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Women Empowerment: A Case Study with Reference to Education and Social Status in Pakistan

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Women Empowerment: A Case Study with Reference to Education and Social Status in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT:

Women's empowerment is the process of enhancing and improving the social, economic, political, and legal power of women in order to guarantee their equality and give them the self- assurance to assert their rights, including the freedom to live their lives with a sense of self-worth, respect, and dignity, and to have total control over their lives both inside and outside of the home and the workplace. The right for women to be heard is a legal right. The percentage of women in the world's population is about 50%. There are a lot of unemployed women in the world. The present study "Impact of women empowerment on their socio-economic conditions (A case study of Multan Cantt) was conducted in Multan Cantt. Random sampling method was used. The major goals of the current study were to identify the many socioeconomic elements that contribute to women's empowerment and the difficulties that women confront in society. Different things including educational level, economic standing, occupation, marital status, work status, family structure, etc. all affect empowerment differently. These elements are interconnected, with each having an impact on the others.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Socio-economic conditions, educational attainment family structure, marital status, employment status.

Empowerment is not a concept that is universal and has diverse definitions in various socio-cultural and political circumstances. Typically, the word "empowerment" refers to interactions among disadvantaged groups, families, and other individuals on a worldwide scale. In a wider context, it refers to the extension of one's own independent desires and behavior, which can be achieved by the use of power and control. Individuals, families, and friends all benefit from having the ability to make big decisions. Women are perceived as having fewer rights to make decisions both inside and outside the home in traditional cultures. Women's empowerment is therefore a complicated and varied movement that attempts to support women in realizing their worth and power control over all aspects of life. Women have worked side by side with men throughout history, from the Stone Age to the current age of enlightenment. In either case, their contribution to society is equal to that of men. Despite their incomparable commitment, women have never been allowed to participate in the labor force or have the same social standing as men. Women's social status varies greatly across the world. It differs from one nation to the next, from one state to the next, from one society to the next, and from one culture to the next. In some parts of the world, women's social status is laudable, while in others, it is dreadful. Similarly, social status is improving in some places while deteriorating in others. It is impossible to determine a woman's social status in absolute terms. The social status of women, on the other hand, can be determined by the attitudes of parents, family members, and other members of society. When women are treated equally by

their parents, family members, and other society members, their social status is defined as praiseworthy. When women are viewed as animals, slaves, or minorities, on the other hand, their social status is defined as miserable. Women account for more than half of the population in Pakistan. In most parts of the world, women's social status is deplorable, especially in rural areas. They are handled as if they were animals or slaves. Extremist and prejudiced actors in Pakistan keep women socially and economically backward. They can be found in every corner of the world. In the name of man-made tradition, traditions, and values, they have placed such limits on women's social and economic mobility. As a result, women's labor force participation has never been closer to men. The statistics on work prospects for women are dismal. When contrasting women's and men's labor force participation rates, it's clear that women's contribution to the labor force is just 14% compared to 70% for men. Since the last few decades, the pattern has shifted drastically. Parents and family members have recognized that they would not be able to advance without the participation of women in socioeconomic areas.¹

Women's standing in Pakistani society varies since gender is intertwined with other forms of exclusion. The socioeconomic condition of women varies significantly between groups, territories, and the rural/urban split as a result of unequal socioeconomic development and the impact of colonial, capitalist, and tribal social formations on women's life. On the other side, women's position in regard to men is one of structural subjugation, determined by patriarchal factors that transcend social divisions, geographic boundaries, and the urban/rural divide. One of the fundamental ideas in Pakistani society is gender. "Patriarchal ideologies ingrained in regional norms and culture predetermine the social importance of gender. The idea of the sexual division of labor places men in productive positions as breadwinners in the public sphere and places women in reproductive duties as mothers and wives in the domestic sphere. Both the family and the government have underinvested in women as a result. The foundation for gender inequality and disparities in all areas of life is low investment in women's human capital, which is exacerbated by purdah (literally, "veiled") ideology, harmful social biases, and cultural practices; the myth of honor associated with women's sexuality; restrictions on women's mobility; and women's internalization of patriarchy."²

The issue of women's empowerment has many facets and is always evolving, with various meanings being used in various nations. Women's status typically refers to a woman's sense of self-development, her right to choose among various options and opportunities, the impact of social changes, and her power to manage her life both inside and outside the home. "This phenomenon is dependent on institutional change in a society, which is focused on educational opportunities, labor reforms, birth control, decision-making rights, capital access, and reproductive process decisions. The major indicators of women's status in Pakistan, according to the Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, are access to options, the capacity to make decisions, services and education, information, control, and authority over one's own

life. Women have a greater impact on economic development because they account for half of any population. Women can publicly display and reach their full potential as talented, diligent, and effective caretakers, moms, and sometimes more accountable family unit leaders than males.”³

Being employed directly contributes to women's empowerment because it boosts the labor force and, in the long term, strengthens the economy. Women who work have a greater socioeconomic impact than women who stay at home. According to data from several nations, women's access to income increases their ability to make economic and household decisions. By distributing domestic earning, which is controlled by women, through their personal incomes and cash transfers, women's access to income strengthens their ability to make economic and household decisions. According to research already conducted, mothers spend the majority of their income on the education, nourishment, and health of their children. According to the statistics, it is true that working women have a greater economic status than unemployed women. This will surely improve society in Pakistan. Working women frequently participate actively in reproductive and productive activities and make financial contributions to the family unit, gaining them respect and a place in the family. Women's empowerment increases by 10% for every one percent increase in income. The current state of affairs demonstrates how much better women's economical and political standing is in Pakistan's urban areas. Because they have access to education, the media, health facilities, freedom of mobility, less rigidity in societies about the wearing of the hijab, and greater work prospects, urban women are more empowered and confident to engage in industrial enterprises. The most recent innovations in technology, ideas, and consciousness may all be found in the media. By establishing a connection to the outside world and showcasing the ways in which women might become more motivated, it increases awareness. Women's empowerment is a multifaceted process that involves many different topics. Some of the factors that come together and create an environment in which women are as powerful and influential in society as men are stable job and career prospects, access to education and health-care facilities, freedom of expression, participation in household decision-making, the opportunity to fight for justice, and participation in national decisions and policy-making. In most families, women are the primary caretakers, and they spend more time and money on their families and children than do males. It has been found that a woman's empowerment reduces fertility, maternal mortality, neglected nutrition, and child mortality. The freedom to express one's opinions on social and political matters, access to health care, education for women, and equality in employment prospects for men are all factors that contribute to the empowerment of women in every society.⁴

Women Empowerment and Islam

One of the major topics that has been discussed throughout the world, not only in Muslim nations, is the empowerment of Muslim women. In actuality, however, Muslim women today are one of the social groups with the lowest levels of influence. About 1400 years ago, women in Islam began to enjoy a respectable position. The lack

of empowerment is caused by corruption and non-Islamic customs that have been imported from other civilizations, not by Islamic beliefs. Unfortunately for the Ummah, due to a lack of comprehension and accurate Islamic knowledge on the subject of women's empowerment, we are unable to empower a crucial human resource.

Islam is a religion of harmony, emphasizing harmony between the worldly and the spiritual, harmony between work and devotion, harmony between self-preservation and harmony with others. The Quran refers to this equilibrium as "ADL," and it is the fundamental foundation of the human creation. It is here that the body and the spirit are brought into harmony and balance, and it is also here that society and the environment's ecological health are maintained. As evidence of their equality and significance, Allah addresses both men and women equally throughout the holy Qur'an.

Islam treats individuals, families, society, and eventually all of humanity, ethically. Differences between the sexes are neither a benefit nor a disadvantage. As a result, when we discuss the situation of women in Islam, we shouldn't assume that there aren't any rules, restrictions, or obligations that apply specifically to men. One's Allah-consciousness and awareness are the only things that matter in the eyes of Allah, the Creator of humanity and the universe, and not wealth, status, intelligence, physical prowess, or beauty (Taqwa). However, due to gender inequality in Western and influenced cultures, there is an increasing need to clarify Islam's position on important issues. The protection of women's rights, such as the freedom of expression, the ability to choose their spouse, financial independence, and the right to play societal roles, is also emphasized in the Holy Quran and Hadis. An empowered woman is a woman who is confident in her, critical of her environment, and in control of decisions that affect her life.

Women Empowerment in Pakistan

Pakistan was designed to be regulated by Islamic law, but demographic figures indicate that women face prejudice there. In Pakistan, social class, economic progress, rural-urban dualism, and other factors could all be diverse and unequal. The dynamics underlying the women's demoralizing predicament in this situation include a challenging judicial system, religious advocacy, and exploitation of religion. For women from various social strata, the issues and conundrums have various explanations within this paradigm.⁵

Additionally, Pakistan is known for its patriarchal structure, which is one of the main reasons for the general undervaluation of women in Pakistani society. "Women are harmed because of male supremacy. In every manner, men are considered superior to women. They are unable to speak out against the violence committed by fathers, brothers, and husbands before marriage as well as by spouses and other male relatives after marriage."⁶

"Pakistani women are forced to live in seclusion and exclusion due to sociocultural norms that are founded on patriarchy. Their ability to benefit from economic development is ultimately undermined by this. Men's perceptions of women's roles are one of the key factors that prevent women in Pakistan from achieving freedom and

empowerment. Women are treated as such because males think of them as being weak and inferior on both a physical and mental level.⁷

Another cause for the extreme antagonism toward women in Pakistani society is the country's ingrained feudal system. The infamous proverb "Woman, Money, and Land are the Foundations of Every Evil" (Zan, Zar, and Zameen) expresses extreme contempt for women as well as her commoditization.⁸

It demonstrates that just like money and land, women are likewise considered as commodities. Sometimes, women are forced to deal with social ills under the guise of religion rather than as a matter of tradition. Gender violence is a phenomenon that is also seen in forced marriage, honour killing, child marriage, bride burning, acid attacks, etc.⁹

Pakistani politics underwent a tremendous transformation as a result of a significant movement throughout the 1980s brought about changes in Pakistani society. However, throughout the same decade, the military dictator of the time attacked women's rights by exploiting Islam, despite the efforts of various organizations to elevate the position of women (including in the legal, educational, and employment spheres as well as in terms of freedom of movement) (by announcing the Islamic slogan). Women's conditions in Pakistan's rural and urban areas have improved as a consequence of their advocacy for their rights, but women's sociocultural and economic position in Pakistan is still low as a result of the country's deeply ingrained patriarchal and feudal structures.¹⁰

In Pakistan, a developing country, women make up 50% of the population physiologically. Pakistan is a developing country that has a number of socioeconomic problems that block its path to prosperity, including poverty, illiteracy, inflation, unemployment, a balance of payments deficit, and a significant foreign debt burden. In 2013, the Pakistani government reported that the adult literacy rate was still 57 percent nationwide and 45 percent and 69 percent, respectively, for males and females. In the national assembly in 2002, men made up 79% of the membership while women made up 21%.

Education

Higher socioeconomic families frequently emphasize the value of education more strongly than lower socioeconomic families do, both inside the family and in the neighborhood. Education may be prioritized over food, shelter, and safety in less wealthy places. Youth audiences in America are particularly susceptible to a number of health and social issues, including as teen pregnancies, drug abuse, and obesity. Numerous problems with one's bodily and mental health, such as asthma, arthritis, cardiovascular disease, and schizophrenia have also been linked to low income and education. These issues could be brought on by the setting in which they work, or, in the case of disabilities or mental diseases, they might constitute the root cause of that person's social dilemma altogether.

Social Status

Social standing refers to how much value a person is seen to have in society. It specifically refers to the level of courtesy, honor and reverence that is typically shown to people, groups, and organizations within a community. Status is based on widely

held beliefs about who people in a society think has comparable more or less social value, or who they think is better in terms of ability or moral qualities, or who they think is better overall. Status is determined by a person's possession of characteristics that are viewed as superior or inferior by their culture (e.g. confident manner of speech or race). People employ status hierarchies to distribute wealth, leadership positions, and other forms of authority. By making the distribution of wealth and power unequal seem normal and just, these shared cultural ideas encourage social stratification. The existence of status hierarchies in human society seems to be ubiquitous, with those at the top of the ladder enjoying valuable advantages such greater health, social acceptance, wealth, power, and freedom.

Literature Review

The researcher read books and articles on the subject. He evaluated and included pertinent literature in this research, which increased its authenticity. A literature review lends credibility to a study.

¹¹on the basis of historical evidence of women's rights and liberalization, compared the freedom and rights of women in Athens and Sparta. In his studies, he claims “that these ancient beings may be distinguished based on how they treat their offspring. He asserts that while Athenians valued male kids more highly than female offspring, Spartans esteemed both genders of children equally. He draws attention to the scant historical evidence of female involvement in a variety of activities. However, it's possible that ancient women had thoughts just as valuable and potent as those of men, but were never given the opportunity to express them”.

¹²“The fact that a sizable portion of borrowers are women is encouraging for societal empowerment; however, research on women's financial performance has produced conflicting findings, demonstrating both positive and negative correlations between outreach to female borrowers and financial performance by microfinance institutions.”.

¹³“Women's empowerment encompasses the independence and power to control their own life both within and outside of the home, as well as the ability to influence how societal changes lead to a more opulent domestic and international socioeconomic system.”.

focuses more on gender equality than just women's rights. He believes that third-world guys are likewise helpless and require assistance in this area.¹⁴

¹⁵“Evaluated how policies and practices related to women's rights have changed and improved. Pakistan underwent a number of social and structural reforms from 1999 to 2008, which aided in bolstering the nation and enhancing its standing abroad. The actions and policy changes made regarding the empowerment of women and the eradication of gender inequity during the Parvez Musharraf administration are notable accomplishments. However, in order to generate stronger protection for women's rights in the nation and achieve long-term success, it is also crucial to recognize the value of women in society”.

¹⁶“Instead of a patriarchal society, gender equality requires a new social structure.

According to the so-called liberal feminism, key institutions like the law, the workplace, households, and education can be reformed to establish gender models in labor division and parity. In organizations that deal with personal property, cruelty to women first emerged.”

Three-Dimensional Women’s Empowerment Model

“provide a paradigm that argues that women's empowerment can take place at three separate but connected levels: the personal, relational, and societal levels. According to our analysis of prior studies, access to microfinance has a varied impact on each of the three facets of women's empowerment. To begin, we believe that the review demonstrates that access to microfinance services was connected with higher degrees of personal empowerment, such as enhanced personal control beliefs”.

“Higher degrees of relational empowerment were observed among female microloan borrowers in terms of social group memberships, such as more extensive social networks.”.

“On the level of intimate relationships, however, we discovered contradictory findings, such as increased and decreased decision-making power by female borrowers.”.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

General Objective

The study's broad purpose is to provide details on women empowerment the case study with reference to education and social status.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are

1. To discuss the impact of women empowerment on their socio-economic conditions.
2. To observe the challenges faced by working women in the society.
3. To observe the role of women empowerment in state benefit.
4. To discuss the proliferation of women empowerment in modern culture scenario.

Methodology

Since the focus of the research is to unearth about the empowerment of women with reference to their education and social status. Every research project has a distinct nature and aim. An exploratory study is conducted in a field where there is little information available; the current study is of this type in nature and seeks to explore insights and a theoretical framework in Pakistan, specifically in Multan, in order to formulate preliminary findings for a more precise and in-depth investigation hence the methodological approach is quantitative.

Sampling

The random selection of a small group of people or members from a larger population is known as random sampling. It gives every person or member of a population an equal and just chance of being picked. One of the easiest and most practical sample selection approaches is the basic random sampling method. My target population for random sampling will be females in Multan Cantonment. By using random sampling

technique, I have used more detailed and in-depth information about my research problems.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Table No 1: Frequency and percentage of Respondents by their Educational Qualification.

Q.3- What is your educational qualification?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	umulativePercent
Valid	Intermediate	11	5.5	5.5	5.5
	Bachelor	60	30.0	30.0	35.5
	Master	64	32.0	32.0	67.5
	MPhil & above	29	14.5	14.5	82.0
	Professional degree (Doctor, Engineer, Advocate)	36	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 1, responses provided by females about their educational qualification, responses exactly matched the researcher's findings locale i.e. Multan Cantt. In Multan Cantt the frequencies of the female's education in Intermediate is 11, Bachelors is 60, Masters is 64, MPhil and above is 29 and is Professional degree is 36.

Table No 2: Frequency and percentage of Respondents by their personal monthly income.

Q.8- What is your Personal Monthly Income?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	umulative Percent
Valid	Less than 20,000	72	36.0	36.0	36.0
	20,001 - 30,000	19	9.5	9.5	45.5
	30,001 - 40,000	21	10.5	10.5	56.0
	40,001 - 50,000	26	13.0	13.0	69.0
	Above 50,000	62	31.0	31.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 2, responses provided by females about their personal income, responses exactly matched the researcher's findings locale i.e., Multan Cantt. In Multan Cantt the frequency of personal income less than 20,000 is 72, 20,001 to 30,000 is 19, 30,001 to 40,000 is 21, 40,001 to 50,000 is 26 and above 50,000 is 62.

Cross Tabulation

4 What is your employment status? X 3- What is your educational qualification? Crosstabulation								
			3- What is your educational qualification?					
			Intermediate	Bachelor	Master	MPhil	Professional	Total
4- What is your employment status?	Employed	Count	5	25	8	22	36	96
		Expected Count	5.3	28.8	30.7	13.9	17.3	96.0
	Unemployed	Count	6	35	56	7	0	104
		Expected Count	5.7	31.2	33.3	15.1	18.7	104.0
Total		Count	11	60	64	29	36	200
		Expected Count	11.0	60.0	64.0	29.0	36.0	200.0

4- What is your employment status? * 10- If Yes, tell the total income of the family Crosstabulation								
			10- If Yes, tell the total income of the family					
			Less than 40,000	40,001 - 50,000	50,001 - 60,000	60,001 - 70,000	Above 70,000	Total
4- What is your employment status?	Employed	Count	4	14	10	27	41	96
		Expected Count	8.6	9.6	13.9	19.7	44.2	96.0
	Unemployed	Count	14	6	19	14	51	104
		Expected Count	9.4	10.4	15.1	21.3	47.8	104.0
Total		Count	18	20	29	41	92	200
		Expected Count	18.0	20.0	29.0	41.0	92.0	200.0

Conclusion

To research women's empowerment with a focus on feminist anthropology. The following are the conclusions: -

- i. It is common knowledge that education for women directly correlates with empowerment. This indicates that women with higher levels of education had greater economic and political clout than women with lower levels of education. It might possibly turn out to be true.
- ii. According to the findings of this research, females who are working have better social status as compared to females who are not working. Working women are more empowered than non-working women.

Findings Education

The current study, in relation to education five slabs of respondents were created. i.e. Intermediate, Bachelor, Master, MPhil & above, Professional degree (Doctor, Engineer, Advocate). The 5.5% respondents fell into the group of intermediate; the 30.0% were in the group of bachelors, the 32.0% were in the group of master, the 14.5% were in the group of MPhil and above, the 18.0% were in the group of professional degree.

Social Status

The current study, in relation to personal monthly income five slabs of respondents were created. i.e., Less than 20,000, 20,001-30,000, 30,001-40,000, 40,001-50,000, Above 50,000. The 36.0% respondents fell into the group of less than 20,000; the 9.5% were in the group of 20,001-30,000, the 10.5% were in the group of 30,001-40,000, the 13.0% were in the group of 40,001-50,000, the 31.0% were in the group of above 50,000.

Recommendations

- For aspiring researchers
Some suggestions are offered for the improvement of further studies on relevant themes based on the knowledge from this study.
- i. Future research on this subject ought to include Multan's other districts. The results of this investigation would have been of greater significance.
- ii. It is a general rule that results will be more accurate the larger the sample size. Therefore, larger samples should be used in future studies in this area so that the results are more representative of the area.

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