

RELATIONSHIPS OF EMPOWERED WOMEN WITH SOCIETY AND THE SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN GUJAR KHAN

Rashina Mehr, M.Phil. Scholar, PirMehr Ali Shah, Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi.

ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to evaluate the relationships of society with women who are empowered in spheres of politics, technology, economy, and many other spheres in society. Not only restricted to evaluating women's relation with society, but the title also signifies to investigate society's responsibility and role in the process of women empowerment. Mainly, five local areas were selected in Gujar Khan by using the multistage statistical sampling technique. The researcher opted descriptive approach as a methodology. It helped her to elaborate on the already existing literature (Secondary data) and analyze the self-encountered relevant experiences (Primary data) with Women empowerment in Gujar Khan. At the end of a research paper, the researcher tried to shed light on the main research issue of concern and concludes by highlighting the major challenges women face while being empowered.

KEYWORDS: Women Empowerment, Societal Responsibilities, Social Issues of Women, Socio-Economic Status, Challenges of Empowered Women

1. INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment has been in discussion for decades, and with the efforts of various government and non-governmental organizational status of the women has improved as a whole. At present women are participating in every field of life and contributing much to improving their socio-economic status. It is a common observation that women who are working outside their homes are facing certain challenges. The study also shed light on the social issues and changes associated with women's empowerment. It also focused on the people's cultural perception of the empowerment of women.

Empowerment has various meanings and dimensions, its meanings are different in a different contexts. One may possess one kind of empowerment while others have their contextual meaning. 'For Nai Kabeer empowerment is the expansion of people's choices about the strategic life planning in a condition that they may be previously denied to them. The choices can be made in terms of resources, agency and on the results of that the achievements' (Kabeer, 2001).

Hence the notion of empowerment has a different meaning with regards to its context of the application. In our society, we cannot blindly follow the western culture in women's empowerment because we have our own social and cultural norms and it varies from culture to culture. 'Empowerment of the women can be understood differently in three different levels such as local, national, and global. It is important to be aware of the interconnectedness of the three that gives a frame to understand the phenomenon with regards to different contexts' (Rai, Parpart, & Staudt, 2007). So as discussed above empowerment of women vary from local to national and alternatively from global.

Various debates are there for the sake of women's rights and empowerment this article focus on the feminist theories of different times. 'The feminist theories are started with the assumption that they should be based on real-life experiences of women as an indicator so that to analyze the status of women. This was based on Marxist epistemological approach so that to study the gender and women role with regards to their real-life experiences' (Eagleton, 2003).

Different feminist theories have been proposed in different time zones that reflect the need and requirements of women in that particular areas. Feminist anthropology was greatly involved in the process of the transition of women's status from ancient societies to the modern world. However, we can observe many drawbacks of feminist approaches. 'In the western feminist discourse, it does not specify the cultural ethos of empowerment. The western ethnocentric approach does not capture the gender relations in the non-western world' (Rehman, 2013).

1.2.Objective of the Research

- Role of Empowered women and the impact on society of Gujar Khan.

1.3. Research Question

What is the role of empowered women and how does it influence society?

1.4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Roy and Chatarjee (2018) compared others researchers' analyses and according to them, Bennett describes empowerment as "the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them." Social inclusion is defined as "the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to assets and development opportunities." Bennett notes that both of these definitions are intended to be operational, and describe processes rather than endpoints

Mandal (2013) stated that women in our society are constantly struggling to achieve their status. Mandal also supports this view in their research he highlights that 'Women all over the world are facing many hurdles to break the oppression, bandage and all type of ill practices within their families and societies. It is the need of the hour to bring the women to the door of power where they can formulate and implements policies for the sake of their survival and development.

Farooq (2015) revealed that women are participating in outdoor economic activities. Women's participation makes them capable to contribute in the different economic and non-economic decision processes in their domestic sphere. Their participation exerts different impacts on their daily life. 'According to a research women's job participation make them enable to participate in economic and even some non-economic decision in their domestic sphere however at the same time the characteristics of their job and socio-cultural background also influence their participation. The researcher in this study tries to analyze the current situation of women's level of empowerment when the situation all over the world is changed. But still, in our society their so many obstacles that women are facing in their way of getting the position of independence or power. Devi (2017) has illustrated that 'Women are still facing discrimination in getting job opportunities, in the economic and political sphere, in their social and domestic sphere, and in gaining control over the resources. That is why women are less educated and poorer as compared to men.

Paudel, Subedi, & Poudyal (2014) affirmed that leisure time activity is very much important for the health of individuals. But it seems much rare in developing countries. People are not much involved in physical activities. The physical activities in leisure time are less among females than men while the meantime of sitting per day is higher. Women are not much involved in leisure-time physical activities, there isa certain variable behind this fact that was addressed by given research.

Darji, Priyanka, & Belani (2016) had pointed out that women are the center of the social-cultural life of a society. They are playing various roles which may be defined by the particular culture in which they are living. So with changing of their position in the society there are also increase of responsibilities upon them. 'As they

are working in every field for income generation nowadays but their social and cultural role is not changing. This will exert pressure on women in managing their social, personal and professional fronts within a time'.

Biernat & Piatkowska(2017) has declared that women seem to be less involved in physical activities for better health instead they are more conscious about their physical appearance. It also observes that women's physical activity is also linked with their residential area and socioeconomic status. The leisure time activities of females are an inter-relating phenomenon with the responsibilities that they are bound to fulfill. The study conducted analyzed how everyday activities affect women's leisure times.

Yerkes, Roeters, & Baxteer (2020) explained that the gender-based division of labor in most developing countries affects women's leisure time activities. The country's characteristics of strong gender norms, low level of childcare by the husband or other family member, limited paternity leave, and lower political powers of women lead towards lower the women's leisure quality than men and sometimes inverse the relation. The study conducted analyzed the factors that influence empowered women's leisure time activities.

Deshmukh (2018) had stated that as the scenario of working the environment is changed within the past few decades it brings many changes in society within the gender roles. 'As working women go through the role change in the society due to social and economic demands, this exerts a pressure on the women to develop their career and while having they should maintain active participation in their personal life as well. The work pressure and household responsibilities of women create pressure on women both in personal and professional life by leaving less personal time for women'. Despite various changes, women are still suffering discrimination in their social and domestic sphere due to the increase of responsibilities.

Ram, Strohschein, & Gaur (2014) had revealed that Despite many developments in the context of women empowerment, discriminatory indicators are still existing. 'Female youth enjoy the less privileged than male youth in our society. Both males and females explain that gender discrimination exists in their homes as a son are given preference in education, freedom of mobility, and in household chores. It is the need of the hour to understand how socialization shapes the characteristics of individuals and it is connected to the mental health of both gender'

Oze (2018) was of the view that another measure for checking women's level of women's empowerment is the use of social media by women. 'The use of social media among females is high, females use social media platforms for seeking awareness and knowledge and connect with others. Women remain introverted regarding their personal life on social media and also avoid political posts on social media. It also seems that women with a high level of education are can handle social media more easily than women with a low level of education.

1.5.METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of this research is based on a descriptive approach. The research study was undertaken among the communities of some local regions of Gujar Khan. Mainly, five local areas were selected in Gujar Khan by using the multistage statistical sampling technique and then SRS. The researcher finalized the sample by taking assistance from the researcher's observation-based formulated categories reflecting the characteristic features of women empowerment in Gujar Khan. Descriptive research methodology helped her to elaborate on the already existing literature (Secondary data) and analyze the self-encountered relevant experiences (Primary data) with Women empowerment in Gujar Khan. A structured questionnaire was used as an essential tool of research. At the end of a research paper, the researcher tried to shed light on the main research issue of concern and recommends some policies to be formulated to overcome the societal issues propagating as a result of women empowerment phenomena.

1.6.RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher has used a structured questionnaire and while administering the tool of research, she interpreted the data and dug out the below-given information. The information has been refined and elaborated with the help of themes with relation to core variables or challenges of women in society:

1. Household Chores

In a patriarchal society, women are assigned the traditional role of managing household chores, working ladies who are involved in the formal work generating income for their families were also have to be filled their traditional roles. Working women who were living in the neutral family had all the responsibilities on their own. One of the women said that she gets up at 4 am the morning to make a cleaning of the home, prepare breakfast for her husband and children, get ready for their children for school and get ready for her job. This is so hectic routine for her.

Other respondents who have three children of school-going age also have similar situations. She said that going from job to home she used to buy chapattis for herself and her children because she don't have enough time to make lunch at home. Another respondent who was a lecturer was also living in a neutral family and had 2 children aged less than 4, were hired a made to manage household chores and also take care of children when she was in the workplace.

However, the situation with working ladies living with joint or extended family was quite different. Working women living in joint families usually were not found worried about managing household chores. The other family members like *Deewarani*, *Jathani*, and also *mother-in-law* manage household chores as she were on her job. One of the respondents was said that she only make cleaning in her room and managed her things just. She replied that as she is the only lady who was doing the job so her in-laws acknowledged her more than others.

2. Childcare and Studies

Taking care of children is another responsibility that is traditionally and socially assigned to the mothers. Working mothers were also had to fulfill their traditional and motherhood roles. For children care women who are despite living in nuclear families or within joint or extended. However, women who lived with joint families have an advantage that their in-laws take care of children while they were in the workplace. Three of the respondents said they prepared all of the things like dress, milk, food, pampers, etc. And left their children to their grandparents.

While women who lived in neutral families have some difficulties managing their job along with children's responsibilities. One of the respondents said that she started the job when their children were at school-going age not before it, because as a neutral family it was not possible for her to leave their children at home and as there were no facilities were available in the workplace. It was also observed that in most cases women's workplaces there are no facilities were available which was quite disgusting.

Another responsibility of parents is guiding studies to their children. Most of the respondents said that their husbands are much corporative with them for helping children in studies. And one respondent said that she and her husband don't have enough time so they sent their children to academies for studies along with schools and colleges.

Taking care of family members including spouse, parent's in-laws, children 's or other family members is also typically the responsibility of women of the family. Working women also take care of their elders in the family. However, women who were lived in the nuclear family were not facing this. One of the respondents who was lived in a joint family was replied that her mother-in-law was a patient of heart and she was taking her responsibility by herself. She used to take her to the doctor and regularly give her medicine.

3. Managing Job and Home Side by Side

It was the questions that the researcher was asked to the respondents that are they are comfortable managing their job and household responsibility. Seven respondents were said that it is tough but they can manage it by setting a proper routine. In this perspective women who were living with the joint family were more satisfied than with nuclear families.

4. Work Load and Work timing.

The workload in the workplace was another important factor that the researcher highlighted in his research. The workload was not an unusual word for working women. Most of the time they have to spend more time in the workplace for extra work. Five respondents who were a teacher at school said that most of the time during examinations they have to be there for extra 1-2 hours. Two respondents were policewomen who said that their duty timing varies on a weekly or monthly basis, so they have to be on duty all day whenever were require. While others were from the banking sector who have most of the time constant work timing although if there were any office work pending so they also have to be there, but it is very rare.

5. Means of Transportation

Women mobility is a great talk for checking the Level of women empowerment. The researcher also discussed it with respondents. Most of the cases there is no transport facility available to the females by their workplace. One of the respondents who was a lecturer at college said that a transport facility is available by the college but it's not available for their specific route. Most of the working women avoid public transport they used to take cabs on monthly basis it became much expensive for them but as working women don't take risk of getting late at the job and public transport were not safer for them. So used to avoid public transport most of the time. However, some women also replied that their family members like father or brother and if they are married so their husbands most of the time took the responsibility of pick and drop.

6. Harassment and Gender discrimination

Harassment and gender discrimination is the most debatable topic for checking the women's level of empowerment. One of the respondents said that she was harassed by their school peon as he took her random picture while he was walking in front of classrooms and put it on social media. Another res said that their class4 boy of school tentatively misplaces the attendance register or other important documents to their female staff. While other respondents replied that they don't ever face any kind of harassment in their workplace. Another important aspect was gender-based discrimination for these females were replied that they never faced discrimination in their workplace regarding gender-based. Now any hardworking employee can get his acknowledgment. The harassment during transportation was reported by almost every respondent. Working women said that people used to bullying and laughing if they watched any women without *Abaya* or *Chadar*.

7. Health Issues

Health issues women who are working were also the main point of discussion for researchers. Working women replied that they usually suffer from body pain due to the extra load of work. As they are doing the job and also managing household chores this tough routine makes them so tired that their body starts paining. One of the respondents said that at 8 pm her feet pain so much that she could not take a step more. Others also reported migraine, backbone pain, and lower body pain as the major health issues that they were facing.

8. Depression and Stress Management

Mental health was also discussed by the researcher with their respondents. The common issue that women were facing was stress. As working women were performing dual responsibilities so managing home and family along with job sometimes through them in the situation of stress? However, they also replied that they can cope with it by setting a proper work routine along with rest.

9. Control Over Own Income

Control over their salary is another important factor to check their level of empowerment. Most of the women were spending their salary upon their own choice. Some said that they brought household accessories by their own choice, some said that they spend money on their shopping and for children's education, some said that they are saving their money for making their own house in future. While one respondent was the breadwinner for their family so she spend most of her salary on household expenditure.

10. Education Attainment

It was observed that now women are more interested in getting higher education. The respondents were more motivated in getting higher education rather get married. Three respondents were doing their Master of Philosophy, 2 were doing M.ad and one was done with her master's and wishing to get higher education. All of the respondents were satisfied that as they are getting an education and it is not a big deal that they are not married at the age of 26.

11. Career Building

It was also observed by the researcher and also asked by the respondents about their future planning. All the respondents were replied that they are focusing on their education and career building because it is necessary. One of the respondents said that now men are also wanted to get married to women who should be more educated and doing some job. So, it is now common for educated women to get higher education and be more focused upon career no matter if they crossed the sophisticated marriage age of twenty or twenty-five years.

12. Decision Autonomy

Another much important triggering factor for this social change is the decision autonomy of the working empowered women. As educated women have more exposure to the world and work financially empowered women have control over their life. This leads to deciding marriage by the women. And for this woman because for various reasons denies any proposal. One of the respondents said that she should be married by her own choice, and she doesn't want to get married earlier. However other respondents said that they don't have decision autonomy regarding selecting a spouse. So this might not much effective on this social change.

13. Status Consciousness

Status consciousness is also an important factor in delaying the age of marriage among women. The researcher asked the respondents about their socio-economic status of them and questions about their expected spouse. Most of the respondents said that they wish to be married of their socio-economic class or from above. One of the respondents said that she did not enough conscious about socio-economic status rather she was interested in the entire personality of the men.

14. Spouse Idealization

Spouse idealization is thought to be so high among women. This factor is also reported in educated, working women. One of the respondents said that she wished her future husband should be tall, bossy, and good-looking. Others respondents also mentioned some of the qualities like being educated, officer, and landlord. This is observed by the researcher that women were lived fictional life where they imagine some of the unusual things for their spouses. This may result in rejecting some good proposals for women. This factor also leads to delayed marriages.

15. Breadwinner of Family

As researcher discussed triggering factors for delayed marriages among workingwomen. Another important factor was the socio-economic conditions of the women. One of the respondents said her father was passed away and she is the elder child of four siblings. She started her job right after the completion of her graduation. And also said that she is the only breadwinner of her family. So for this reason she was not going to get married until her siblings were enough grown up and became independent.

16. Dowry Demands

Another triggering factor behind the delay of marriages among women was also dowry demands by the groom side or that are practiced within the society. Researchers highlight that working women saved some of their money for their dowry as well. The respondents also said that as they are educated and working so they are saving money for their dowry as well. One of the respondents said that although society is changing, dowry is as demanded from both educated working women and non-working women. So researcher also observed that women from low socio-economic backgrounds were more worried about the dowry while women from high socio-economic backgrounds don't bother this one. However, one of the respondents were said she spend her money on her shopping and save money just for higher studies.

1.7.CONCLUSION

Women empowerment is a significant phenomenon to be discussed and the researcher has shed light on it and the after-effects. The after-effects of women's empowerment are illustrated by the researcher in the form of challenges the women encounter. Following conclusions have been drawn from it:

- Household chores are the biggest of all challenges that women face in domestic spheres.
- Working ladies who are involved in the formal work generating income for their families also had to fulfill their traditional roles.
- Working women living in joint families were not found much worried about managing household chores.
- Some married empowered women are less burdened as the other family members like Deewarani, Jathani, and mother-in-law manage household chores when they are on job.

- Empowered or common women has to confront a significant challenge that is rearing her child with all of the best methods.
- Working mothers have to fulfill their traditional and motherhood roles.
- Local women of Gujar Khan have also a core challenge in society while commuting for job purposes. Because it's a burden for their families also to take out time from their heavy schedules and provide pick and drop service to the working women of their family.
- Women are exploited in various ways in a society of Gujar Khan in the form of harassment in various ways and many other forms.
- Women's simultaneous involvement in the domestic and economic sphere in a parallel way develop health issues that are not good for having a sustained life.

REFERENCES

- Biernat, E., & Piątkowska, M. (2017). Leisure-time physical activity among employed and unemployed women in Poland. *Hong Kong Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 29, 47-54.
- Darji, M. (2016). The Challenges Faced by Indian Working Women to Balance Professional and Social Life in 21st Century. *Indian Journal of Technical Education, Special Issue for ICWSTCSC-2016*, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308747968>.
- Deshmukh, K. K. (2018). Work-life balance study focused on working women. *International Journal of Engineering Technologies and Management Research*, 5(5), 134-145.
- Eagleton, M. (2008). *A concise companion to feminist theory*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Kabeer, N. (2001). Resources, Agency, Achievement: Reflection on the measurement of women's empowerment. In B. Sevefjord, & B. Olsson, *Discussing women's empowerment_Theory and practice* (pp.18-21).
- Mandal, K. C. (2013, May). Concept and Types of Women Empowerment. In *International Forum of Teaching & Studies* (Vol. 9, No. 2).
- Maqsood, F., Ullah, S., & Farooq, F. (2015). Proxy measures of women's empowerment and use of contraceptives in south Asian countries: An analysis of seven sisters. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)*, 35(1), 1-10.

- Öze, N. (2018, April). Women and Social Networking Websites Usage Patterns in Small Societies. In *Proceedings of International Conference on Gender Research* (pp. 278-285).
- Paudel, S., Subedi, N., Bhandari, R., Bastola, R., Niroula, R., & Poudyal, A. K. (2014). Estimation of leisure-time physical activity and sedentary behavior among school adolescents in Nepal. *BMC public health*, 14(1), 1-10.
- Rahman, M. (2013). *Women's empowerment: Concept and beyond*.
- Rai, S. M., Parpart, J., & Staudt, K. (2007, May). (Re) defining Empowerment, Measuring Survival. In *A paper prepared for 'Workshop on Empowerment: Obstacle, Flaws, Achievements* (Vol. 3, No. 5).
- Ram, U., Strohschein, L., & Gaur, K. (2014). Gender socialization: Differences between male and female youth in India and associations with mental health. *International Journal of Population Research*, 2014.
- Rehman, M.A. (2013). Women's empowerment: Concepts and beyond. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, 9-13.
- Roy, C., Chatterjee, S., & Dutta Gupta, S. (2018). *Women empowerment index: Construction of a tool to measure rural women empowerment level in India*. Available at SSRN 3357543.
- Women and social networking website usage in small societies. *International Conference on Gender Research*, 12(13), 278-285.
- Yerkes, M. A., Roeters, A., & Baxter, J. (2020). Gender differences in the quality of leisure: A cross-national comparison. *Community, Work & Family*, 23(4), 367-384.