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Women research scholars career patterns – A study in Karnataka

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Abstract
The case of different professions there could be gradations among student scholars based on faculty, skills, and length of studentship as well as the social origin, which could provide insights into the social structure of an academic system dealing specifically with the student scholars. Hence, an attempt in made in this chapter to deal with the student status, employment status, financial resources, conception of research career, motivations to take to such a career, length student career, sources of financial support, extent of progress achieved in research, their achievement as student scholars, the schedule of-work, conditions of work on the one hand and, nature of guide ship, guide-scholar relationships, credentials and qualifications of the guide, the stresses and strains in guide-scholar relations, expectations of student from the guides, and willingness on the pails of guides to fulfill these expectations and the like in short, it is endeavored here to portray an intellectual and academic profile of the student scholars and ascertain the career aspects or aspects of their professional existence as the student scholars. These career patterns of research scholars are subsequently employed as explanatory variables MI the analysis of issues and challenges being faced by the student scholars.

Keywords: Social Origin, Employment Status, Financial Resources, Intellectual.

Introduction
One should note here that Chitnis has suggested "The sociologist can understand the existing patterns of interaction among students, teachers, parents, administrators and policy makers, only if he knows something about the social background of the participants, their economic status, their attitudes and aspirations, and reference groups in terms of which they think and act" (1974:168). Education as a process and social institution has come to occupy a place of primary and importance and is accorded priority and privilege that was unthought and of a few decades ago. It is, hence, but natural that the branch that seeks to focus empirically upon the structure, functioning, determinants and consequences of this process has come to be viewed as of important applied and policy implications, elevating sociology to the status of a scientific enterprise with research output from this branch being viewed as of high practical utility. Studies of the sociology of education in India continues to rely heavily on the functionalist paradigm which presumes that education is an instrument of social change since it trains the manpower required for an industrializing and developing society, but lack a feminist perspective.

Dongerkery (1948) notes that, the advancement of knowledge, or research and the diffusion of knowledge or teaching are the two main functions of a modern university. He has discussed the relationship between teacher and students on the one hand and the problems of teachers in a university set up on the other. The director of research or head of the department helps his colleagues by solving their problems and guiding them from time to time. The universities themselves with such resources are at their disposal for the advancement of sound research in all branches of knowledge.

Light (1974) [5] considered academic profession as a scholarly profession. According to him, it is an occupation with the attributes of a profession whose core activity is the advancement of knowledge. The academic profession is empowered to recruit and train new members and is authorized to exercise some exclusive powers to judge who is qualified.

Objectives
1. To examine the attitudes and orientations of women research scholars towards various components of the academic milieu.

2. To test their aptitude for a research/ academics career and employ it as determinant of achievements.
3. To probe empirically into their occupational aspirations and expectations from a research career.
4. To ascertain and measure their levels of achievements in research and discover their determinants.
5. To probe into the nature of supervisor-supervise an interaction patterns, and identifies the areas and reasons for strains.

Methodology

This paper is based on primary data only. The primary data collected from women research scholars at university level in Karnataka from irrespective of branches (80 from science and social science each and 90 from other branches). Collected data were tabulated at various statistical tools like chi-square, standard deviation and correlation co-efficient.

Discussion

Student Status

For the purposes of analytical convenience, the student scholars are divided into categories such as those pursuing Ph.D. degree as Junior Research Fellow (JRF) or Senior Research Fellow (SRF) of diverse funding, agencies such as HGC, CS1R, ICHR, ICSSR, DST, DOE, FIPC and the like, who may be looked upon as the full-fledged women scholars and those who have been selected through a nationwide written test, for research talent and aptitude. They are normally looked upon as thorough breed student scholars, capable of being the top scientists in their respective fields of academic specialization and taking research as a full time career. The data reveal that, those pursuing their doctoral degree through research as university research students or fellows represent the single largest category (54.6 percent) followed by those pursuing Ph.D. on self supporting or self financing basis., with those doing research as follows of various funding agencies constituting a small minority (15.4 percent). The data seem to indicate that more opportunities need to be provided for those genuinely interested and having research aptitude to pursue a research career through fellowships awarded from reputed and prestigious funding agencies. The analysis further reveals that the student status of the research scholars varies significantly with the faculty to which they belong.

Enrolment Status

There is provision in most of the universities to pursue Ph.D. on full time or on part time basis, depending upon the situation of the scholar. Those who are employed are rather constrained to work on part time basis owing to their employment obligations. It is those who are working as teachers in colleges and universities and scientists in different research institutes, who take to research as part time candidates. In all probability the part time students are in a small proportion as research as, a rigorous academic activity requires the full time attention, full time effort and full devotion. Further, viewed in the light of their faculty background, the data seem to indicate that, it is those pursuing Ph.D., in science and social science faculties who more often tend to be full time research scholars than are those from other faculties.

Table 1: Faculty and Enrollment Status

Faculty	Enrollment Status		Total
	Full-Time	Part-Time	
Science	48 (19.20)	32 (12.80)	80 (32.00)
Social Science	48 (19.20)	32 (12.80)	80 (32.00)
Others	75 (30.00)	15 (6.00)	90 (36.00)
Total	171(68.40)	79 (31.60)	250 (100)
X^2- 5.22, df-2, Significant at 0.01 level, C-0.0058			

Source: Field Survey.
Note: Figures in Parenthesis are indicated percentage.

The above Table-1 shows that, the faculty and enrollment status of research scholars. Out of 171 researchers, 48 (19.20%) are full time researcher in science and social science faculties and 32 (12.80%) are part-time researcher in both science and social science. Remaining 75 (30.00%) are full time and 15 (6.00%) are part in other faculties. This state of affairs could be attributed to the fact that, science and social science research scholars have to invariably engage themselves in experimental work and fieldwork, respectively, for generating and collecting data, that are primary in nature. The relationship between employment status and the enrollment status was found to be significant at 0.05 levels. The association between the enrollment status and age of the research scholars was statistically not significant.

Coming to the data pertaining to enrollment status viewed in the light of social origin of the research scholars, the analysis indicates to no significant variations. There are two assumptions possible, one stating that, those from higher social origin having adequate resources of their disposal to pursue research as a full time activity could be more prone to enroll themselves as full time scholars. The data seem to support the latter reasoning is the proportion of those pursuing Ph.D. as part time scholars is higher (17.8 percent) among those coming from higher social origin than it is among those from lower social origin (13.6 percent). This may indicate that, those from lower social origin depend upon the assistance that is available only to those pursuing Ph.D. as full time scholars.

Faculty

An attempt is made here to ascertain the career patterns of research scholars in terms of their faculty background, although, faculty has been dealt with under the section on social profile. A significant association could be observed between Faculty and age, with scholars from humanities and science faculties being quite younger than their counterparts from other faculties.

Table 2: Faculty and Age

Faculty	Age		Total
	Young	Elder	
Science	56 (42.75)	24 (20.17)	80 (32.00)
Social Science	43 (32.82)	37 (31.09)	80 (32.00)
Others	32 (24.43)	58 (48.74)	90 (36.00)
Total	131 (100.0)	119 (100.0)	250 (100)
X^2- 9.99, df-2, Significant at 0.01 level, C-0.0004			

Source: Field Survey.
Note: Figures in Parenthesis are indicated percentage.

It is also observed from the table that respondents (51.4 percent) in the social science faculty are relatively elder. Similarly, in faculties, like law, Education and Commerce the research scholars are from elderly age group. It may mean that, scholars in science and humanities think of taking to research or pursuing a Ph.D. degree much earlier in their lives than do their counterparts from other faculties.

Span of Career

Span of career is an important variable in analyzing the context of research and its determinants. The data seem to indicate that, a majority (61.1 percent) of the respondents have spent up to three years in their research career.

Even with regard to age, the analysis did not reveal any significant association. The data nevertheless indicate that, younger research scholars have a relatively shorter span of research career compared to their elderly counterparts. It may be stated that, research scholars take to research at about the same age and naturally, those who are relatively elder could have spent more number of years at research resulting in a longer span of research career.

It is further interesting to note that, those coming from lower social origins have a shorter span of research career than those coming from higher social origin.

Table 3: Span of Career and Social Origin

Span of Career	Social Origin		Total
	High	Low	
One Year	16 (13.79)	12 (8.96)	28 (11.20)
Up to three years	33 (28.45)	74 (55.22)	107 (42.8)
Four to five years	35 (30.17)	18 (13.43)	53 (21.20)
More than six years	20 (17.14)	62 (46.27)	62 (24.80)
Total	116 (100.0)	134 (100.0)	250 (100.0)
X^2- 6.91, df-2, Significant at 0.01 level, C-1.35			

Source: Field Survey.
Note: Figures in Parenthesis are indicated percentage.

Such scholar is about half the above proportion (16.3 percent) among researchers from low social origin. Although it may not be categorically stated that those from low social origins are more intelligent or bright or have a more suitable aptitude for research, it may be inferred that, they are more committed, devoted or serious about the research degree they are pursuing than are their counterparts from higher social origins. The analysis reveals that research scholars from rural background have a relatively shorter span of research career (34.4 percent) than that of their urban counterpart (53.4 percent). The span of research career was seen in the light of nature of research as well in order to ascertain whether it varies with the type of subject chosen for research. The nature of research was classified as intra and interdisciplinary taking into consideration the disciplines one has to touch in completing the research. It is observed that, those working on topics of interdisciplinary nature are slightly more likely to have a longer span of research career (22.5 percent) than those working for their Ph.D. on a topic from single discipline (13.5 percent). In view of the emphasis on research of interdisciplinary nature and multidisciplinary approach these days, the finding that such research does not take all that more time could be taken as encouraging and adds further strength for advocating research of interdisciplinary nature.

Stage of Research Work

Research is a tedious and long process with several stages to be gone through. In every research endeavor, there are sequential steps to be taken that represent different stages of research from formulation of research problem to the submission of thesis. The data pertaining to the stage of research reveal that about one half (53.1 percent) are in the initial stage of their research about one third (32.3 percent) are in the advanced stage and only the remaining 15 (14.6) percent of the research scholars are in the final stage. Theoretically or ideally speaking, the proportion of research scholars should be roughly the same in all the stages as, research in an institution of about 40 years standing should have regular inflow and outflow. However, it may vary with intake or enrolment for research each year. As such enrollment is always on the rise owing to new research guides being recognized and old guides continuing to have vacancies subsequent to award of Ph.D under their guidance. As the research scholars drop out not reaching advanced or final stages, fresh research scholars join, keeping the proportion of those in initial stage perpetually larger than those who are in advanced stage or final stage. We may thus always expect pyramidal structure of research scholars, representing those in different stages of research with many research scholars found in initial stage of research and the number going down as we advance in the stage of research. The stage of research was further viewed in the light of other personal variables such as age and employment status. As expected, elder research scholar are found in increasing numbers as the stage of research progresses.

Table 4: Stage of Research Work and Age

Research	Age		Total
	Young	Elder	
Initial	67 (51.15)	33 (27.73)	100 (40.00)
Advanced	28 (21.37)	39 (32.77)	67 (26.80)
Final	36 (27.48)	47 (39.50)	83 (33.20)
Total	131 (100.0)	119 (100.0)	250 (100.0)
X^2- 11.569, df-2, Significant at 0.01 level, C-0.0006			

Source: Field Survey.
Note: Figures in Parenthesis are indicated percentage.

It may be observed from the table that among those who are in initial stage of research 67 (51.15) percent are from the younger age group and 27.73 percent are elder ones are from older age groups. On the contrary, among those in final stage of research only about one third (27.48) percent are younger research scholars and about two thirds (39.50 percent) are elder ones. The association between age of the respondent and the stage of research was not statistically significant but almost closer to be significant at 0.05 level indicating to a assumed pattern.

The analysis, reveals that greater proportion of those without employment (57.0 percent) are in the initial stage of their research than are those in employment (45.1 percent) and those who are employed also have a greater proportion (21.2 percent) of those in final stage than the corresponding proportion among the unemployed (11.4 percent). This is something unexpected that those who are employed are ahead in research than those who are not and pursuing research full time without any professional obligations.

Coming to other contextual variables, the analysis reveals no statistically significant association between the stage of research and the faculty. Obviously, there could be researchers in all the faculties at different stages of progress in research. However for the purpose of academic interest, among the researchers studied, those pursuing Ph.D., in social sciences were more in the initial stage (57.4 percent)

as compared to humanities (50.0 percent), science (52.9 percent), law and education (35.0 percent) and commerce (40.0 percent). Again it is in the faculty of law and education, that we find highest proportion of those in final stages (30.0 percent) as compared to those in commerce (10.0 percent), social science (11.2 percent), humanities (14.1 percent) and science (18.4 percent). The data pertaining to those in final stages are important as they may also be speaking about survival ratio or completion ratio, that is what proportion of research scholars in a particular faculty once registered, successfully completes the degree. Further, data do not reveal any significant association between the stage of research and the enrolment status. It is normally assumed that, full time scholars would be completing their work in much shorter period and their progress is assumed to be faster than the part time research scholars. Avery strong positive association was found between the stage of research and the span of research career.

Table 5: Stage of Research and Span of Research Career

Research	Span of Career				Total
	One Year	Up to three years	Four to five years	More than six years	
Initial	7 (25.00)	65 (60.75)	13 (24.53)	15 (24.19)	100 (40.00)
Advanced	12 (42.86)	18 (16.82)	21 (39.62)	16 (25.81)	67 (26.80)
Final	9 (32.14)	24 (22.43)	19 (35.85)	31 (50.00)	83 (33.20)
Total	28 (100.0)	107 (100.0)	53 (100.0)	62 (100.0)	250 (100.0)
X^2- 30.077, df-4, Significant at 0.01 level, C-4.497					

Source: Field Survey.
Note: Figures in Parenthesis are indicated percentage.

It is quite logical to expect that those who have put in more number of years in research are at higher stage in completion of research. The data presented in the table support this logic, as the proportion of those with greater progress in research increases with increasing span of career. It may thus be stated that, the stage of research is likely to be advanced and it is a positive sign, as the time spent in research by most does not go in vain.

The data indicate that two third half (29.27 percent) of those working in traditional subjects are in the initial stage of their research whereas, the corresponding proportion is over three fourths (60.47 percent) among those working in the interdisciplinary subjects. Similarly about 64 (39.02) percent of those working in traditional subjects were in the final stage of research whereas the proportion of such scholars in interdisciplinary subject was about the half of the above (22.09 percent). The data seem to support the argument that research of interdisciplinary nature is difficult and takes rather longer time than research in traditional subjects. Even in the present study, as stated earlier, those working in interdisciplinary subject constitute a small proportion, representing about 83 (33.20) percent of the scholars studied.

Motivations and Support

Having considered several aspects of research as a process and function, an attempt is made here to ascertain empirically motivations and support the research scholars receive from other in pursuing the research process. The research scholars were asked as to who motivated or inspired them to take to research. The data pertaining to this reveal that, about two thirds (67.1 percent) of the research scholars were self motivated and thought of research career by themselves, which may be taken as quite gratifying. Even in terms of for rural urban background the analysis does not indicate to any particular pattern, with both research scholars from rural and urban background being equally self motivated.

Table 6: Motivators and Educational grade

Motivators	Educational Grade		Total
	High	Low	
Self	83 (72.81)	92 (67.65)	175 (70.00)
Others	31 (27.19)	44 (32.35)	75 (30.00)
Total	114 (100.0)	136 (100.0)	250 (100.0)
X^2- 0.786, df-1, Significant at 0.01 level, C-0.674			

Source: Field Survey.
Note: Figures in Parenthesis are indicated percentage.

Lastly with regard to the faculty, the analysis reveals no significant association with source of motivation. The data indicate that the proportion of the self-motivated was least among those pursuing Ph.D in humanities (59.4 percent) followed by law and education (65.0 percent), natural sciences (65.5 percent), commerce (70.0 percent) and social science (71.0 percent). Coming to the support the research scholars receive in pursuing the research degree, the data indicate that those who are supported by self are in majority (54.9 percent), which indicates to a healthy situation in which they are not dependent on others for pursuing their research. It is assumed that, those from lower social origin could be dependent on others to support them as research scholars. But on the contrary, the data indicate that, those from lower social origin are more self dependant (57.9 percent) than are their counterparts from higher social origins (49.5 percent). The data further suggest that those who are working on part time basis are more likely to be self supporting (66 percent) than those who are pursuing it full time (52.9 percent) and in terms of faculty, those in natural sciences are more likely to be independent (65.5 percent) than their counter parts from commerce (60 percent), humanities (45.3 percent) and social sciences (51.5 percent). As such those pursuing research in humanities are more likely to be dependent on others for support than the rest.

Guide-Scholar Relationship

Further, in the career of any research scholars, the guide is the key person and the entire research career revolves around the guide scholar relationship. The success or failure and the

length of research career to a considerable extent depend on the guide-scholar relationship. In many cases, the research career is terminated prematurely owing to lack of understanding or lack of communication between guide and the scholar. The guide is viewed as the "significant other" in the research career of a scholar and is instrumental in the progress and completion of research. Just as in case of interaction in any social situation, the interaction between guide and scholar is determined by several contextual and personal variables and in turn they determine the outcome of research endeavor that is the quality of research and the length taken for its completion. The guide has several significant in puts with research process in terms of skill, knowledge and encouragement and the extent of these inputs are the function of the guide scholar relationships though, the guides personal academic credentials and caliber are other intervening variables. In view of their significance in the process of research, an attempt is made in this chapter to ascertain the nature of guide and scholar relationships. The data so ascertained reveal that, guide scholar relationships on the whole are cordial and sometimes neutral and seldom strained.

Table 7: Guide Scholar Relationship

Guide Scholar Relationship	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Stained	46	18.40
Neutral	125	50.00
Cordial	79	31.60
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field Survey.

The data indicate that nearly two thirds (31.60 percent) of the scholars have cordial relationships with their guides and almost negligible proportion (18.40 percent) of the respondents has strained relationships. Since, the guide scholar relationships go a long way in determining the outcome of the research, it is gratifying to note that such large proportion of scholars have cordial relationships with their guides, and those who have not been able to establish cordial relations have at least neutral relations owing to which they can carry out their, research without constraints. If guide scholar relationship could be taken as indicator of academic health of any institution and the quality of research being carried out then, it may be assumed that same are sound to a considerable extent in this institution of higher education.

Further, it was assumed that, these relationships vary significantly with the contextual variables, as well as personal attributes of the guides and scholars. Even in terms of the social origin of the respondents, there was no significant variation in GSR indicating that social origin is of no significant consequence in determining the GSR. The data indicate that, it is in science subjects that the GSR was most cordial (75.9 percent) as compared to law and education (50.0 percent), social science (53.3 percent) and humanities (57.2 percent).

Table 8: Guide Scholar Relationship and Student Status

Scholar Relationship	Student Status			Total
	UGC and others funding agencies	Self Financing	University Fellowship	
Stained	11 (20.37)	27 (25.23)	8 (8.99)	46 (18.40)
Neutral	27 (50.00)	45 (42.06)	53 (59.55)	130 (37.2)
Cordial	16 (29.63)	77 (73.3)	97 (50.8)	216 (61.7)
Total	54 (100.0)	105 (100.0)	191 (100.0)	250 (100.0)
X^2- 18.68, df-4, Significant at 0.01 level, C-0.00018				

Source: Field Survey.
Note: Figures in Parenthesis are indicated percentage.

It may be observed from the table that, all those who had strained relations with their guides are the ones who support their research themselves and on the other hand, the proportion of those having cordial relations with their guides was least among those pursuing Ph. D. with university fellowship. Although all those who had strained relations with their guides had higher grades in their education, the proportion of those with cordial relations was higher (66.1 percent) among them, compared to those with lower educational grades (53.3 percent). Both full time and part time scholars had almost similar type of relations with their guides.

Significant variations in GSR could be found with regard to two most important aspects of the research career, that is, the span of research career and the stage of research. It is interesting to note that all those who had strained relations with their guides had spent more than six years at research.

Table 9: Guide Scholar Relationship and Span of Career

Guide Scholar Relationship	Span of Career				Total
	One Year	Up to three years	Four to five years	More than six years	
Stained	9 (32.14)	12 (11.21)	12 (22.64)	13 (20.97)	46 (18.40)
Neutral	13 (46.43)	51 (47.66)	30 (56.60)	31 (50.00)	125 (50.00)
Cordial	6 (21.43)	44 (41.12)	11 (20.75)	18 (29.03)	79 (31.60)
Total	28 (100.0)	107 (100.0)	53 (100.0)	62 (100.0)	250 (100.0)
X^2- 7.267, df-4, Significant at 0.01 level, C-0.100					

Source: Field Survey.
Note: Figures in Parenthesis are indicated percentage.

Whether the relations were strained owing to not completing research in a reasonable length of time or they had not completed their research within reasonable length of time owing to their strained relations is a question to be probed further. But one thing that appears to be clear is that, strained GSR and non completion of research within reasonable time go together. The association between GSR and span of research career was found to be significant 0.01 levels. It is also interesting to note further that; the GSR varies with the stage of research in an expected pattern. With these, findings on the career patterns of the research scholars serving as the backdrop, attitudes and orientations of the research scholars. It is assumed that, these traits they exhibit as research scholars could be of significance in shaping or conditioning their attitudes and orientations towards research as a career and a process.

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