

ECONOMIC MOBILIZATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY IN VILLAGE KARIMABAD HUNZA

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Abstract: The present study focuses on the economic empowerment of working women by contributing in household economy by working both inside and outside their homes. The study was conducted in the village of Karimabad in district Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan. Data was collected from 100 respondents with the help of simple random sampling technique, after building a sampling frame of working women in the area with the help of key informants. The study utilized various data collection methods like socio economic census forms, case studies, participant observation, and key informant method. The study shows a significant yet unrecognized role of women in the economy, where they work both inside and outside their homes. Mostly the women working inside their homes engaged in agriculture, handicraft and vocational work, while women working outside the premises of their homes were involved in various educational, Community Based Organizations, NGOs and Public Organizations. Tabulated data shows that 63% were attached with miscellaneous professions categorized as others occupations like teachers, professors, clerks, lower division clerks, shopkeepers and restaurant owners. While, 25% worked in different Community Based Organizations, NGOs and Public Organizations and 12% were attached with agriculture, poultry farming, handicrafts and sewing clothes.

Key Words: Household economy, Women empowerment, Rural area

INTRODUCTION

The role of women is as important in education, tourism, health, fashion industry, agriculture as it is important in the management of their households and rearing of their children. The role becomes more diverse and complex, with geographical variability i.e. from rural to urban, as remote areas face tougher challenges due to restricted resources. If women do not work outside their homes, it is perceived that they do not need to be strong, healthy and do not need proper education (Duflo 2011). Recently however, with industrial development in the country; the situation is changing very quickly both in rural areas as well as in urban areas. Women have increasingly started participated in outdoor economic activities thereby not only making them economically empowered but socially empowered as well (Mohyuddin, et al. 2012). Women's economic empowerment is the single most important factor that can contribute to the equality between women and men. Rural women traditionally have played a vital role in a wide range of income-generating activities. The employment of women leads to improvement in family care, health, nutrition, and housing (Masika and Joeke 1996). Working women positively effect

the household economy by contributing to family income, employment, and poverty reduction in both rural and urban areas. Women employment had a positive effect on the children's education (Singwane and Gama 2012). Pakistani women work hard from dawn to dusk to improve their economic conditions however their role is seldom appreciated. Women's work, both paid and unpaid, may be the single most important poverty-reducing factor in developing countries (Heintz 2006). Even the women who are uneducated contribute to their economy mainly through agricultural work and rural production activities include harvesting, cow milking, goat farming, backyard poultry rearing, farming, garment and handicraft making. In Southern Asia, Western Asia, and Africa, only 20 percent of the women work at paid non-agricultural jobs while the women's rate of paid livelihood around the world, outside of horticulture increased up to 41 percent by 2008 (Kinnear 2011). Women and men often participate in economic generating activities but their contributions are sharply disproportionate as a result of gender clashing their occupations. 11 percent of the employed women in East Asia are employed as agriculturalists, 55 percent in South Asia, 70

percent of women in Southern Africa are employed in the service sector, while in Eastern, Middle, and Western Africa this number is 26 percent (Nations 2010).

The women either working or not, have to take complete care of household chores without pay. With the current norms in place, women are forced to deal with full-time jobs and family care at home too (Williams 2009). Economic empowerment puts women in a better social position, granting them the power to participate equally along men, in shaping the society. Furthermore it wins women a respectable status in the society proportionate to the economic burden carried. Pakistan is a country which is considered to have an unequal participation in the economy especially in the rural areas. However, studies have confirmed that role of women in agriculture is massive. They participate in almost every sphere of agriculture activities, in addition to her considerable household responsibilities (Brohi 2003). Selling animals and engaging in poultry farming helps women earn extra income which is approximately up to Rs.8780/-, which becomes a prominent source of contribution to household income.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in the village of Karimabad, District Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan. The population of the Karimabad is round about 7325 divided into four main tribes, *Deramiting, Brataling, Khurukuch, and Brong*. Simple random sampling technique was utilized for the selection of sample of 100 respondents, after building sampling frame with the help of key informants. The data was collected through various tools including interview guide, participant observation, and case study method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table.1: Distribution of Respondent with Regards to Involvement in Different Income Generating Activities

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Different organizations	25	25%
Farming and handicraft	12	12%
Others	63	63%
Total	100	100%

Table 1 indicates involvement of respondents with different income generating activities. The majority of the respondent's i.e. 63% were attached with miscellaneous professions categorized as others occupations like teachers, professors, clerks, lower division clerks, shopkeepers and restaurant owners. According to the tabulated data 25 percent of them

work in different Community Based Organizations, NGOs and Public Organizations, work for women welfare e.g. AKDN, AKCSP and KHDP and 12 percent were attached with agriculture, poultry farming, handicrafts and sewing clothes.

Case Study

SHAWAL BIBI was a 50 years old lady who was divorced when her daughter was 12 years old. She lived with her mother and two abnormal brothers. Unfortunately, after some time her mother died too and she was forced to become the sole bread earner and care taker both her brothers and daughter. However, lack of education becomes a serious hurdle in the path of finding a good job. Her relatives were helpful still it was difficult for her to make the two ends meet. Gradually she started learning making jewelry bags with KHDP (Karakorum handicraft development program). She was quiet gifted and made beautiful bags, bracelets and necklaces. Even though she still does not have enough money to send her daughter to school still she is now able to provide the family with two proper meals. Apart from the jewelry making she has started selling fruits and vegetables in local market and is hopeful about the future of her daughter.

Table.2: Distribution of Respondent with Regards to Spending their Earnings

Spending earnings	Frequency	Percentage
Domestic	59	59%
Children education	34	34%
Personal needs	7	7%
Total	100	100%

Table 2 shows that women spend the major portion of their earning i.e. 59 % on domestic expenditures, 34 % earning are spent on children education and the rest of 7 % of the earning is utilized for their personal needs.

Case Study

Asyia bano is a 42 year old married woman with 3 sons. Before she got married she was not doing any job however after marriage she recognized that her husband's income does not match the needs of family. She was only metric pass and thus working at some organization or school was impossible. She started taking beautician classes from her sister in law and now owns her own beauty parlor and training center at her own place. In the beginning she shared that it was extremely difficult to manage both home and business, but with time she learned to work the two things together. She also expanded her business by opening male and female clothes shop and hired her own nieces. Her husband now helps her by brining stock from various cities and is

quiet supportive. The people in the community also appreciate her work and courage.

Table. No.3: Distribution of Respondents with Regards to Working Hours.

Job or Work Timing	Frequency	Percentage
Morning to Afternoon	62	62%
Morning to Evening	31	31%
Afternoon to Evening	7	7%
Total	100	100%

Table 3 gives the details of the timing of the work. For females in Hunza, working hours and timing is of significant importance as working during late hours is considered a taboo in their society. Moreover, since looking after the family especially their children is specifically a woman's job thus working hours critically decide if they will be allowed to work or not. A large number of them i.e. 59 % are working between morning and afternoon which was considered the best timing for working women. About 31 % worked from morning till evening which was considered a bit too much work for women in a single day. While only 7 percent of them worked from afternoon to evening.

Table .4: Distribution of Respondents with Regards Status Elevation

Importance in family	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	91	91%
No	4	4%
To some extent	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Table 4 reveals the level of elevation in the social status of a working woman. About 91 percent of the women felt that they were considered more important as compared to those who are not working. Whereas 4 percent felt that they were treated no different from those who were not working, and 5 percent felt, that they are treated somewhat important than none working ladies. It clearly reveals that by working and earning a woman gets empowered and receives a better social status than the non-working lot.

CONCLUSION

Women of Karimabad are contributing greatly to the income of their households. Mostly women are literate but not well educated. Irrespective to the literacy status of women, they are employed through different channels. Women are running their own social enterprises, businesses and agriculture farms. Most of working women, who

are self-employed have well organized businesses and are making the best of the situation, helping in economic development of their families and area. Some young women who are well educated work with educational institutions, Community Based Organizations, NGOs and Public Organizations. The main reason that a large percentage of women are engaged with economic activities is their current uncertain financial status and issues. They are determined to contribute in the domestic expenses and elevate their status. Most of the women who are working spend their entire income on the education of their children without any personal priorities. Moreover, women of rural areas are contributing in the socio-economic development despite of the limited opportunities and scarce resources available in their surroundings. If better opportunities and resources would be made available, then these women can contribute more efficiently. For the hard services that they are providing to the area and their families, it is necessary to provide their rights, and respect along with an environment which would help them to enjoy their life.

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