

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 177 (2015) 3 – 8

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

Global Conference on Contemporary Issues in Education, GLOBE-EDU 2014, 12-14 July 2014,
Las Vegas, USA

Assessing the Socio-Economic Determinants of Women Empowerment in Pakistan

Aliya Bushra ^{a*}, Nasra Wajiha^b

^aAssistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Lahore School of Economics, Lahore, 54700 Pakistan

^bProfessor, Head of the Department of Psychology, Govt. College for Women Gulberg, Lahore, 54700 Pakistan

Abstract

Women empowerment is one of the most important that has been discussed in developing countries. In this paper, an attempt is made to explore the determinants that have an influence on women empowerment in Pakistan. Sample consisted on 200 female respondents from two renowned universities in Lahore. The empirical results showed that the content of education, economic participation of women, poverty and economic opportunity available for women increases their empowerment. In this study, apart from conventional variables, a variable, Women having a bank account was also tested which showed a extreme significant positive impact on women empowerment. This supports the economic opportunity available to the woman increases their power. Finally, it is concluded that these significant factors influences empowerment of women, so one can focus on these determinants to increase and enhance women's role in our society.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the Scientific Committee of GLOBE-EDU 2014.

Keywords: Empowerment; conventional; economic opportunity; economic participation.

1. Introduction

Women's empowerment has been a very important issue of the contemporary world. Education is vital for the growth of human mind in order to attain equal opportunities and status to achieve their goals and objectives. Empowering women has been neglected for long and was applied in the 1970's. The scope of study is to see the

* Aliya Bushra Tel.:+4-355-433-4243.

E-mail address: a_aylz@hotmail.com

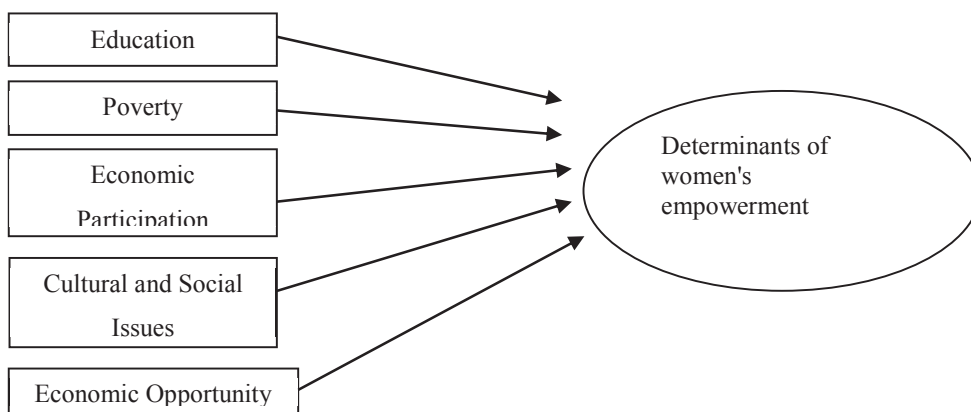
present situation of women in Pakistan and to distinguish the important determinants and barriers restricting women's empowerment in education. Chitrakar (2009) states that there was a huge gender gap in youth literacy and adult literacy rates. This paper indicated clearly that women were lagging behind in education due to women's conditions of gender inequality, health, education and equal rights.

Empowerment of education has deprived women from gaining knowledge, attaining equal job opportunities, control, power, status, decision-making capabilities, knowing self as to be a productive asset for the child growth etc. The women's circumstances in Pakistan as to the cultural and social values, traditions, poverty, religious grounds, illiteracy, public awareness, high fertility rate all contribute to the powerlessness of women in under-developed economies. Women's powerlessness shatters self confidence and self esteem. In rural areas in Pakistan the women are mostly isolated, fragmented and are unable to discuss and share their wishes, concerns and problems. Different factors contribute on both micro and macro level to women's empowerment of education in Pakistan. The government plays an important role to having no supportive women education policies and strategies. Recently government, Non-government organizations (NGO's) and political parties have been trying to take steps for women education by opening a number of schools around the country for girls and women. Manisha Desai (2010) states that there was gender disparity at primary and secondary level primary education should be made compulsory for the females till they reach the age of 16. The paper discussed the needs for government policies regarding this issue to make basic primary education to secondary education compulsory for both men and women.

Women's empowerment has been neglected since the creation of Pakistan. Women have been deprived of their basic legal rights to have an equal status and opportunity to grow as a human being. Women have been isolated from the development process and social factors including health, basic needs, education, information, access to power and authority, decision-making. The problem has not been served since 1947. Women's Empowerment helps women gain confidence, knowledge, gain experience and bring up their children in a more disciplined manner and contribute to the decisions. It will also create awareness and exposure to females and allow them to have equal opportunities to have an equal position on the managerial level contributing to the organization and the economy of the country

2. Methodology

2.1. Theoretical Framework



2.2. Sample Criterion

The data was collected through survey method. The sampling procedure was based on convenience. The sample consisted of females mainly the students of Lahore School of Economics and Government College for Women, Gulberg, Lahore. The sample size consisted of 200 students (100 from each college). The respondents were all females chosen include married or unmarried of the age group of 17-27 years. The students were mainly taken from Bachelor's degree program (BBA/BSc/B.A).

2.3. Instrument

The data has been collected through structured questionnaire. This questionnaire has been taken from Chaudry and Nosheen (2009). Few modifications have been done to the structured questionnaire. It includes 16 questions which measures four main variables for women empowerment in Pakistan. All of them were closed ended questions. The questionnaire was based on Likert five point scale which measured the high and low dimension of all the independent and dependent variables (1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). This questionnaire consists of two sections: i) Employee empowerment (dependent variable) and ii) Education, poverty, social and cultural issues and economic conditions (independent variable). See table 1. The instruments have been developed to test the impact of women empowerment.

Table 1. The Variables included in each category are listed below

Dependent Variable	Constitutive Definition	Operation definition
Women Empowerment		
Empower to make decision regarding family issues	Freedom to make decision regarding their family issues	Measured by Likert five point scale: 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree
Empower to make decision about one self	Freedom to make decision regarding their own selves	Measured by Likert five point scale: 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree
Decision regarding marriage	Freedom to make decision regarding their marriage	Measured by Likert five point scale: 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree
Education		
Content of education curriculum	Relevance and importance of curriculum taught in universities on empowerment	Measured by Likert five point scale: 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree
Mother's education	Role of mother's education on empowerment	Measured by Likert five point scale: 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree
Female enrolment rate	Number of female enrolment in university	Measured by Likert five point scale: 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree
Economic Participation		
Having an asset	Impact of woman having an asset (on her name) on empowerment	Measured by Likert five point scale: 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree
Economic Opportunity		
Having a bank account	Woman having bank account contributes in empowerment	-do-
Equal opportunity and status	Number of opportunities available	-do-
Credit opportunities	Credit opportunities provided	-do-
Choice between career and family	Freedom of choice in family or career	-do-
Poverty		
Unpaid work	Payment is not been made for the work	-do-
Culture/Social issues		
Social and Cultural Norms	Norms and values related to culture and society	-do-

2.4. Research Hypothesis:

$H_1: \beta_1 \neq 0$ Education has a significant impact on women's empowerment.

$H_{1a}: \beta_1 \neq 0$ Content of education has a significant impact on women's empowerment

$H_{1b}: \beta_1 \neq 0$ Mother's education has a significant impact on women's empowerment

$H_2: \beta_2 \neq 0$ Economic participation has a significant impact on women's empowerment.

$H_{2a}: \beta_{2a} \neq 0$ Women having an asset has a significant impact on women's empowerment

$H_3: \beta_3 \neq 0$ Cultural/social issues have a significant impact on women's empowerment.

$H_4: \beta_4 \neq 0$ Poverty has a significant impact on women's empowerment.

$H_{4a}: \beta_{4a} \neq 0$ Unpaid work has a significant impact on women's empowerment.

$H_5: \beta_5 \neq 0$ economic opportunity has a significant impact on women's empowerment.

$H_{5a}: \beta_{5a} \neq 0$ women having a bank account has a significant impact on women's empowerment.

3. Data Analysis:

3.1. Regression Model:

Model 1: including all variables (content of education, education of mother, poverty, bank account, skill training, unpaid work, house hold income and having assets)

$$WE_{fit} = \beta_0 + \beta_{1t} Edu_{it} + \beta_{2t} Ecopp_{it} + \beta_{3t} Ecpart_{it} + \beta_{4t} Pov_{it} + \beta_{5t} cult_{it} + \epsilon_i$$

Where, WE represents women empowerment (family issues) at the time period t , Edu represents education, $Ecopp$ represents economic opportunity, $Ec part$ represents economic participation at time t , Pov represents poverty and $cult$ represents Cultural/social issues at the specific time period t . β_0 is the intercept of regression equation and ϵ represents the error term which was the random in nature and is expected due to uncertain event.

Model 2: ordered logit regression: empowerment to make decision about oneself

$$WE_{oit} = \beta_0 + \beta_{1t} Edu_{it} + \beta_{2t} Ecopp_{it} + \beta_{3t} Ecpart_{it} + \beta_{4t} Pov_{it} + \beta_{5t} cult_{it} + \epsilon_i$$

Model 3: ordered logit regression: empowerment to make decision about marriage

$$WE_{mit} = \beta_0 + \beta_{1t} Edu_{it} + \beta_{2t} Ecopp_{it} + \beta_{3t} Ecpart_{it} + \beta_{4t} Pov_{it} + \beta_{5t} cult_{it} + \epsilon_i$$

Where, WE represents women empowerment (decision about marriage at the time period t , $Ecopp$ represents economic opportunity, $Ec part$ represents economic participation at time t , Pov represents poverty and $cult$ represents Cultural/social issues at the specific time period t . β_0 is the intercept of regression equation and ϵ represents the error term which was the random in nature and is expected due to uncertain event.

4. Results and Discussion

In table 2, the results of ordered logit regression analysis for all the independent variables revealed that few of them were extremely significant with women empowerment. In model 1, content of education, unpaid work for females, economic participation, economic opportunity available to them and having a bank account was significant on empowerment of women. Training and skills utilization also plays an important role in empowering women. If females has an skill and is able to utilize that skill to earn for herself, she feels authoritative and a financial support to the family. Economic participation for women empowerment is important. This means that if women are given some financial benefits or they are allowed to contribute financially they feel fewer barriers in their empowerment. This relationship has an inverse effect because the more pressure of financial participation is on women so this eventually decreases the authority of the women. The next logit regression analysis was on the empower to make decision about themselves. (Shown in table 3) . The content of education provided to them has highly significant impact on the authority of these females. The education has a positive significant impact on women empowerment; the syllabus taught in these universities pays a contribution towards their thinking ability to be empowered. Education is necessary but the relevance of education is highly important for the females to understand their position in the society. In table 4, the third model, result shows that empowerment in making decisions about one own self

and about the family has more significance if the women is educated. But in case of making decision about her marriage, education doesn't play an important role. Whereas having a bank account and economic opportunity was significant in the third model as well. Poverty was highly significant variable with women empowerment. Females who possess a bank account has a positive impact on their authority, whereas women financially supporting their family, or are not been paid for their work has an inverse relationship with empowerment.

Table 2. Ordered Logit Regression Analysis: Model 1

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[familyissue = 1.0]	-4.04	0.89	20.73	1.00	0.00	-5.78	-2.30
	[familyissue = 2.0]	-2.72	0.85	10.26	1.00	0.00	-4.38	-1.06
	[familyissue = 3.0]	-1.93	0.84	5.32	1.00	0.02	-3.57	-0.29
Location	[education=1.0]	-1.32	0.89	2.17	1.00	0.14	-3.06	0.43
	[ecopart=1.0]	0.99	0.52	3.60	1.00	0.06	-0.03	2.01
	[ecopart=4.0]	-0.20	0.33	0.37	1.00	0.55	-0.85	0.45
	[poverty=1.0]	-0.11	0.73	0.02	1.00	0.88	-1.53	1.31
	[ecoopp=1.0]	-0.04	0.67	0.00	1.00	0.95	-1.35	1.27
	[ecoopp=2.0]	-1.62	0.57	8.15	1.00	0.00	-2.73	-0.51
	[ecoopp=3.0]	1.70	1.25	1.87	1.00	0.17	-0.74	4.14
	[ecoopp=4.0]	-0.93	0.56	2.78	1.00	0.10	-2.03	0.17
	[culturesocial=4.0]	-0.24	0.41	0.34	1.00	0.56	-1.04	0.57

Table 3. Regression Analysis: Model 2

		Estimate	Std Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[oneself = 1.0]	-4.97	0.92	29.26	1.00	0.00	-6.78	-3.17
	[oneself = 2.0]	-3.20	0.87	13.60	1.00	0.00	-4.90	-1.50
	[oneself = 3.0]	-2.89	0.86	11.22	1.00	0.00	-4.58	-1.20
	[education=3.0]	-1.84	0.73	6.37	1.00	0.01	-3.27	-0.41
	[education=4.0]	0.02	0.29	0.01	1.00	0.94	-0.55	0.60
	[ecopart=1.0]	0.28	0.52	0.29	1.00	0.59	-0.73	1.29
	[ecoopp=1.0]	-0.79	0.67	1.39	1.00	0.24	-2.10	0.52
	[ecoopp=2.0]	-1.25	0.57	4.80	1.00	0.03	-2.36	-0.13
	[ecoopp=4.0]	-1.46	0.57	6.52	1.00	0.01	-2.58	-0.34
	[culturesocial=1.0]	0.07	0.52	0.02	1.00	0.90	-0.94	1.07
	[culturesocial=3.0]	-0.57	0.48	1.40	1.00	0.24	-1.52	0.38
	[culturesocial=4.0]	-0.48	0.42	1.34	1.00	0.25	-1.29	0.33

Table 4. Regression Analysis: Model 3

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence	
							Lower	Upper
Threshold	[marriage = 1.0]	-0.85	0.81	1.11	1.00	0.29	-2.44	0.73
Location	[education=1.0]	0.16	0.89	0.03	1.00	0.86	-1.59	1.91
	[education=2.0]	0.03	0.81	0.00	1.00	0.98	-1.57	1.62
	[ecopart=1.0]	-0.04	0.49	0.01	1.00	0.94	-1.00	0.93
	[ecopart=4.0]	0.02	0.32	0.01	1.00	0.94	-0.61	0.66
	[poverty=1.0]	1.50	0.72	4.30	1.00	0.04	0.08	2.92
	[ecoopp=4.0]	-0.01	0.54	0.00	1.00	0.99	-1.06	1.05
	[culturesocial=1.0]	-0.43	0.50	0.73	1.00	0.40	-1.40	0.55

5. Conclusion and Future Implications

The result was consistent with the study of Noreen (2010). Poverty showed a positive relationship but this showed a negative relationship in previous studies. Jehan and Qamar (2000), poverty is higher in houses with lesser number of literate members in the family. But this implies that female feels that if the poverty is increased there will be increase in the barrier to their empowerment. Economic participation and economic opportunity available to females also show a negative relationship with determinants of women empowerment in Pakistan also shown in previous article by Zahidi (2005). Barriers in women empowerment that Pakistan being a male dominated society restricts women from taking decisions, are forced to obey their husbands or father. Education shows a positive relationship with the determinants of Women's Empowerment in Pakistan and thus new laws for upbringing women status and encouraging parents to educate their children.

References

- Ghazala Noreen (2010), "Education as a Prerequisite to Women's Empowerment in Pakistan", *Journal of Research and Reflections in Education* Vol.6, No.1, pp 50 -60
- Imran Sharif Chaudhry & Farhana Nosheen, (2009), "The Determinants of Women Empowerment in Southern Punjab (Pakistan)", *European Journal of Social Sciences, Volume 10, Number 2,*
- Jehan Qamar,(2000), "Role Of Women In Economic Development Of Pakistan", *University of Balochistan Quetta.*
- Manisha Desai, (2010), " Hope n Hard Times: Women's Empowerment and Human Development", *United Nations Development Programme Human Development Reports.*
- Roshan Chitrakar, (2009), "Overcoming Barriers to Girl's Education In South ASIA" *United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF ROSA).*