a productive role in order to serve my society, especially women. And this makes me feel satisfied and proud because of what I have achieved at this age, specially that many did not believe that I could do it."

Also it can be noticed that there are similarities in the role of open learning system in socio-development and empowerment of women at the Community & Civic Participation domain between Indian and Palestinian case studies since all of these case studies revealed important changes in this aspect as a result of their education in open learning system specially in their relations with colleagues and friends.

Her it can be noticed that there are some differences in the role of open learning system in socio-development and empowerment of women at the

Community & Civic Participation domain between Indian and Palestinian case studies in favor of Palestinian women who revealed more participation in their social space in addition to positive changes in the work and friends' respect. This result supports what has come through interview schedule in chapter five which revealed that the role of open learning system in Palestine through QOU has higher degree than Indian's one through IGNOU at Community & Civic Participation domain.

To clarify this result in the case studies in India and Palestine we can show some quotations:-

Arti mentions: "At the social level open learning gave me respect from other people specially my parents in law and my colleagues finally I owe a lot of gratitude for IGNOU that granted me this wonderful opportunity".

Monika has always promoted education. She supports the statement "Each One Teach One". She added: "I want that every educated individual should teach an uneducated one. This will decrease the illiteracy rate and increase the prosperity of the nation. Distance Education or one can say IGNOU has been started with the same purpose. Due to distance education, many of people who were unable to complete their studies, have got another chance to accomplish their studies. Distance Education has proved to be boon for such people".

Iba' illustrates: "At a local level, she provides special cultural and educational activities in the UNRWA schools and some community organizations such as the Center for Autism for those with special needs and the local committee for the rehabilitation of the disabled and other committees. In addition to her main career as a supervisor in social services in Al-Quds Open University in Jenin, she holds 3-4 seminars in conjunction with local community organizations and these activities are financed by QOU".

Taroob says: "It was the only way to achieve my ambition to complete my study and to engage in the labor market, the service of family and community rather than staying at home as housewives. I am now a woman who contributes in building her family and society. "

An other difference can be noticed at the National and Political Awareness domain also in favor of Palestinian women since Palestinian women remarked some participations no one from Indian women participate at the National and Political Awareness domain this result also supports what has come through the interview schedule in chapter five. This may be explained as a result of specific political conditions in Palestine because of Israeli occupation. An other reason may related to small size of Palestinian society.

To clarify this result in the case studies we can show some observations and quotations:-

Concerning **Eman's.N** contribution in training and employment for women in the crew, she, now, can tell many stories and achievements of women such as the opening of women's centers in several villages surrounding the city in order to empower women and improve their situation.

Nazzal participated in many courses and local and international conferences in Egypt - Cairo - and a course in conflict resolution in Jordan and Turkey and she submitted a work sheet on the impact of the apartheid wall built by Israel on Palestinian women in Italy - Rome -. Nazzal candidated for the elections of the Legislative Council to serve the issues of women and society and to access decision-making.

Eman.D explains: "Socially, I have a distinct role in the sessions of professional development to train others. At the level of the country, I participated in many workshops. Also, I participated in many educational activities in the school which I work in. There are many national and

social activities that I contributed to through my students of all ages and I had a contribution to the research on the impact of the Israeli-built wall on the villages adjacent to the wall in terms of the volume of land being taken by the wall and was confiscated by the occupation forces which belongs to Palestinian farmers. "

Khitam mentions: "Now, I have more opportunities to work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as (CARE) as a trainer, so I have the ability to design training materials and participate in the preparation and training of others such as courses in scientific research - measurement and evaluation - active learning - the child friendly school - life skills – educational drama".