



WOMEN EMPLOYMENT IN SULTANATE OF OMAN - AN INSPIRING SOURCE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

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Abstract: Women play a vital role in the growth of the family and women started sharing their shoulders in the country's economic growth as well. Now days, Women Employment shows a positive trend throughout the world. Women participation in active roles of the country is high in Sultanate of Oman comparatively with GCC, whereas the role of women is still restricted. With the realization that Education is the greatest asset which makes the country to grow faster, the government started giving full encouragement and support to the women in making their schooling and university education in equal with boys, it has decreed that women should be given career opportunities and equal pay. In the country, many women now have jobs, especially with the government. Omani women and Expatriates have made rapid progress in the field of education in the recent past, and many of them are highly educated. Women are given full support to involve herself in the various positions in education, employment, business, politics, social service and other leading sectors. Hence, an attempt is made in this paper which highlights the various roles and contributions of women in various sectors in the Sultanate of Oman. Also, the paper is amid to analyze the employment status of women in government and private sector and its projection for the future. Further, it is proposed to measure the contribution of women for the Oman's economic growth.

The study is analytical in nature and will use secondary data available with various government departments in Sultanate of Oman. Around 5 years (2005 to 2010) employment data will be used to analyze the employment trends in different sectors. Required statistical tools like Regression analysis, Trend analysis will be used in this research paper.

Key words: Women Employment, Education, Sultanate of Oman

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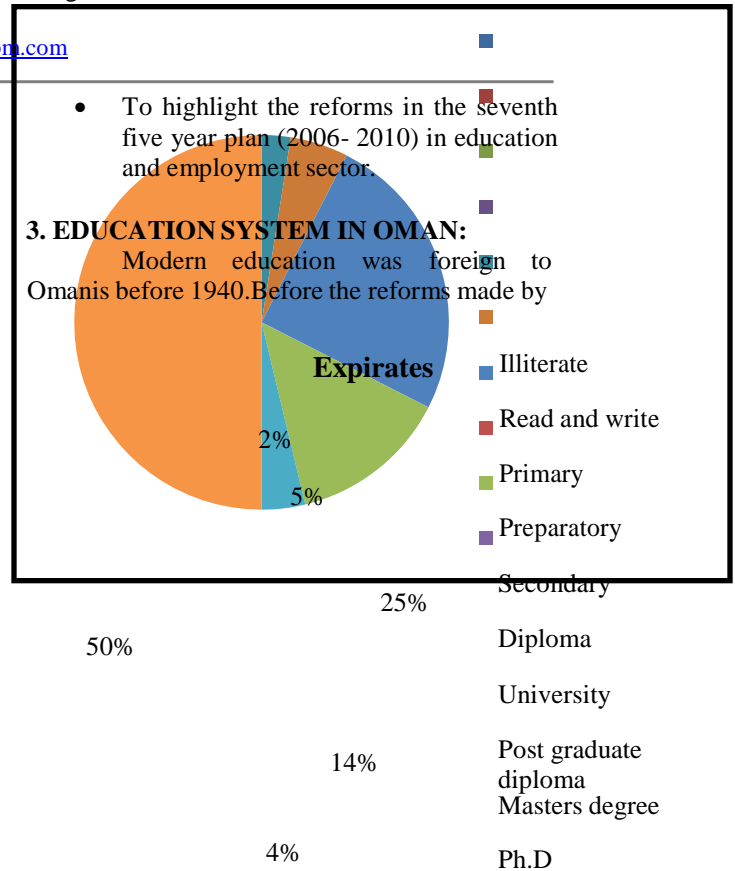
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1. INTRODUCTION:

Over the last 4 decades, when His majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said began the process of Renaissance in Sultanate of Oman, In today's scenario Women are given opportunity to work in par with male counterparts. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos has repeatedly called upon female citizens to offer their full support to the continuing development of the country, describing them as representing *-half of Oman's potential*. Women participation in active roles of the country is high in Sultanate of Oman comparatively with GCC, whereas the role of women is still restricted. With the realization that Education is the greatest asset which makes the country to grow faster, the government started giving full encouragement and support to the women in making their schooling and university education in equal with boys, it has decreed that women should be given career opportunities and equal pay. In the country, many women now have jobs, especially with the government. Omani women and Expatriates have made rapid progress in the field of education in the recent past, and many of them are highly educated. Women are given full support to involve herself in the various positions in education, employment, business, politics, social service and other leading sectors. Hence, an attempt is made in this paper which highlights the various roles and contributions of women in various sectors in the Sultanate of Oman. Also, the paper is amid to analyze the employment status of women in government and private sector and its projection for the future. Further, it is proposed to measure the contribution of women for the Oman's economic growth.

2. OBJECTIVES FOR THE STUDY:

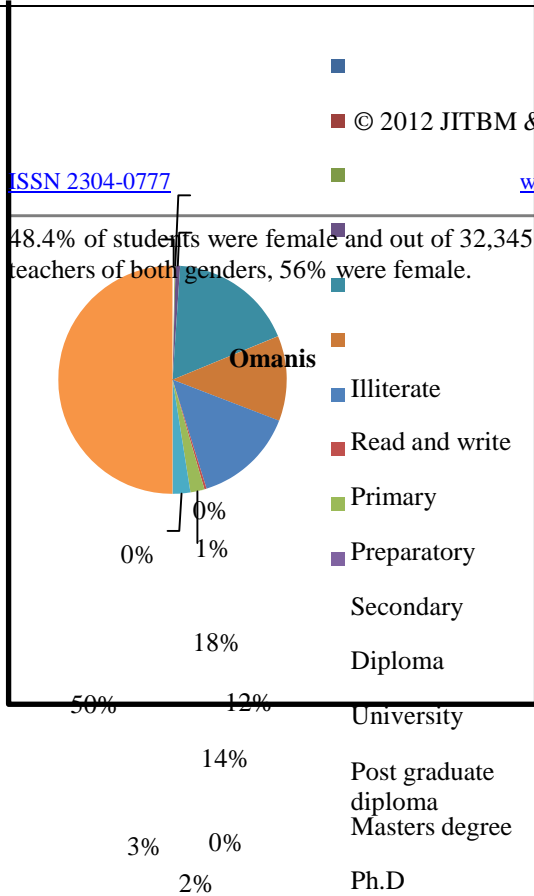


- To highlight the reforms in the seventh five year plan (2006- 2010) in education and employment sector.
- To study the growth of women education and employment in Sultanate of Oman during the year 2005 to 2010.
- To study the sector-wise employment generation for women in different sectors in the Sultanate of Oman during the year 2009 and 2010.
- To examine the future trends in women employment in Sultanate of Oman for the years 2015 and 2020.



Sultan Qaboos, there were only three primary schools serving 900 boys, focusing mainly on reciting the Quran and learning basic math and writing skills. In 1970, Sultan Qaboos introduced the universal education policy for both men and women, increasing female attendance in schools from 0% in 1970 to 49% in 2007. In the years following, 600,000 students, both male and female, enrolled in over 1000 schools, bringing Oman one step closer to the goal of -education for all.

After this first stage of universal education was established, the Ministry of Education implemented measures to improve the quality of education. In the 1980s, the Omani government sponsored construction of school buildings, the providing of adequate equipment and textbooks, and the provision of teacher training. The reforms continue today and saw a tremendous growth in school attendance. The gender equality was the next focus of the education reform, especially after Oman's 1995 -Vision 2020 that focused on the country's economic future. As a result, in 2003 to 2004,

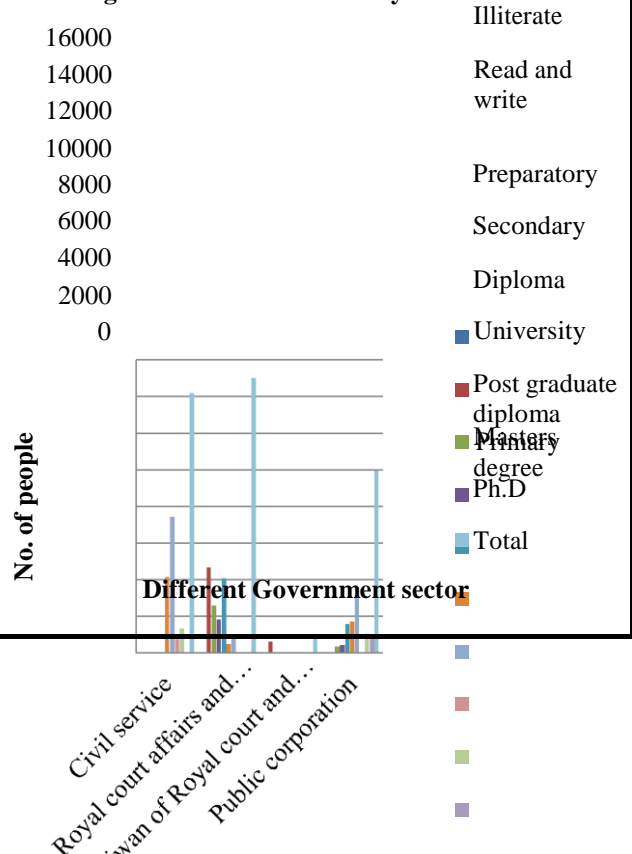


Education level	Expirates	Total	%	Omanis	Total	%
Illiterate						
Read and write		3		5	15	33.3
Primary		1		2	103	1.9
Preparatory		2		10	131	7.6
Secondary		19		283	1180	24
Diploma	4	58	6.9	193	653	29.6
University	20	195	10.3	229	791	29
Post graduate diploma		13		5	12	41.7
Master's degree	11	111	9.9	32	132	24.2
Ph.D.		2			4	
Not stated	3	52	5.8	40	245	16.3
Total	40	454	8.8	799	3266	24.5

Education level of women employees in government sector in the year 2010

Education level	Civil service	Royal court affairs	Diwan of Royal court	Public corp
Illiterate	43	0	0	195
Read and write	144	4687	643	212
Primary	11	2595	111	422
Preparatory	7	1848	15	501
Secondary	71	4098	88	1603
Diploma	4179	539	38	1720
University	7451	898	76	3191
Post graduate diploma	791	30	1	87
Masters degree				
Ph.D				

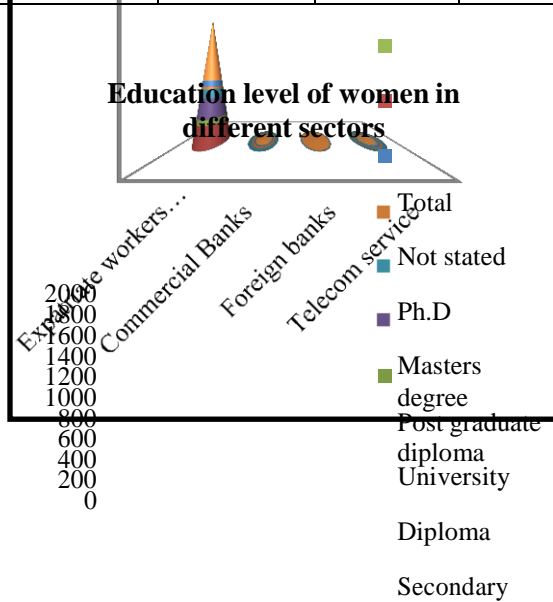
Education level of women employees in government sector in the year 2010





Education level of women employees in private sector in the year 2010

Education level	Expatriate Workers in private sector	Commercial Banks	Foreign banks	Telecom service
Illiterate	4242	14	4	0
Read and write	317895	90	30	18
Primary	76462	275	21	104
Preparatory	294826	218	57	131
Secondary	134093	2962	419	1199
Diploma	31482	2123	184	711
University	91199	1171	152	986
Postgraduate diploma	666	286	23	25
Masters degree	1843	361	60	243
Ph.D	1860	2	0	6
Not stated	1062	35	0	297
Total	955630	7537	8487	3720





Preparatory

Primary



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4. EMPLOYMENT STATUS:

Ever since the 1970s, women typically educated were encouraged to return to Oman and help to –rebuild the nation.

progress, women were able to hold jobs in nearly every profession: banking, medicine, engineering, teaching, etc. According to a UNICEF-sponsored census, 40% of economically active women were in professional job categories. In 2000, 17% of the Omani workforce was made up of women. In the 1980s, however, the government started to retract their previous liberties and slowly restrict the professions deemed –gender acceptable for women. The number of professional women decreased and women were forced into more traditional roles as –nurturers and caregivers. The Omani Women’s Association, the first women’s government-recognized group in Oman, was stripped of the majority of its independence and was passed to the male-led Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. In 1984, it was replaced with a Directorate General of Women and Child Affairs with a sub-unit for women’s associations. The main goal of this unit was to set-up classes for women to learn basic household skills and day-care centers for the handicapped and disabled.

Despite the slight setbacks, Oman is still considered to be one of the leading Gulf countries in terms of gender equality and continue to make positive strides. In 1997, the Omani Policy was implemented, committing to the promise of gradually replacing foreign labor dependence with Omani workers, giving women more of a chance to participate in the work force and making jobs more accessible to all Omanis. Women now make up 30% of the workforce and even serve in ministerial positions. The ministers of higher education, tourism, and social development in the cabinet are all women, as well as the US Ambassador and the head of national authority for industrial craftsmanship.

Employment indicators of women for the year 2005-2010						
Gov. Sectors	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Total Omani - service	48751	47390	43204	39957	35804	32566
Expirate s - service	6506	6549	6626	6944	7333	7907
Total Omani - Labor In	128415	126134	118990	114624	108995	99386
court -	640	600	551	519	485	453
Expirate s - diwan	54	44	48	44	37	40
Diwan of roayl court -	10579	9777	9314	8828	8282	7919
court Affairs	622	582	479	445	396	358
Expirate s -						
Royal court affairs	39	29	28	25	28	30
Total	15009	14335	16446	13177	12884	12388
Omani - Public corporat ion	1874	1663	1518	1723	1566	1464
Expirate s - Public corporat ion	1171	1089	979	889	761	751



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Total	9979	9292	8778
10279	8645	8400	

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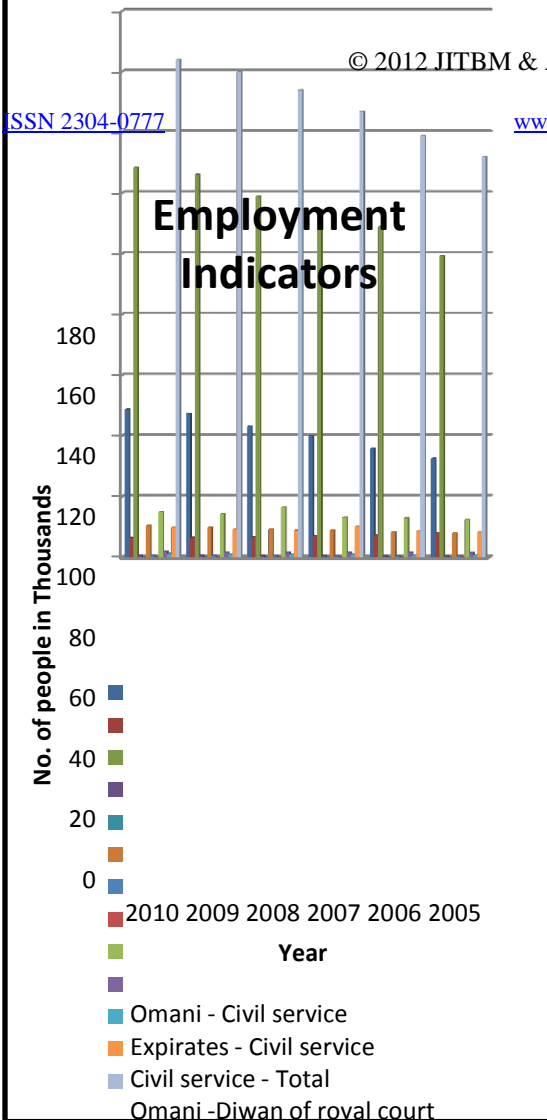
es	164000	160000	154000
147000	139000	132000	



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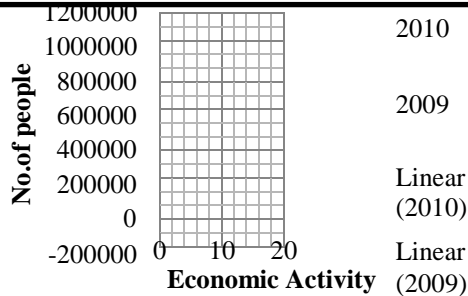
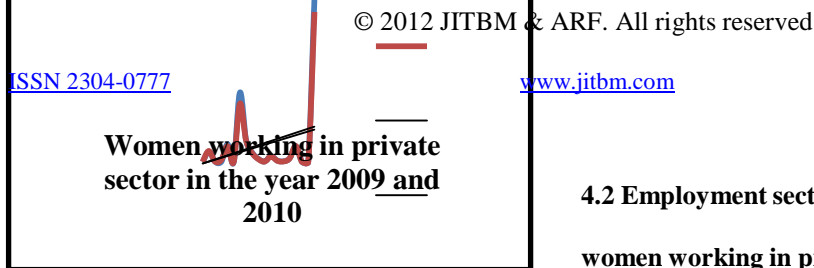




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women working in private sector in the year 2009 and 2010

Occupational Groups	2010	2009
Administration, Directors and Managers	29999	27326
Scientific, Technical and Human matters specialities	60144	62029
Scientific, Technical and Human matters technicians	54103	55048
Clerical occupations	2493	2383
Sales occupations	37638	32603
Service occupations	186571	178083
Agriculture, stock breeding,	66277	69623
Industrial, chemical and food industries operations	52389	48495

4.2 Employment sector in private sector

women working in private sector in the year 2009 and 2010

Economic Activity	2010			2009		
	Female	Total	%	Female	Total	%
Agriculture & Hunting	170	62672	0.3	186	65809	0.3
Fishing	8	2549	0.3	12	2325	0.5
Mining and Quarrying	760	1534	49.5	689	12486	5.5
Manufacturing	668	104678	0.6	601	94143	0.6
Electricity, Gas and water	21	686	3.1	24	765	3.1
Construction	1229	405304	0.3	1016	341357	0.3
Wholesale and Retail trade	2691	126074	2.1	2694	124268	2.2
Hotels and Restaurants	1750	53673	3.3	1717	51052	3.4
Transport	1433	18453	7.8	1325	16900	7.8
Financial Intermediaries	433	3204	13.5	396	3112	12.7
Real Estate	1875	36504	5.1	1695	33479	5.1
Education	4439	9026	49.2	3694	7750	47.7
Health and social work	2483	4644	53.5	2077	4021	51.7
Community and personal services	1773	21253	8.3	1806	21284	8.5
Private household with employed persons	72682	93421	77.8	69256	94592	73.2
Territorial organisations and bodies	320	891	35.9	301	833	36.1
More than one activity	7	60	11.7	15	69	21.7
Total	92742	955630	9.70	87504	874245	10.0



Principal & auxiliary engineering operations	466026	398655
Total	955630	874245



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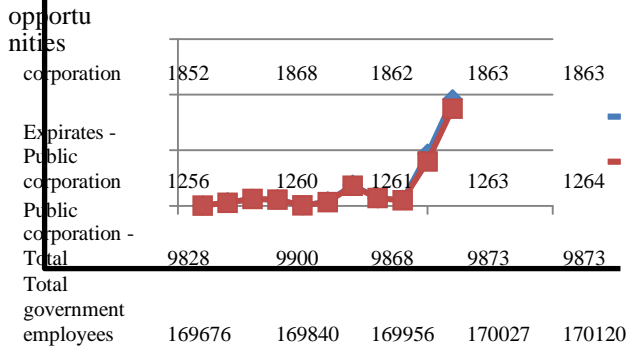
4.3 Projection of women employment for the year 2015-2020

Employment indicators of women for the year 2015-2020							2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Government Sectors	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2					
Omani - Civil service	51989	52042	52098	52153	52208	5						
Expirates - Civil service	6292	6293	6285	6284	6280	6						
Omani - Diwan of royal court	670	672	672	673	673	673						
Expirates - diwan of royal court	54	55	55	55	55	55						
Omani - Royal court Affairs	674	676	676	677	678	678						
Expirates - Royal court affairs	39	39	39	39	39	39						
Omani - Royal court affairs - Total	15505	15489	15560	15529	15530	15544						

5. REFORMS OF THE SEVENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (2006- 2010)

5.1 Objectives of the Seventh Five-Year Development Plan

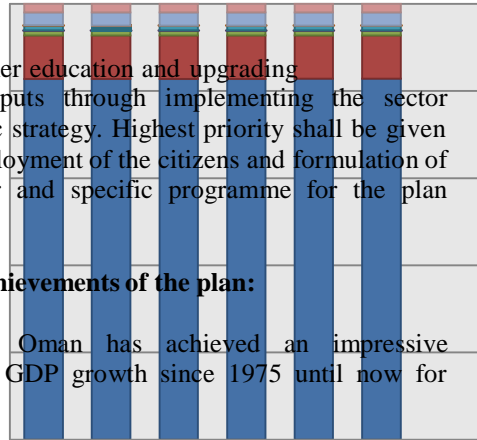
Achieving average annual growth rates, during the plan period, of not less than 3%, to rise the citizen's standard of living and maintain the current low levels of living and maintain the current low levels of inflation. Improving the output of the general education, expanding the Public



of higher education and upgrading its outputs through implementing the sector specific strategy. Highest priority shall be given to employment of the citizens and formulation of a clear and specific programme for the plan period.

5.2 Achievements of the plan:

Oman has achieved an impressive annual GDP growth since 1975 until now for





instance the GDP rose from O.R 5307.2 million in 1995 to O.R 7639.2 million in 2000 to O.R 11889.8 in 2005. In addition the GDP per capita increase from O.R 2490.5 in 1995 to O.R 3180.3 in 2000 to O.R 4737 in 2005 (Annexes X). The actual annual inflation rates during the period (1996-2000) fluctuated between m(-0.5%) and (0.5%), and registered (-1.2%) in 2001 but thereafter it rose gradually until it reached 3.8 in 2006. Further, Oman has relatively a low debt as share of GDP which averaged 25.5% during the period (1995-1998). For 2001 it is 19.9 % compared with 23.4% average for upper middle income countries (World Development Report, 2004).

The education status is concerned, the number of public and private schools rose from 3 in 1970 to 1,259 schools in 2006. Regarding education indicators, the adult literacy rate rose to 82% for males and 65.4% for females in year 2002 (Human Development Report, 2004). Also, gross primary school enrolment ratio reached 75%, and gross secondary school enrolment ratio reached 68% in 2001/02 (Human Development Report, 2004).

5.3. Vision 2020

Documentation related to Oman's -Vision 2020 — produced in 1995 on the country's economic future (Ministry of Development, 1997) contains specific policies concerning education inspired by the following statement of the Ministry of Education (Al-Belushi, Al-Adawi & Al-Ketani, 1999):

The challenges facing Oman, particularly the need of self-sufficiency and the need to diversify the economy and keep pace with technological change, require new educational goals to prepare Omanis for life and work in the new conditions created by the modern global economy. These will require a

high degree of adaptability and a strong background in mathematics and science in order to independently apply rapidly changing technologies to Oman's needs. The proposed educational reforms are designed to achieve the knowledge and mental skills and attitudes that young Omanis will need to learn and adapt to the very different future most of them will face.



As mentioned in the Vision 2020 document, those policies are (Ministry of Development, 1997):

- To implement and improve the standards of basic education;
- To make secondary education more consistent with the requirements of the future society;
- To pay more attention to the science subjects;
- To introduce the teaching of computers in schools as a basic subject;
- To improve the teaching/learning of the English language in basic education;
- To provide schools with adequate human resources and educational equipment;
- To improve the status of teachers;
- To improve in-service training courses and workshops for all staff in the educational field.
- To improve teaching methods and education practices according to new trends and to encourage the concept of learning by doing.

6. CONCLUSION:

The education level of women and employment status of women shows a positive trend and in turn helps the country to grow and increase the economic status in the better way. The Government of Oman has developed its economy, educated its people and has relatively comfortable standard of living and to achieve the sustainable economic growth. Oman has identified the role of liberalization and privatization to accelerate the rate of economic growth. The country's fifth five year plan 1996-2000 highlighted the importance of participation of Omani women in private sector development. In the 6th five year plan 2001-2005 the ministry of manpower set up SANAD programme, though not specifically targeted to women, 37% of funds were provided to women in 2002-2004. With the economic growth, liberalization and diversification more job opportunities are created enabling women to make their contributions in their country's development.

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