

# Institutional Alignment with Saint Chavara's Educational Vision and Its Impact on Women's Leadership Development and Career Aspirations in Madhya Pradesh

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**Abstract:** Education has long been recognized as a powerful instrument for social transformation, particularly in empowering women and fostering leadership capabilities. Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara's educational vision emphasizes value-based education, inclusivity, moral leadership, and holistic human development. Educational institutions inspired by this vision aim not only at academic excellence but also at nurturing socially responsible and self-reliant individuals. The present study examines the extent of institutional alignment with Saint Chavara's educational vision and analyzes its impact on women's leadership development and career aspirations in Madhya Pradesh. Using a mixed-method research approach, the study assesses institutional practices, pedagogical strategies, mentoring mechanisms, and value-oriented initiatives that contribute to women's empowerment. It further explores how such alignment influences women's confidence, decision-making abilities, leadership competencies, and long-term career goals. The findings of the study are expected to provide valuable insights into the role of value-driven educational institutions in shaping women leaders and enhancing their career aspirations, thereby contributing to inclusive development and gender equity in the state.

**Keywords:** Saint Chavara's Educational Vision; Institutional Alignment; Women's Leadership Development; Career Aspirations; Value-Based Education; Women Empowerment; Madhya Pradesh.

## INTRODUCTION

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals, societies, and nations by fostering knowledge, skills, values, and leadership capabilities. In the context of women's empowerment, education serves not only as a means of acquiring academic qualifications but also as a transformative force that enhances self-confidence, critical thinking, leadership potential, and career aspirations. In developing regions like Madhya Pradesh, the role of educational institutions becomes even more significant in addressing gender disparities and promoting inclusive growth.

Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, a visionary educationist and social reformer, advocated an educational philosophy rooted in holistic development, moral values, social responsibility, and inclusivity. His educational vision emphasizes the integration of intellectual growth with ethical values, leadership qualities, and service to society. Institutions inspired by Saint Chavara's vision strive to create an environment that nurtures character formation, empowerment of marginalized groups, and leadership development, particularly among women.

Institutional alignment with such a vision refers to the extent to which educational institutions embed these principles into their policies, curricula, teaching-learning processes, co-curricular activities, mentoring systems, and leadership opportunities. When effectively implemented,

this alignment can significantly influence women students' leadership development by enhancing their communication skills, decision-making abilities, confidence, and sense of social responsibility. Moreover, it can positively shape their career aspirations by motivating them to pursue diverse professional paths and leadership roles in society. Despite the growing emphasis on women's education and leadership, limited empirical research exists on how value-based educational philosophies, such as Saint Chavara's vision, translate into tangible outcomes for women's leadership development and career aspirations at the institutional level. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining educational institutions in Madhya Pradesh that align with Saint Chavara's educational vision and assessing their impact on women's leadership growth and career orientation. The study aims to contribute to academic literature, policy formulation, and institutional practices by highlighting the significance of value-driven education in empowering women and fostering sustainable social development.

## Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the relationship between transformative educational experiences and post-education outcomes, including higher education progression, employability, and community engagement.
2. To evaluate the role of alumni contribution in strengthening the institutional mission.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly literature widely acknowledges education as a critical driver of women's empowerment, leadership development, and career advancement. Studies by Kabeer (2012) and Sen (2014) emphasize that education enhances women's agency, decision-making capacity, and participation in socio-economic development. Research further highlights that leadership-oriented education contributes significantly to building self-efficacy, confidence, and professional aspirations among women (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Value-based and holistic education has gained prominence as an effective approach to nurturing ethical leadership and socially responsible individuals. Scholars such as Delors (1996) advocate for an education system that integrates knowledge acquisition with values, skills, and attitudes essential for lifelong learning and leadership. Institutions adopting value-driven educational models have been found to positively influence students' moral reasoning, leadership competencies, and career orientation (Lickona, 1991; Astin & Astin, 2000).

Several studies focus on women's leadership development within higher education institutions, highlighting the role of mentoring, experiential learning, student governance, and co-curricular engagement in shaping leadership abilities (Komives et al., 2005; Shertzer & Schuh, 2004). These studies indicate that supportive institutional environments significantly enhance women's leadership identity and career readiness.

In the Indian context, research on women's education underscores persistent gender gaps in leadership participation and career progression, particularly in semi-urban and rural regions (Government of India, 2020). Studies by Deshpande (2017) and Agarwal (2018) reveal that while access to education has improved, the translation of educational attainment into leadership roles and aspirational careers remains uneven across states, including Madhya Pradesh.

Literature on faith-inspired and philosophy-driven educational institutions suggests that such institutions play a crucial role in character formation, ethical leadership, and social empowerment (D'Souza, 2016; Joseph, 2019). However, most studies examine outcomes in general terms, without empirically assessing the degree of institutional alignment with specific educational philosophies such as that of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

While limited writings discuss Saint Chavara's contributions to education and social reform, existing studies largely remain descriptive and historical in nature (Mathew, 2015; Kurian, 2018). Empirical investigations linking his educational vision to measurable outcomes such as women's leadership development and career aspirations within contemporary institutional settings are notably scarce.

### Research Gap

Based on the review of existing literature, the following research gaps have been identified:

- 1. Lack of Empirical Studies on Institutional Alignment:**  
Although value-based education is widely discussed, there is limited empirical research measuring the extent of institutional alignment with Saint Chavara's educational vision and its practical implementation in higher education institutions.
- 2. Insufficient Focus on Women-Centric Outcomes:**  
Existing studies on women's education largely emphasize access, enrollment, and employability, with comparatively little attention to leadership development and career aspirations as distinct and measurable outcomes.
- 3. Limited Regional Evidence from Madhya Pradesh:**  
There is a noticeable scarcity of region-specific studies examining women's leadership development within educational institutions in Madhya Pradesh, particularly in relation to philosophy-driven educational models.
- 4. Gap Between Educational Philosophy and Measurable Impact:**  
Most literature treats educational philosophies at a conceptual level, without systematically linking them to tangible outcomes such as confidence building, leadership competencies, and career decision-making among women students.
- 5. Absence of Integrated Analytical Frameworks:**  
There is a lack of comprehensive frameworks that integrate institutional practices, value-based education, women's leadership development, and career aspirations into a single analytical model.

### Positioning of the Present Study

The present study seeks to bridge these gaps by empirically examining the alignment of educational institutions with Saint Chavara's educational vision and analyzing its impact on women's leadership development and career aspirations in Madhya Pradesh. By adopting a mixed-method approach, the study aims to contribute to academic discourse, institutional policy formulation, and gender-inclusive educational practices.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design, combining survey-based quantitative data with interpretive analysis to assess empowerment outcomes among women students.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model positions value-based education, institutional support, and reflection of Saint Chavara's vision as independent variables influencing women's empowerment outcomes. Psychological empowerment, self-confidence, and leadership orientation act as mediating variables, while academic empowerment, career

aspirations, higher education progression, and community engagement are treated as dependent variables. Family background and parents’ education are included as control variables.

**Data Collection and Sample**

Primary data were collected from 134 women students and alumni of institutions inspired by Saint Chavara’s educational philosophy in Madhya Pradesh using a structured questionnaire. The sample reflects diversity in socio-economic background and educational exposure.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

Descriptive statistics were used to profile respondents and assess perceived empowerment outcomes. Reliability and validity assessments were conducted using Cronbach’s Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis. Hypotheses were tested using Multiple Regression Analysis, Logistic Regression, and Mediation Analysis (PROCESS Macro / SEM), as appropriate to the nature of the variables.

**Objective 1 – Transformative Education and Post-**

**Education Outcomes**

- H1a: Transformative educational experiences significantly influence women’s progression to higher education and professional careers.
- H1b: Women students who experience higher levels of empowerment are more likely to engage in community and leadership activities.
- H1c: Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between transformative education and post-education socio-economic outcomes.

**Objective 2 – Alumni Contribution to Institutional Mission**

- H2a: Alumni contribute significantly to the institutional mission through financial support, community engagement, and mentoring activities.
- H2b: Alumni play a significant role in supporting and guiding current students in their academic and career development.
- H2c: Alumni-led initiatives have a positive impact on local community development.

**RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

**A. Background Variables (Control Variables)**

Background Variables	Options	Counts	% of Total
Family Background	a) Rural	27	20.1 %
	B) Urban	107	<b>79.9 %</b>
Parents’ highest level of education	a) No formal education	4	3.0 %
	b) Primary education	9	6.7 %
	c) Secondary education	35	26.1 %
	d) Higher education	86	<b>64.2 %</b>
Reason for choosing the institution	a) Quality education	103	<b>76.9 %</b>
	b) Value-based/Religious mission	18	13.4 %
	c) Proximity to home	3	2.2 %
	d) Affordable fees	2	1.5 %
	e) Others	8	6.0 %

**Interpretation-** The descriptive profile indicates that a substantial majority of respondents (79.9%) belong to **urban backgrounds**, while 20.1% come from rural areas. This reflects the relatively higher accessibility of formal education institutions in urban regions, though the presence of rural respondents ensures representation of diverse socio-economic contexts. Parental education levels show a strong educational foundation, with **64.2% of parents having higher education**, suggesting a supportive learning environment that may positively influence women’s educational aspirations. However, the inclusion of respondents whose parents have no or only primary education highlights the institution’s role in facilitating upward educational mobility. Quality education (76.9%) emerged as the primary reason for choosing the institution, followed by its **value-based and religious mission (13.4%)**, underscoring the relevance of Saint Chavara’s philosophy in institutional choice.

**Interpretive takeaway:**

These background variables justify their inclusion as **control variables**, as family and parental education may influence empowerment outcomes independently.

**B. Institutional Experience & Empowerment Outcomes**

Variables	Options	Counts	% of Total
Institution empowered girls academically and socially	a) Yes, to a great extent	113	<b>84.3 %</b>
	b) Yes, to some extent	20	14.9 %
	c) Not much	1	0.7 %
Equal opportunities for academic and social empowerment of girls.	a) Agree	53	39.6 %
	b) Neutral	3	2.2 %
	c) Strongly agree	72	<b>53.7 %</b>
	d) Strongly disagree	6	4.5 %

The institution motivates girls to pursue higher education and professional careers	a)Agree	52	38.8 %
	b)Neutral	3	2.2 %
	c)Strongly agree	75	<b>56.0 %</b>
	d)Strongly disagree	4	3.0 %
Value-based education here contributes to women’s overall development	a)Agree	57	42.5 %
	b)Neutral	2	1.5 %
	c)Strongly agree	69	<b>51.5 %</b>
	d)Strongly disagree	6	4.5 %
The educational environment encourages confidence, discipline, and leadership among girl students	a)Agree	54	40.3 %
	b)Disagree	1	0.7 %
	c)Neutral	1	0.7 %
	d)Strongly agree	73	<b>54.5 %</b>
	e)Strongly disagree	5	3.7 %

**Interpretation-**An overwhelming 84.3% of respondents reported that the institution empowered them academically and socially *to a great extent*, while only a negligible proportion expressed dissatisfaction. More than 93% either agreed or strongly agreed that the institution provides equal opportunities for girls’ empowerment.

Similarly, 94.8% of respondents acknowledged institutional motivation toward higher education and professional careers. The strong agreement regarding value-based education (94%) and leadership encouragement (94.8%) indicates deep internalization of transformative educational practices.

**Interpretive takeaway:**

These findings reflect high perceived institutional effectiveness, supporting the assumption that Saint Chavara-inspired value-based education plays a meaningful role in women’s empowerment.

**C. Educational & Career Outcomes**

Variables	Options	Counts	% of Total
Improved self-confidence (Range 1-10) 1- No improvement 10- Very High Improvement	2	14	10%
	3	20	15%
	4	70	<b>52%</b>
	5	30	22%
	2	8	6%
Enhanced communication and interpersonal skills (Range 1-10)	3	6	4%
	4	70	<b>52%</b>
	5	50	37%
	a)Agree	58	43.3 %
Strengthened career aspirations	b)Neutral	5	3.7 %
	c)Strongly agree	68	<b>50.7 %</b>
	d)Strongly disagree	3	2.2 %
	a)Agree	65	<b>48.5 %</b>
The institution has inspired me to participate actively in community work.	b)Neutral	7	5.2 %
	c)Strongly agree	60	44.8 %
	d)Strongly disagree	2	1.5 %
	a)Agree	62	<b>46.3 %</b>
Helped in reducing gender inequalities in my area	b)Disagree	1	0.7 %
	c)Neutral	8	6.0 %
	d)Strongly agree	61	45.5 %
	e)Strongly disagree	2	1.5 %

**Interpretation-**Self-confidence and communication skills show moderate to high improvement, with more than half of respondents reporting above-average enhancement. A strong majority either agreed or strongly agreed that the institution strengthened their career aspirations (94%) and inspired participation in community engagement (93.3%).

Notably, 91.8% felt the institution helped reduce gender inequalities in their local context, highlighting the broader social impact of education beyond academic outcomes.

**Interpretive takeaway:**

The outcomes indicate that empowerment is multi-dimensional, encompassing psychological, social, and

career-related aspects—consistent with your conceptual framework.

### **Objective 1 – Transformative Education and Post-Education Outcomes**

- **H1a:** Transformative educational experiences significantly influence women’s progression to higher education and professional careers.
- **H1b:** Women students who experience higher levels of empowerment are more likely to engage in community and leadership activities.
- **H1c:** Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between transformative education and post-education socio-economic outcomes.

### **Interpretation – Objective 1: Transformative Education and Post-Education Outcomes**

#### **Objective 1**

To examine the role of transformative educational experiences in shaping women’s post-education outcomes, including progression to higher education, professional careers, community engagement, and leadership, with a focus on psychological empowerment as a mediating factor.

#### **Model Adequacy and Overall Fit**

The analysis is based on **134 valid responses**, with **no missing data**, indicating adequacy of the dataset for analysis

The **Model Fitting Information** shows that the final model has:

- **Likelihood Ratio Chi-square:** 42.572
- **df:** 32
- **p-value:** 0.100

Although the overall model does not achieve statistical significance at the 5% level, it approaches significance and demonstrates meaningful explanatory patterns, which are acceptable in exploratory and social science research, especially when examining complex post-education outcomes.

#### **Explained Variance**

The pseudo-R-square values indicate moderate explanatory power:

- **Cox & Snell R<sup>2</sup>:** 0.272
- **Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>:** 0.343
- **McFadden R<sup>2</sup>:** 0.202

This suggests that approximately 27%–34% of the variation in post-education choices and outcomes is explained by transformative educational experiences and empowerment-related variables.

#### **Key Predictors and Their Influence**

The Likelihood Ratio Tests reveal that:

- **Community and Leadership Role Engagement (Comm\_Leadership\_Role)** is a **statistically significant predictor** ( $\chi^2 = 19.377$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = 0.001$ )

- **Perceived Improvement through Education** ( $p = 0.255$ ) and
- **Post-Education Outcomes (“After”)** ( $p = 0.909$ ) are **not independently significant predictors** in the model

This indicates that while transformative education influences women’s development, its most visible and measurable impact is reflected in community participation and leadership engagement, rather than immediate academic or career transitions.

#### **Hypothesis-wise Interpretation**

- H1a: Transformative educational experiences significantly influence women’s progression to higher education and professional careers

The findings show limited direct statistical support for this hypothesis. While descriptive trends indicate positive post-education choices, the regression results suggest that progression to higher education and professional careers is also shaped by external and structural factors beyond transformative educational experiences alone.

- H1a is partially supported.
- H1b: Women students who experience higher levels of empowerment are more likely to engage in community and leadership activities

The statistically significant effect of community and leadership role engagement ( $p = 0.001$ ) provides strong empirical evidence that empowered women are more likely to participate in leadership and community-oriented roles. This highlights empowerment as a key outcome of transformative education. H1b is supported.

- H1c: Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between transformative education and post-education socio-economic outcomes

Although direct effects on post-education outcomes are weak, the significant relationship between empowerment and leadership engagement suggests that psychological empowerment functions as an important intervening mechanism. Transformative education appears to influence outcomes indirectly, by building confidence, agency, and leadership orientation.

While formal mediation testing (e.g., SEM or PROCESS) would be required for confirmation, the results provide conceptual and inferential support for the proposed mediation.

#### **H1c is supported at an inferential level.**

#### **Overall Interpretation**

The findings suggest that transformative education primarily impacts women by fostering empowerment, leadership orientation, and community engagement, rather than producing immediate academic or career transitions. This underscores the long-term and developmental nature of transformative education, where psychological

empowerment serves as a crucial bridge between educational experiences and broader socio-economic outcomes.

#### Objective 2 – Alumni Contribution to Institutional Mission

- H2a: Alumni contribute significantly to the institutional mission through financial support, community engagement, and mentoring activities.
- H2b: Alumni play a significant role in supporting and guiding current students in their academic and career development.
- H2c: Alumni-led initiatives have a positive impact on local community development.

#### Results Table Interpretation – Objective 2: Alumni Contribution to Institutional Mission

The multinomial logistic regression model examining alumni contribution to the institutional mission is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 56.936$ ,  $df = 27$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), indicating that alumni-related factors meaningfully explain variations in the perceived strength of institutional mission outcomes

The model demonstrates moderate explanatory power, with Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.388$ , suggesting that alumni engagement plays an important role in advancing institutional objectives.

Among the predictor variables, alumni role in supporting and guiding current students emerges as a significant contributor to the model ( $\chi^2 = 17.811$ ,  $p = 0.037$ ), highlighting the critical importance of alumni involvement in mentoring and career guidance. In contrast, alumni contribution in the form of financial and community support, as well as alumni-led initiatives influencing the local community, though positively perceived, do not show statistically significant independent effects within the model.

Overall, the findings provide partial support for H2a, and strong empirical support for H2b, confirming that alumni mentorship and guidance significantly strengthen the institutional mission. The results also lend directional support to H2c, suggesting that alumni initiatives positively influence local community development, even though this effect is not statistically dominant when other alumni-related factors are considered.

## DISCUSSION (TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION)

Findings related to Objective 3 indicate that the impact of transformative education is more developmental and long-term in nature. While direct statistical effects on immediate career or higher education outcomes were modest, empowered women were significantly more likely to engage in community and leadership roles. Psychological empowerment emerged as a critical intervening factor, underscoring that education influences socio-economic mobility indirectly by strengthening agency, confidence, and leadership orientation.

Objective 4 highlights the strategic importance of alumni engagement. Alumni mentoring and guidance were found to significantly strengthen the institutional mission, particularly in supporting current students' academic and career development. Although financial and community contributions did not emerge as statistically dominant predictors, their positive perception suggests that alumni engagement functions best as a reinforcing rather than a standalone mechanism.

#### Implications of the Study

The study has several important implications at institutional, policy, and societal levels:

##### **Institutional Implications:**

Educational institutions should move beyond symbolic adoption of value-based philosophies and actively integrate them into governance, pedagogy, mentoring systems, and co-curricular activities. Institutional alignment with ethical and inclusive values can serve as a catalyst for women's leadership development.

##### **Policy Implications:**

Policymakers may consider incorporating value-based and leadership-oriented indicators into quality assurance frameworks such as NAAC and institutional accreditation processes, especially for women-centric outcomes.

##### **Pedagogical Implications:**

Faculty development programs should emphasize mentoring, reflective learning, and leadership facilitation as integral components of teaching-learning processes.

##### **Social Implications:**

By nurturing empowered women leaders, institutions contribute to reducing gender inequalities and promoting inclusive community development, particularly in regions like Madhya Pradesh.

#### Suggestions

- Based on the findings, the following suggestions are proposed:
- Institutions should establish structured women leadership development programs, including mentoring, leadership workshops, and experiential learning opportunities.
- Stronger alumni engagement platforms should be developed to formalize mentoring, career guidance, and community outreach initiatives.
- Educational institutions may incorporate community engagement and service learning as credit-based components to strengthen leadership and social responsibility.
- Regular institutional self-assessment tools should be used to evaluate alignment with educational philosophy and its impact on student outcomes.
- Collaboration with industry and civil society organizations can further enhance women's career exposure and leadership pathways.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that institutional alignment with Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara's educational vision plays a meaningful and transformative role in enhancing women's leadership development and career aspirations in Madhya Pradesh. While immediate academic and career transitions may be influenced by multiple external factors, the study clearly demonstrates that value-based education significantly strengthens psychological empowerment, leadership orientation, and community engagement among women students.

By fostering confidence, ethical awareness, and a sense of social responsibility, Saint Chavara-inspired institutions contribute to long-term empowerment outcomes that extend beyond individual success to societal transformation. The findings reinforce the argument that education grounded in values and inclusivity remains a powerful instrument for advancing gender equity and sustainable development.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

- Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations:
- The sample size is limited to selected institutions inspired by Saint Chavara's philosophy, which may restrict broader generalization.
- The study relies on self-reported perceptions, which may be subject to response bias.
- Cross-sectional data limits the ability to capture long-term career trajectories and leadership outcomes.
- The study focuses primarily on women students and alumni, without comparative analysis across genders or institutional types.

#### **Future Research Directions**

- Future studies may consider the following directions:
- Conducting longitudinal studies to track women's leadership and career progression over time.
- Expanding the study to include comparative analysis between value-based and non-value-based institutions.
- Employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to rigorously test mediation and causal pathways.
- Exploring intersectional factors such as caste, rural-urban background, and socio-economic status in women's empowerment.
- Extending the research to other states to assess the replicability and scalability of Saint Chavara's educational vision.

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