



## Hurdles and Propellants in the Success of Educated Women: A Phenomenological Study

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### Abstract:

*Success is a word that fills anyone's mind with ardour and positivity. But its meaning may differ from person to person according to their philosophy of life. Here in the study, the meaning of success for women is discussed. The study also sheds light on the factors that influence success. Among these factors, some have a positive impact on success, while some others play a negative role in achieving it. It is also discussed their perception according to their priorities.*

**Key words:** Success, Phenomenology, Family as a priority, Education and Self-exploration.

### Introduction:

Success is a word which brings a wave of enthusiasm to anyone's mind as soon as it is heard. The definition of success as given in the English Oxford Living Dictionaries as "The accomplishment of an aim or purpose" means the attainment of fame, wealth, or social status ("Success," 2019). The study was started with curiosity about what is the meaning of success for educated women. While studying, the researcher found many factors that affect the success of educated women. In these factors, some have a positive impact while some have a negative impact on the success. Five educated women from different professions have been selected for the study, and wondering if there are some factors common to all that have a negative or positive impact on success. The objective of the study is to explore those factors and their impact that may play a supportive or hindering role in the success of educated women.

**Methodology:** For the study, the researcher intended to feel the experiences of participants. The most appropriate method the researcher found to study a person's experience is Phenomenology.

**Sample and Sampling:** Purposive sampling had been used to fulfil the requirements of the research. The person had to pass through three filters to be selected for the sample, and these are: 1. Participant must be a woman, 2. Participant must be educated and 3. They are successful in their opinion. After talking to several ladies, five such women were finally selected who were successful in their opinion. All these five women belonged to different professions as-

- A Homemaker • A Teacher • A Doctor • A Scientist • and A Businesswoman.

**Tool and data collection:** A self-made semi-structured interview schedule had been used to collect data intensively by the participants. Counter questions have also been used to clarify the meaning of statements of the participants, wherever needed.

**Data analysis and presentation of results:**

The participants were given a face-to-face interview, and a few conversations were also conducted over the phone and via social media messages. The interviews of the participants were recorded by a voice recorder/ call recorder in a multimedia mobile with their permission.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of five educated women who thought that they are successful and their self-perception about the phenomenon of success. This research used phenomenology as a method, and it is time-consuming.

I have conducted all the interviews individually and in person. All the interviews were taken in a private room, as per the convenience of the participants either it was face to face or telephonic discussion. One thing that has also been taken into consideration is that the mood of the participants was relaxed at the time of the interview, so that the rich lived experience could be captured. Each interview conducted was approximately one to two hours, as per the explanation of the participants about their experiences.

I began the study with the use of **Epoche** (Moustakas, 1994). I bracketed myself from all the prejudices and presumptions about the phenomenon of the study, which means I have left all the experiences and beliefs of myself about the phenomenon so that it would not affect the interpretation of the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2013; Husserl, 1977).

The following themes emerged through horizontalization and reduction of the data phenomenologically-

1. Family as priority
2. Educated Family as a support
3. Education has a remarkable role in success
4. Ambiguity in the planning of a career
5. Women can sacrifice everything for their kids/husband (family)
6. Family attachment is sometimes a hurdle to a career
7. Supporting husband is necessary for a successful career for married women
8. Self-exploration is lacking

**Themes emerged from their Associated Formulated Meanings-**

**Theme 1-Family as priority**

- Giving a bright future to kids is a prime duty.
- Priority is family.
- Family is more important than the profession.
- Priority is children.
- Although I am ambitious but priority is family.
- My own ambitions are secondary because family is a priority.

### **Theme 2- Educated family as a support**

- Parents and husband supported in success.
- Parents supported for studies.
- Whatever I am today because of family members.
- Father-in-law supported for career.
- The in-laws' family was very supportive.
- Family supported for career.
- Father-in-law supported in every aspect.
- Family supported always
- Family is supportive.
- The home environment was supportive.
- All family members were supportive.

### **Theme 3-Education has a remarkable role in success**

- Education has an important role in success.
- Without education, it is not possible to achieve success.
- Women can compete with men because of education.
- My success is totally influenced by education.
- All aspects of life are influenced by education.
- Could not achieve success without education.
- Education plays an important role in professional success.
- Education influenced success.
- Education is necessary for success.
- Education influenced all dimensions of success.
- Educated people get respect everywhere.

### **Theme 4- Ambiguity in planning of career**

- Career was not planned
- I did another job earlier, and now I am in a different field

### **Theme 5- Women can sacrifice all the things for their kids/husband (Family)**

- Can sacrifice everything for family.
- Can sacrifice for husband only.
- Can sacrifice everything for her husband.
- Motherhood dominated over professional success.

**Theme 6- Family attachment is sometimes a hurdle to a career**

- Family attachment was a hurdle to my career.
- I became an emotional fool and sacrificed my career.
- Family responsibilities are sometimes a hurdle to a career.

**Theme 7- Supporting husband is necessary for a successful career for married women**

- Husband always motivates me.
- Willpower and the support of the husband play an important role in success.
- My husband is supportive.
- Husband supported everywhere.

**Theme 8- Self-exploration is lacking**

- Not getting time for self.
- Did not work for herself.
- Did not work for myself.
- It is important to give time for self.
- Cannot get time for her.
- Personal interests are suppressed by other dimensions.

In this study, 149 significant statements were extracted, and their formulated meaning was drawn. The common meaning units were placed together. By this phenomenological analysis, eight themes emerged from that are the essence of the study and were explored as follows-

**Theme 1-Family as priority**

The participants discussed their priorities while interviewing about success and self-perception. All the participants take their family as a priority above all their work/ career, etc. Sometimes it causes a hurdle to their success. Although all the interviews were taken separately, this theme emerged by analysing all the data separately and in the composite textural description, the same meaning was drawn. While interviewing, all the participants said that their children and husband are their priority. All of them can sacrifice everything for their family, but only one participant said that she can sacrifice to an extent of 99 percent for their children.

So, it could be said that by prioritising family, women give less time to their personal work, like studies, career, and health. And sometimes it is a hurdle for women.

**Theme 2- Educated family as a support**

All the participants agreed that if the family is supportive, then it is easy to achieve success in any field. One of the participants started her studies again after marriage, and her father-in-law



and husband supported her very much. Finally, she succeeded and got selected as a Primary Teacher in a central government school. One participant said that her parents supported her in her studies, and as a result, she became a scientist at DRDO. This was a big achievement for a middle-class girl. The participant, who is a homemaker, also said the same, that she is successful because her family was supportive.

Overall, the theme shows that if the family is supportive, it is easy to succeed in any field.

### **Theme 3- Education has a remarkable role in success**

All the participants accepted that education is the most important factor in their success. The participants are of five different professions, but all agreed on it. One of the participants is a homemaker, but accepted the role of education in her life and said that education broadened her thoughts and helps to succeed in every aspect of life. Therefore, the theme shows that education is an important factor in success.

### **Theme 4- Ambiguity in planning a career**

The participants of the study are in professions they never imagined in their childhood. Most of them have uncertainty in planning their career. Almost all the participants agreed that planning a career is an important factor in success, but if a career is not planned, then it takes more effort and time. In most of the cases, it happened that the career was not made in the field in which it was initially thought of.

### **Theme 5- Women can sacrifice all the things for their kids/husband (Family)**

The study found that most of the women are family-oriented. Their decisions and concerns are not independent but dependent upon the interests of the husband and kids. The central point of their existence is their children or husband. Even career decisions are right to the extent that it does not affect the family. Only one participant showed courage, that she cannot sacrifice everything for anyone. Most of the women are the moons that revolve around the family earth.

### **Theme 6- Family attachment is sometimes a hurdle to a career**

The priorities of one's life decide her/his style of life or their philosophy of life. If they have two options, most of the women go with their families. That shows their attachment to family. Most of the women hesitantly accepted that their attachment to family created hurdles for their careers. Their decisions might be affected by the role of a woman expected by society. So, somewhere such decisions indicate their intentions to get fit into the expected role of a woman from ancient times. Although the attachment of a woman to her family cannot be denied.

### **Theme 7- Supporting husband is necessary for a successful career for married women**

Irrespective of the socio-economic level, more or less patriarchy prevails in Indian society. Support of husband becomes necessary to build a successful career for women. Although here the term 'support' may contain a variety of meaning in it. It may be a kind of permission or support in household work, or financial support or handling family concerns, and many more hidden aspects. But above all, the decisions of her husband play an important role for women to build

their careers. It seems quite contradictory to a famous saying that behind every successful man there is a woman.

### **Theme 8- Self-exploration is lacking**

Women are playing all dimensions of their lives successfully, but one thing is lacking in all of them, and that is time for themselves. They all have a desire for some hobbies, some dreams and some unfulfilled aspirations. In the hustle and bustle of life, they have hidden such a desire somewhere behind. Although one of the reasons for this lack seems to be the dual role played by women. But it is not completely true, as a homemaker participant also suffered from this lack. It depicts that most of the women put their self-exploration behind the role played by them in life.

### **Conclusion-**

This study is about hurdles and propellants in the success of women. The study reveals that almost all women give priority to their families over their careers or anything else in their lives. The success has its own meaning for everyone, so for women too. Some are happy being a homemaker and are satisfied with their life and success. Most of them agreed that they are in a career they never planned. All of them accepted that family attachment and responsibilities are sometimes a hurdle to success. Almost all the participants accepted if the family is educated, then it's a big support for them in achieving success. The married participants accepted that if the husband is supportive, then achieving success in a career after marriage will be easy. Overall, the study shows that only making a career is not a measure of success, but it has a different meaning for different people. If family is supportive, then it is easy to achieve success for women in every aspect of life. On the other hand, sometimes family is a hurdle to achieving success. All agree that education is necessary for achieving success in life.

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