

SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Gender disparities among third-world nations are frequently seen when women's status is studied for research purposes. Hence, the relationship between jobs and equality is focused in the present study concerning the contemporary era. The accessibility of women to services and the extent of input to the households' cumulative family incomes are also significant for eliminating gender discrimination. The present study comprises five selected aspects to explore the multi-facets of women empowerment. The study discussed that women are more likely to be motivated in mostly limited occupations and that a few of the empowerment measures appear to interrelate with these unique proficient characteristics. The research is intended to encourage discussion on improving women's empowerment by creating more professional markets that offer women new prospects, particularly in rural areas of Pakistan, that are often the most ignored parts in third-world countries.

Keywords: *women empowerment, socioeconomic development, employment, occupation, financial contribution, Pakistan*

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INTRODUCTION

Gender disparities amongst third-world countries are often seen when examining the status of women for study purposes. Such gender disparities cause multiple types of inequality and financial discrepancies, namely inequity in healthcare, more inadequate accessibility to fundamental requirements, unfair educational prospects, and inadequate authority in all aspects of lifespan (Ashraf et al., 2017; Choudhry et al., 2019a).

This inequality contributes to financial uncertainty too. Women empowerment is vital for a nation's development: to realize viable growth, and it is essential to offer women in society freedom and empowerment contribute to their welfare in the socioeconomic, political, and healthcare fields to shape vital goals amongst them (Musindarwezo, 2018).

It is essential to accord women freedom and empowerment for both genders' stability and development to maintain poise in shared justice and achieve clearly outlined objectives (UN Women, 2017). Therefore, the emphasis must be on gender equality. As said by various analysts, women's financial empowerment is more debated in the political and social sense than in women's economic sense. It should be identified as a unique and most powerful path to eradicate gender disparity (Noureen, 2015).

In economic prosperity, policymaking, and power-sharing, occupations are core aspects of financial empowerment (Noureen, 2015). Control and selection are vital components of empowerment, consistent with past studies, and these components are the resulting features of the continuing empowerment procedures that accompany several fields and scopes (Abrar et al., 2017a).

Therefore, when considering the problems of empowerment, it should be remembered to know from where it originates and the fundamental aspects that it occurs. The milieu must be addressed when devising policymaking, and the power arrangements should be studied. Similarly, the women who are continually participating in this ever-shifting phase must be addressed (Abrar et al., 2017b).

Gender is a dynamic socially built mechanism to manipulate women through gender separation of labor. Also, it is seen by them as a racial component of bigot philosophy. In the male-dominated philosophy of separation of labor, women are accountable for domestic work, whereas men are publicly qualified, which implies more authority, more income, superior position, independence, and new

prospects for progress and self-esteem.

However, due to sexism, marginalization, abuse, and limited movement in public affairs, women discover their knowledge restricted and often find themselves in a time-bind when returning from work to start a second shift back home. This reserved life requirement prevents the capacity of women to succeed in community lifestyle.

Marriage inequalities in Pakistan are one of the fundamental challenges that women experience. Here, the reproductive age lies between 15-49 years, although the average marriage age is 20 years in city areas and about 19 years in countryside regions (Shahzad, 2017). The system of marriage helps equality and sensual control to males, as stated by classical research by Jessie Bernard in 1982. Usually, males considered themselves above home duties consistent with the marriage system. On the other hand, women sometimes feel helpless, reliant in marriage deals, and are responsible for providing men with all the care and services. Customary marriages put women into domestic loneliness. Married individuals have a high level of stress compared to unmarried (Steil, 1997).

Women's status, empowerment, and gender disparity, women's conditions in Pakistan, are worrisome. Their social conditions are meager, and disparities are pervasive about their education, healthcare, financial and political contribution, as stated by World Economic Forum. Pakistan has a general gender disparity of 55%, which is the lowest among the South Asian countries. The country has seen minor changes in women's empowerment in cosmopolitan towns, but in minor municipalities, townships, and countryside regions, the conditions are worse. It should also be noted here that Pakistan's countryside regions are home to 70% of the population. In all walks of life, rural women face a large scale of inequity.

In the lives of rural women in Pakistan, the Pandora box of unfairness has remained open, that included limited movement, poor education and healthcare services, unavailability of financial growth, unpaid employment, pay disparities, abuse in the places of work, spouse violence, severe and protracted job timings, dual working shifts, lack of civil structures, disputes and differences.

The bulk of women's issues in Pakistan are those encountered in the 19th century by western women. Due to the so-called first feminist wave's activism, they have considered themselves liberated and got their civil rights. However, women in Pakistan, particularly in the countryside regions, are still experiencing

various difficulties. In Pakistan, there is a need for further studies to thoroughly comprehend women's subjugation and the need for active research to free them from old male-controlled rules.

The subject of empowerment must be viewed as a holistic process that brings about the development of a whole structure, beginning with recognizing the power hierarchy systems that keep women subjugated (Women's Working Group, 2015). The present research explored how women could be motivated by their jobs to achieve a thorough perception of the association between women and jobs' empowerment. Moreover, this research offers a snapshot of the fundamental contribution of women's work for empowerment. Specifically, for whom they are collaborating and their role concerning their income in the family. Economic empowerment also implies social and political empowerment. Reforms are essential to improve women's status in the social hierarchy.

Justification of the Study

The status of women in Pakistan is in a desperate state, as stated by the World Economic Forum, and gender disparities are pretty widespread in their education, healthcare, financial and political contribution. There is an insignificant change in women's empowerment in cosmopolitan metropolises in Pakistan, but it is worse in small towns and countryside regions. Moreover, it should be noted that 70% of Pakistan's population lives in rural areas, and there they face strong bias in all aspects of their lives.

Hence, the association between jobs and empowerment is typically concentrated in the present research, and particular focus is given to the person's capacity to address professional prospects and the employment milieu. Women's approach to services and the extent of involvement in the household divisions' cumulative family incomes are also remarkably significant.

Objectives

1. To explore the relationship between employment and empowerment in Pakistan.
2. To explore the relationship between employment status and empowerment in Pakistan.
3. To explore the relationship between demographics and empowerment in Pakistan.

4. To explore the relationship between occupation and empowerment in Pakistan.
5. To explore the relationship between financial contribution and empowerment in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Women empowerment includes freedom and authority to manage personal lives alike within and externally their homes and their capacity to affect how social changes generate a more lavish domestic and global socioeconomic system (Sepotokele, 2018). Feminism is not an individual's work; in it, a multifaceted community is generalized. It is thought to be women-focused since its primary goal is to study women's social experiences as an exploited faction and create an improved environment for women. Despite differences in ideas, both feminists agree that women's subordinate role is supported by male-controlled society and conservative thoughts.

Hence, a new social system is needed for gender parity instead of a patriarchal society. The so-called liberal feminism argues that gender modeling in labor division and parity could be created by re-modeling significant institutes such as law, employment, families, and education. Cruelty against women has its origins in personal property institutions (Schmitt, 2018). This system was further strengthened in the colonial era in the Indian subcontinent and reinforced by capitalism through remote control of the creation sources.

This right has established a class structure, and men embraced this practice since it favors a male-dominated society. Though the capitalist system does not prioritize women, it serves as one of the primary sources for gender discrimination. Women comprise 50% of the world's population, and if this percentage gets freedom, then capitalism to an extent could suffer, wherein the sources of creation are deemed collective possessions and women are financially self-governing like men. Socialist feminists believe that the two reasons for women's oppression are the capitalist system and patriarchy, and the elimination of this issue is the only solution to free women.

Scholars are currently endeavoring to outline an instrument to estimate and assess female empowerment's scale or extent in society. Thus, past research employed women's status as an instrument because women with high family status are empowered, and those women with no family status were thought to

be non-empowered. Afterward, to assess empowerment, the analysts, Mason and Smith (2003), applied various variables, viz., women's role in the households, their participation in management, and gender disparity; nevertheless, these were not established.

The word 'independence' does not seem very striking in the societal structure situation, whereas the word 'empowerment' suggests the degree of privileges and ranges for both genders (Kabeer, 2012). Nevertheless, it is inadequate when researching the facts concerning women's empowerment to understand women's economic power as evidence of empowerment (Malhotra et al., 2002).

The women's resources and the power (settings) they have over those resources should be understood. Empowerment is inadequate without control over the resources. As well, society has to play a significant contribution in the empowerment of women. Western countries' empowerment values are entirely dissimilar to those in third-world countries (HHI, 2016). Hence, by evaluating evidence, resource, and setting, women's empowerment could be assessed.

Therefore, women's happiness is less contented and less gratified with their families' outright and virtual economic condition than men's counterparts (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009). Pakistani women are willing to reach covenants with their partners on various aspects, namely education of girls, social mobility, working status, hobbies, and domestic obligations, though disputes bring about conflicts that minimize the happiness in the lives of women (Yasmeen, 2015).

Furthermore, Yasmeen and Karim (2014) claim that Pakistani feminists were females who experience dissatisfaction or frustration in their jobs and later started their own company, taking into account the ultimate objectives of choosing the form of work, service hours in the workplaces, and the people with which they worked. Nevertheless, in their business startups, most women experienced social, behavioral, and economic obstacles. Thus, one could realize that empowerment might be viewed in different fields, but it also coincides with various aspects.

Indicators of Empowerment

Family management and freedom to travel are often women's empowerment gauges. The term 'women empowerment' originated from the terms employed in part for them, such as women's autonomy and independence in introducing their rights and justice issues. The remaining aspects of women's lives have become integral to their empowerment with the continuing expansion of the notion of

empowerment to the degree that it could engage authority across several realms and processes, and the management of assets of women has become a particularly challenging aspect of empowerment of women (Wiebesiek & Treffry-Goatley, 2017).

How does access of women to resources, women's empowerment affect the problem being faced? Peinado and Serrano (2018) believe that developing freedom from economic aspects of women or resources reduces gender disparity and enhances empowerment. Also, gender disparity could be reduced by growing leverage over resources in the household, gradually contributing to women's financial strength.

The influence to be heard in households provides women with confidence. They begin to monitor life decisions and could affect public issues significantly (Blumberg, 2005). As for the deliberations of the association between empowerment and jobs, the underlying point is mainly relevant since, mostly, it is inadequate only to do jobs and increase income; instead, it is essential the leverage over their resources (Abrar et al., 2017a; Blumberg, 2005; Kabeer, 2012). However, women may work and earn money; however, they are unlikely to achieve any influence or power in their households if they have no power over their resources.

Employment and empowerment

The most substantial claim of all the debates of women's empowerment is that their contribution to making money could guide them towards their empowerment, as the capacity to manage their resources would motivate them to negotiate matters (Guinee, 2014). It then allows them to influence the choices and selections they decide to make in their lives. If the women earn, they can deal with themselves, and thus they become less reliant for survival and the remaining household members.

It gives strength to women's negotiating power in the families since it does not merely add to the households' income but acquires a more decisive fallback point (Datta & Gailey, 2012). That improved degree of bargaining power in families is judged a central empowering element since it affirms their authority over themselves and their households (Deere & De Leal, 2014). In contrast, discussions amongst analysts often say that women experience several other barriers that act like a monster managing their lives and gender parity race and

cannot be eliminated with jobs alone.

Thus, it can be concluded that women are pressured to make money by the kind of feeble systemic factor and poor choice and remain unempowered. However, for women in Pakistan and in other third-world countries, work is scarce. Due to the low level of education among women and self-awareness, it could be inferred that women's occupations need less expertise and are often remunerated disproportionately, are unable to gain safety, and are involved in a disastrous occupational environment (Samarakoon & Parinduri, 2015).

Engagement of women in jobs and revenue-generating activities does not remove their family obligations, thereby indicating that most working women have several tasks, namely jobs, family chores, and the duty to protect the households (Rehman et al., 2015). The realism of empowerment is much nuanced and is at the center of the statements made above. Jobs do not necessarily bring about empowerment, jobs though they can improve their power and contribution in households. Thus, consistent with both, the researchers ascertained and included several core factors that included the conditions that affect occupations to occur and the type of empowerment.

Employment status and empowerment

The researchers discovered discrepancies after they have used the earlier study frameworks. Simultaneously, some analysts have claimed that with the assistance of paying jobs, age-old social values could be changed (Datta & Gailey, 2012). However, some studies have noted that merely an occupation has negligible effects on empowerment without consequences of employment circumstances. As stated by a previous study, Bengali women and poor Indian women recorded that jobs empower women, and those who do jobs seek decision-making power in contrast to those who are without, have control of their resources, own mobility, and accumulate properties to protect their welfare (Klugman et al., 2014).

The power hierarchies that prevent women's involvement and input in society are sufficiently robust and cannot be questioned only by being on the job. The primary reason for the failure of job empowerment is that women have chosen to do jobs and earn mainly due to survival, and that form of occupation does not impact the input of gender (Singh & Raghuvanshi, 2012). Women are under no circumstances permitted to engage in the political domain due to the lower income levels, nor does this work alleviate the households' obligations and do not

obtain similar property civil rights (Cinar & Kose, 2018).

Despite these troubles, jobs in the right circumstances would combine the communal endeavors to empower women to a significant extent (Cinar & Kose, 2018). Nevertheless, the issue is how jobs could be regarded as empowerment? A dire need to thoroughly study this problem and observe this relationship concerning the factors that encourage women to move into the job market, their implications, jobs, family experiences, and salary outcomes.

Demographics and empowerment

Empowerment of women could be affected directly and indirectly by sociodemographic contexts, 'indirectly' implies its relation to the accessibility of jobs, social status, and projections for gender contributions. Previous research shows the couples' roles at the time of their marriage and community links, as household structures and characteristics of its units are vital for financial procedures, the fundamental direction of leadership, and women's economic empowerment (Choudhry et al., 2019b; Frankenberg & Thomas, 2001).

Some women in society appear less likely to be empowered, for example, younger women, women with lower learning rates, countryside women, poor women, and those women belonging to inferior status or caste (Hunter et al., 2013). For women's occupation and its link to women's empowerment, education could be a striking amongst the stimulating effects since it leads to life opportunities and outcomes. Occupation and learning appear to be critical subjects for domestic financial power; hence women are no more engaged in community and executive issues (Sonowal, 2013). Therefore, the women with more education levels and job rates hold relatively more significant economic policymaking power than other decision-related issues.

In the current literature, most analysts have identified employment and education as vital pointers of women's empowerment (Choudhry et al., 2019a). Nevertheless, Pakistani women do not possess adequate educational and job prerequisites (Sadaquat & Sheikh, 2011), particularly in countryside regions (Noreen, 2011).

Literacy amongst women is lower than that of men. Pakistani women are powerless to begin their private business due to an absence of education and community norms in countryside regions (Khan, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to study how education allows women to improve empowerment by removing

obstacles that hinder their empowerment.

Pakistani women are beleaguered with conventional patriarchal customs in a nasty life cycle (Awan, 2016). Women are not at liberty to make decisions concerning their lives. It may include marriages, divorces, child-bearing, healthcare, traveling, inheritance possessions, education, and deciding occupation (Adeel et al., 2017; Awan, 2016; Jamal, 2016; Sarfraz et al., 2015). Age-old gender-prejudiced sociocultural traditions are the key reason for women's repression, restricting women's position in society and giving them inferior positions (Awan, 2016).

It is hard to eliminate these sociocultural obstacles (Kirai & Kobia, 2012). As a possible obstacle to women's equality, these sociocultural aspects limit women and contribute to women's subservient and victimized condition (Rafay et al., 2016). Because of social sexism and social standards, Pakistani women consider themselves vulnerable. In Pakistani society, women's violence is also an established practice. Abuse of the danger of cruelty hurts their self-image (Baehr & Amy, 2013).

Marriage institutions and practices, such as dowry payment, adversely affect women's capabilities and cause them psychologically pitiable in South-East Asia (Begum, 2016). In a submissive and subservient course, society affects the traits of women. Patriarchal social standards have driven parents to train their offspring submissively. Likewise, early pitiable family socialization is often the communal strain product (Kirai & Kobia, 2012; Rafay et al., 2016).

Dandona (2015) states that self-image and capability are essential characteristics of a woman's motivation. Dodd (2012) also states that the vital prospective predicament to women's empowerment is the absence of self-confidence, motivational level, and poor socialization. Awan (2016) explained that there is a requirement to change society's mindset for women's empowerment owing to efficient education.

According to Bandyopadhyay (2011), there is an encouraging effect on women's empowerment in education and employment positions. Stevenson and Wolfers (2009) suggested that education has risen over time, and satisfaction is related to advanced education. In Pakistan, male enrollment is motivating, though women are less educated than men (Yasmeen, 2015).

Little traveling is the crucial reason for illiteracy among women due to

increased apprehensions about Pakistan's security (UNICEF, 2018). In Pakistan, many other reasons comprise lower family earnings (poverty), availability, strengthening traditional gender participation and absence of female educators, and political indifference (Jamal, 2016). Education in Pakistani women's empowerment should be more focused on the future study (Ali & ul Haq, 2006).

Occupation and empowerment

A little study has been carried out to examine the relationship between women empowerment and jobs (Singh, 2013). There is still ample reason to conclude that women's careers contribute significantly to women's empowerment. Due to its link of educational needs, earnings, and power within the community, women's occupation is vital (Gautam, 2018).

It may identify the qualifications and abilities to accomplish that specific career, the economic proceeds associated with the classification, the working environments, and the status of the gender (Raj, 2014). Women work in all professional fields. However, especially in India, where they do menial vocations that are much lower in the revenue and thus are paid less, such as in the agricultural field and household work (Gautam, 2018).

Nevertheless, in a few situations, wherein women are skilled and willing to do some specialized occupations, jobs that are not labor-intensive are typically oriented towards the service sectors when doing 'feminized' vocations, namely, education, social work, and nursing (Singh, 2013). As previously reviewed, occupations are vital for empowerment in their relationships to status and educational fulfillment, easing work environments, salary variations, and influence.

Financial contribution and empowerment

The effects of women's empowerment in exchange for the salary she receives could be vital for those who have a crucial strong influence and reverence in their households. The monetary help of women to their households tends to increase their capability to control the portion of revenue offers them power in both policymaking and management in homes (Anyanwu et al., 2018).

The analysts in earlier studies conclude that their input to household income and the degree to which they contribute is another significant aspect of women's empowerment and in the relationship between work and empowerment. The scale

to which families rely on women's wages could affect the strength and influence of working-women in their families as it shapes their roles in the family units and improves their fallback position by reducing their dependency on male members (Kato & Kratzer, 2013).

The voice in the households influences the participation degrees of wages of women. Hence, if they contribute primarily to family income, they would be heard more for the household decisions and would have a more decisive say. However, if they contribute less to the family's income, their opinions would not be weighted much on important domestic policies (Meisenbach, 2010). Household earnings and empowerment studies showed a positive relationship between increased empowerment likelihood and more significant revenue input (Grasmuck & Espinal, 2000).

There is also a significant relationship between women's income and household income and the cases and severity of domestic violence (Ahmed & Hyndman-Rizk, 2018). The research showed that those influential women reviewing their contributions and standings in the households appear to be monetarily powerful and effective and increase their incomes. The increase in their empowerment and reduction in home violence against them is the product of the vital input of their family incomes (Demirguc-Kunt et al., 2013). Women's earnings explicitly suggest that they are providers to society and are worthy of being valued in their households. It shows how incomes influence women's empowerment, despite the challenge of patriarchy structure (Kabeer, 2012).

While women did not discuss their earnings and the rights suggest a more significant fallback part in ups and downs, the women were considered valued, respected, and honored (Kabeer, 2012). Generally, due to their monetary inputs to household revenues, their equality and value could be improved with their household contributions.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research methodology was used in the study. Descriptive research is more concerned with what it is rather than how or why it aims to define a phenomenon and its properties.

CONCLUSION

Three critical assumptions could be drawn while considering the contribution

of employment for the empowerment of women, kind of work, work proximity to the home gamut if the tasks of women result in freedom from the authority of patriarchal society, and only the significant increase of earnings appear to result in the empowerment of women.

The study reveals that Pakistani women are less empowered in all fields of activities. They face a lack of authority, restraints on traveling, domestic violence, prohibition, and lower resource control. The present research enunciates that women's employment seems essential in the country to boost their empowerment. However, there are many obstacles to relate well to them, and employment is one reason for getting along with them in various circumstances. In families, societies, and countries worldwide, the fundamental barriers to equality of women and privileges must be considered if one wants to see women's vocations, especially in Pakistan and the world in general, as a dominant means for empowerment. Nevertheless, some structural changes are needed to make jobs a relatively strong trend to empower women.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, considering job opportunities for women is a crucial stage in raising equality for women. The job prospects for them must be dissimilar to traditionally existing jobs, and it is essential to concentrate on the presence of women at all phases of employment. Secondly, the initiatives for empowerment that have been effectively launched to provide small companies with work competencies, training, and monetary assistance are proved unsatisfactory. It is essential to put helpful cohorts wholly in a place, helping women know their self-worth and their fundamental civil rights. The increase in the perception of women could reinforce their bargaining power. Consequently, their rights to make domestic decisions would seem best for themselves and their children.

Thirdly, the present research elucidates that the education standards should never be underestimated. Education not only broadens the financial opportunities for women, but it has also been commonly observed in the delay of marriages, first-birth age intervals and increases women's ability to fix their problems. The guarantee of the rights of women is necessary for their empowerment and equality. Lastly, policies must ensure the fundamental rights and security of women. Therefore, one must not fail to see empowerment as a situation instead of as a process. Hence, women should behave exceptionally to have tremendous

respect for themselves and to have self-esteem. It must take on the burden of women's empowerment, not only related to women but also to the society that seems vital to third-world countries, such as Pakistan.

Moreover, in the past studies, it is claimed that women's empowerment must be observed in all society's echelons. The comprehensive procedures necessitate women to fight for their civil rights, men must have input to the procedure, and governments must actively encourage egalitarianism in all spheres of life. Globally and domestically, women should be empowered in their homes, society, country's economy, and politics.

When seeing the details about women's empowerment, it can be deduced that women's empowerment is essential for society's upheaval. It is the basis after which a positive transformation may start. Rates of empowerment of women in their households should not be underestimated and underrated. To perceive the challenges that create obstacles in the occupational path and explore the methods wherein employment creates a shift in their lives, in-depth studies regarding employment and empowerment must be further conducted.

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