

Socio-economic Determinants of Women Empowerment: A Case Study of Cholistan Desert, Pakistan

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Abstract: The study is concerned to predict the factor which affect household economic decision making. The study finds out the factors which can help us to empower the women in household decision making. The Data is taken through the questionnaires and sample size is one hundred fifty two collected by household survey from the area of check no 8BC of Cholistan district Bahawalpur (August 2014). The study concerned with the primary data. To measure the impact of independent variables on women empowerment stepwise linear regression Model is used. The independent variable used in this study are Income of head, total family member (female), Working status, kind work done by wife, kind of business done by wife, education of wife , education of husband, health of male child, health of female child, Assets, Livestock, Loan. In the twelve steps of linear regression models variable are subtracted in each steps and in the final step kind of work done by wife, education of husband and assets owned by women have positive effects on women empowerment. All these variables have greater impact on women empowerment and statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$).

Keywords: Decision-making, Assets, loan, Work specifications

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The Universal Declaration of Human Right clearly asserts that everyone (i.e. both men and women) has got the right to take part in the Government of his or her country. It is further stated that women should be empowered socially, politically and economically for the development in all walks of life. The above mentioned statement conspicuously explains that no nation can afford to ignore the role of women if desires progress.

Pakistan is a country having almost 50 % of the female population. This thing clearly shows that Pakistani nation should give same importance to women as to men in order to benefit from this large proportion of population. In Pakistan women labor force participation rate is less (19.1 %) as compared to men (70.1%) (GOP, 2013-2014). This report ranks Pakistan as second lowest country of the world (World Economic Forum, 2009). In Pakistan, to deprive the daughters of inheritance in favor of sons is a common practice (Zafar, 1993). Females in Pakistan do not take decisions about their own life. Women have half functional unit in the population. Rural women have the lower empowerment status and power than men. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1994 explains empowerment as a process which divided power from powerful to the powerless. Rowlands uses the term 'internalized oppression' for this. They have less opportunities and less choice in making decisions of their lives. There are many reasons for disempowerment of women in under developed countries. Poverty is the major reason of disempowerment. Reducing poverty through farming communities is under investigation among development circles of the world. They should have access to political structure and decision-making and to the economic and political spheres as well. The United Nations fact sheet on the "Feminization of poverty" highlights that "Empowering women is an important factor in releasing the millions of people who are trapped in the

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ferocious cycle of poverty and hunger. By providing women with access to economic and educational chances as well as the autonomy, will lead them towards poverty eradication. Agriculture is a sector by which the natural resources can be

utilized properly. It becomes compulsory to empowerment of the poor as the crucial requirement for a sustainable solution to poverty. Working women participate to national income of the country and maintain a sustainable livelihood for the families, children's throughout the world. . Microfinance plays an important role in improving women decision making through their participation in economic activities. The condition of women particularly in the third world

countries and the under developed countries do not seem to be very encouraging. They have less opportunities and less choice in making decisions of their lives. Enhancing the participation of women in normal development would mean given that greater chance and convenience for them to make decisions, to manage their own resources and to be self-conditional. At the national level seventeen percent seats have been held in reserve for women in the constituent assembly. Women empowerment and their relationship in society intertwines with gender equality, class, race, ethnicity, age, culture and history. Power is known as with equity and equality for women and men in access to resources, participation in decision-making and control over circulation of resources and benefits. A basis of gender equality is women's equal contribution in decision-making. Combined participation is also one of the critical aspects of women empowerment. Participation in decision-making is combined with conscientization - the process of raising awareness among women about gender discrimination and the resulting domination it creates for women as a social group. Through this process, women collectively analyze different aspects of gender inequality that they face.

Cholistan which is a district of Bahawalpur needs considerable attention because of having a large number of women in that area. The women of this area are intelligent and hardworking but they are waiting for the easy access to education and jobs. They want equality in decision making, health facilities, division of assets etc. Women of this area really need attention regarding to their empowerment status. The sample of our study size is collected from Cholistan desert.

Cholistan is one of main deserts covering an area of about 2.6 million hector, constituting the southern part of Bahawalpur Division. It is traced between latitudes 27°42 and 29° North and longitudes 60°57 east. The size of desert is about 480km and breadth is from 32 to 192 km. Cholistan is the part of Great Indian Deserts and one of the bigger deserts of Pakistan. The whole area of Cholistan desert is 10,399 square mile (2,693,328hc). Small Cholistan spread north east from Hakara River to the end along the bank of Sutluj River. This part of Cholistan is dry apart from the presence of intersecting perennial water of Sutluj and Beas rivers. The Greater Cholistan is seriously grazed by pastoralists' animals. It is a sandy desert categorized by large, often migrating, sand dunes and interdunal hollows, ridges and depressions. Land is suitable for the use of only grazing. Although, the rural culture and an extended family system, the rural of Greater Cholistan are inextricably related with the inhabitants of Lesser Cholistan. Cholistan Desert also nearby known as Rohi sprawls thirty kilometers from Bahawalpur, covers an area of 16,000 km². It connects the Thar Desert extending over to Sindh and into India. In Bahawalpur the largest area of Cholistan is present in Bahawalpur which is 40, 28,217 acres. The high temperature ranges in Cholistan from 6 to 50°C. The length of Cholistan is 480 kilo meter and width ranges from 32 to 192 kilo meter. Humanoid population of Cholistan is 1, 55,000 where as the animals population is 13,18,000.

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Sado et.al (2014) explained in their article, "The influence of women's empowerment on maternal health care utilization: Evidence from Albania. The study focused was on the improving the regional disparities, improving the health status, and investigate the influence of women's empowerment within the household on antenatal and postnatal care utilization. The result based on primary data. The data was collected from the 2008-09 Albania Demographic and Health Survey. Upadhyay et.al (2014) explained in their article, "Women's empowerment and fertility: A review of the literature". The study focused was empowering the women through decision making in their owned life of household. The primary data was used in this article. The data was collected from DHS or World Fertility Surveys. Alkire et.al (2013) explained in their article, "The women's empowerment in Agriculture index". The study focused was women empower in agriculture field and increase their income. The result was based on primary data of household survey September to November 2011. Khan (2013) explained in his article, "women's empowerment through poverty alleviation". The study focused to develop the gender equality and women empowerment. The result based on secondary data of Pakistan. The sources of data were united nation development program 1998. Jabeen and jabeen (2013) explained in their article "women empowerment and socio-economic development. The study focused was the development of women in Pakistan, especially in urban area of Pakistan. Duflo (2012) was explained in his article . The study focused that inequality between man and women in the other direction, empowering women may benefit development. The secondary data was used in this article. The source of data was World Bank and public report on basic education, business process outsourcing centers world development report 2012. Khan and Bibi (2011) explained in their article "women socio- Economic empowerment through participatory approach '. The study focused was the effects of Government development project on social and economic women

empowerment. The result based on pooled data of Nasirabad area of Baluchistan. The sources of data were World Bank, economy survey of 1999-2003. Khan and Noreen (2011) explained in their article, "Microfinance and women empowerment , A case study of district Bahawalpur". The study focused on the empowerment of women and how they help to develop the country. The study based on primary data of district Bahawalpur. Khan et al. (2010) explained in their article "Determinants of women empowerment". The study focused was low status of women compared to men in developing countries.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Women Empowerment (WE) is a social network focused on providing events and communication to inspire women's ambitions through the power of Collaboration, Engagement and Growth. After 1980, women empowerment has got most attention from every forum and organization. Through this study, an attempt is made to determine the social and economic factors of women empowerment.

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

Is there any link between socio-economic statuses of household head with women empowerment?

4. OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the factors of women's empowerment.
2. How decision making effect on women empowerment.
3. How education effect on women empowerment.

5. DATA & METHODOLOGY

For the investigation of socio-economic determinants of women empowerment, the methodology consisted of following steps. For the study the qualitative data and quantitative data. Primary data is collected with the support of questionnaire by household survey. In questionnaire, different questions are asked from the respondent and the answers are recorded by the interviewer. We used this method because it is the most suitable method to get information as by visiting respondents. It is possible to have the appropriate knowledge about the determinants of women empowerment.

Statistical Methodologies:

All the analysis was carried out by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 21.

5.1 Factor analysis:

Factor analysis is a useful tool for investigating variable relationships for difficult concepts such as socioeconomic status, dietary patterns, or psychological scales. It allows researchers to investigate concepts that are not easily measured directly by collapsing a large number of variables into a few interpretable underlying factors. In factor analysis, there are the same numbers of factors as there are variables. Each factor detentions a certain amount of the overall alteration in the observed variables, and the factors are always listed in order to know how much difference they explain.

Formula:

Sum of (factor loading (Y_i) * value (Y_i))

Table 2: socio-economic indicators of women empowerment

	Decision of earning	0= someone other 1= husband 2= husband and wife both 4= wife
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Economic decision	Decision of spending money	0= someone other 1= husband 2= husband and wife both 4= wife
Education decision	Decision of children education	0= someone other 1= husband 2= husband and wife both 4= wife
Health decision	Decision of Family planning	0= someone other 1= husband 2= husband and wife both 4= wife
	Decision of Baby delivery	0= someone other 1= husband 2= husband and wife both 4= wife
Political decision	Decision of voting	0= someone other 1= husband 2= husband and wife both 4= wife

5.2 Automatic linear model

Automatic linear modeling is used to check the consistency and reliability of variables. This technique uses dichotomous variable, multiple category variables, and ordinal or scale variable. It is among one of the best techniques that are used to predict the values on single scaled outcome variable.

The good thing about this technique is that categorical variable with several categories can be used in this technique and it will break that variable in a way that makes best sense for the given data. So variables having more than two categories can be used in Automatic Linear Modeling as they are, and there is no need to convert them into dichotomous ones.

5.3 Backward stepwise selection

The method of model selected is backward stepwise selection. The model of this selection method starts with no variable. Predictors are added stepwise in this model and once a variable added is never removed.

The backward elimination method is given :

Equation:

Linear model is given as

$$y = \alpha + \beta x$$

Where

y = explained variable

α = y intercept β = regression coefficient

x = explanatory variable

In this study women empowerment index is used as the target variable, whereas predictors are age of wife, age of household head, income of head, female family members, working status, kind of job done by wife, type of business done by wife, education of wife of household head, education of household head, health of male child, healthy female child, assets, live stocks and loan.

To examine the effect of target variable on the above given predictors the following model is used

$$y = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \beta_5 x_5 + \beta_6 x_6 + \beta_7 x_7 + \beta_8 x_8 + \beta_9 x_9 + \beta_{10} x_{10} + \beta_{11} x_{11} + \beta_{12} x_{12} + \beta_{13} x_{13} + \beta_{14} x_{14}$$

(equation 1)

Where α is y intercept which represents the average value of target variable, when X is zero and β 's are the slope of regression line.

5.4 Dependent Variable

Y= Women empowerment Index

5.5 Independent Variables

X1= Age

X2= Income of Husband

X3= Total Family Members

X4= working status of women

X5= type of work done by wife

X6= type of business

X7= Education of Wife

X8= Education of Husband

X9= Health of male child

X10= health of female child

X11= Assets owned by wife

X12= Livestock owned by wife

X13= Loan

5.6 Construct Validity and Reliability of Instrument

To ensure the scales used in the study are both valid and reliable, factor analysis and reliability analysis were conducted before testing the hypotheses. The aim of factor analysis is described as “the orderly simplification of a larger number of inter-correlated measures to a few representative constructs on factors”. The results of the factor analysis among the independent variables are shown in Table 1 that shows 35 questions were remained in the instruments to reflect the six dependent variables: decision about job, decision about delivery, decision about children education, decision about family planning, decision about spend money, and decision about vote.

Table 4: Result of Factor Analysis of dependent Variables

DEPENDENT VARIABLES	Initial	Extraction
who take decision about earning?	1.000	.277
who makes decision for the delivery at home/hospital?	1.000	.462
who makes decision about children education?	1.000	.671
who takes decision about family planning?	1.000	.666
who decide how to spend money?	1.000	.863
who take decision for voting?	1.000	.542

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

To test the internal reliability of the scales, factor analysis was designed. The tests demonstrated that the measures of decision about earning, decision about delivery, decision about children education, decision about family planning, decision about how to spend money, and decision about vote. Factor analysis designed for variables dec, dfp, mbd, dcedu, dv and smny. Then extraction value was multiplied by coded scale values in SPSS. Then converted spss file into excel sheet and replaces all by their gained coded value and sum all for dependent variable (career skill)

The method of model selected is backward elimination, which involves starting with all variables in the model, testing the deletion of each variable using a chosen model comparison criterion, deleting the variable (if any) that improves the model the most by being deleted, and repeating this process until no further improvement is possible.

Table: 5Result of stepwise liner regression model

(Constant)		7.504	.000
kind of work done by wife	.173	2.269	.025**
education of husband	.275	3.591	.000*
Assets	.149	1.949	.050**

** 5% level of significance

*1% level of Significance

The value of kind of work done by wife intended to increase to 0.173 units. P-value shows that there is relationship between kind of work done by wife and women empowerment index as it is statistically significant.

The value of education of husband intended to increase to 0.275 units. P-value shows that there is relationship between education of husband and women empowerment index as it is statistically significant.

The value of assets intended to increase to .149 units. P-value shows that there is relationship between assets and women empowerment index as it is also statistically significant.

6. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In qualitative analysis average and percentage have been calculated.

Table 6: Frequency table of decision about *earning*:

Who take decision?	Frequency	percentage	Cumulative percent
Someone other	4	2.6	2.6
Husband alone	104	68.4	71.1
Husband and wife both	2	15.	86.8
Wife	20	13.2	100.0
Total	152	100	

Source: Survey

Explanation

The graph shows that 2.6% decisions about earning are taken by someone(else) other, 68.4% (a very large amount) decisions about earning are taken only by husband , 15.8% decisions about earning are taken by both husband and wife and only 13.2% decisions about earning are taken by wife.

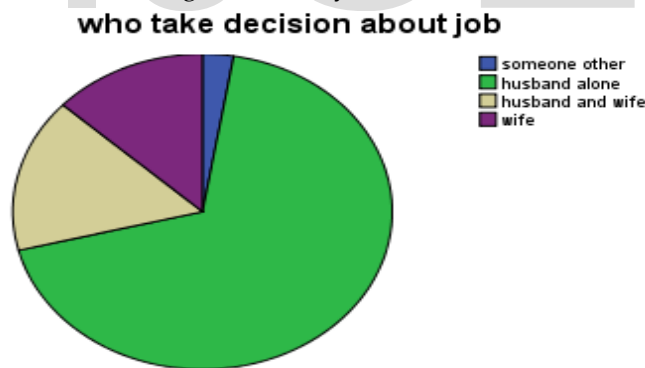


Table 7: Frequency table of decision about children education

Who take decision	Frequency	percentage	Cumulative percent
Someone other	9	5.9	5.9

Husband	75	49.3	55.3
Husband and wife	58	38.2	93.4
Wife	10	6.6	100
Total	152	100.0	

Source: Survey

Explanation

The graph shows that 5.9% decisions about children education are taken by someone other else, 49.3% decision about children education are taken by husband only, 38.2% decision about children educations are taken by both (husband and wife) and only 6.6% decisions about children education are taken by wife.

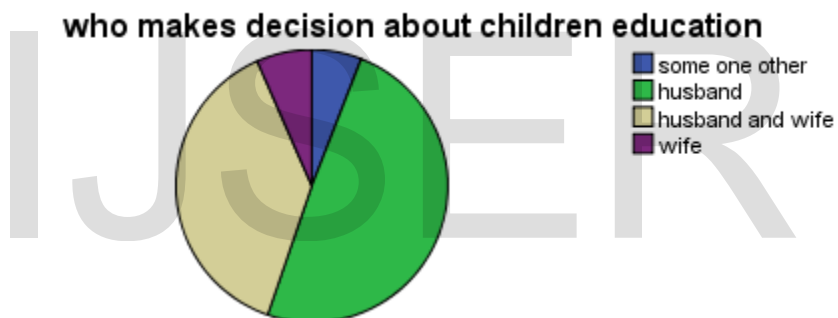


Table 8: Frequency table of decision about baby delivery at home and hospital:

How take decision?	Frequency	percent	Cumulative percent
Someone other	18	11.8	11.8
Husband	42	27.6	39.5
Husband and wife	48	31.6	71.1

Wife	44	28.9	100.0
Total	152	100.0	

How decision? take	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Someone other	45	29.6	29.6
Husband	61	40.1	69.7
Husband and wife	30	19.7	89.5

Source: Survey

Explanation

The graph shows that 11.8% decisions about baby delivery at home and hospital are taken by someone other else, 27.6% decisions about baby delivery at home and hospital take by husband, 31.6% decisions are taken by both husband and wife and 28.9% decision about baby delivery at home and hospital are taken by wife.

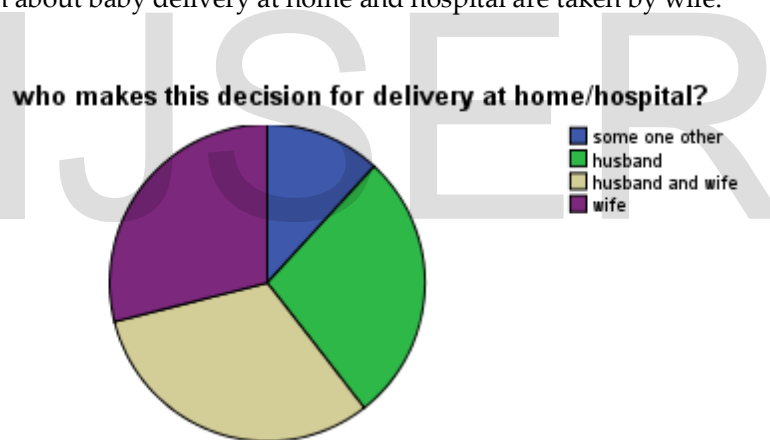


Table 9: Frequency table of decision about spending money

Wife	16	10.5	100.0
Total	152	100.0	

Source: Survey

Explanation

The graph shows that 29.6% decision about how to spend money take by someone other else, 40.1% decision about how to spend money take by only husband , 19.7% decision about how to spend money take by both (husband and wife) and 10.5% decision how to spend money take by wife.

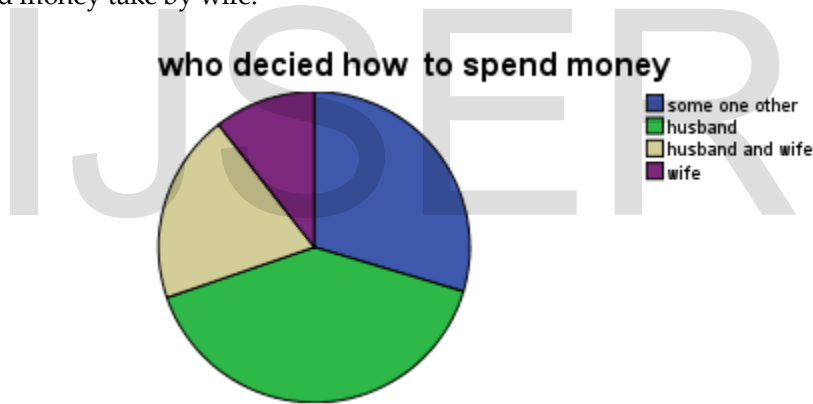


Table 10: Frequency table of decision about voting:

How take decision?	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Someone other	58	38.2	38.2
Husband	60	39.5	77.6
Husband and wife	26	17.1	94.7

	8	5.3	100
Wife			
Total	152	100.0	

Source: Survey

Explanation

The graph shows that 29.6% decision about how to spend money are taken by someone other else, 40.1% by husband only ; 19.7% decisions about how to spend money take by both husband and wife and only 10.5% decisions how to spend money are taken by wife.

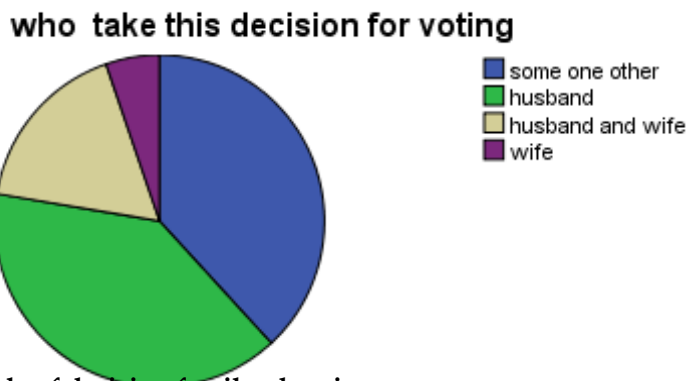


Table 11: Frequency table of decision family planning

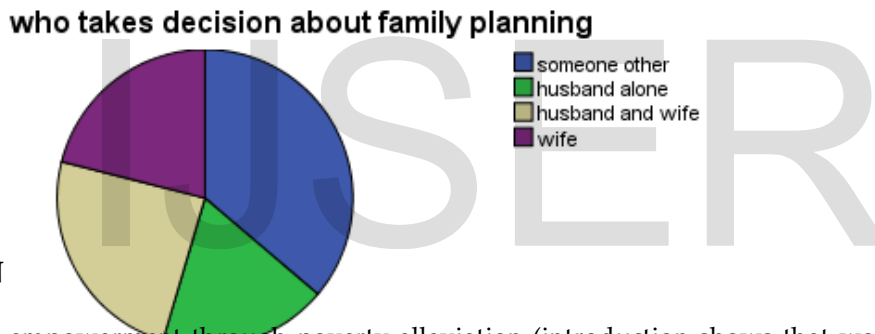
How take decision?	Frequency	percent	Cumulative percent
Someone other	55	36.2	36.2
Husband	28	18.4	54.6

Husband and wife	37	24.3	78.9
Wife	32	21.1	100
Total	152	100.0	

Source: Survey

Explanation

The graph conspicuously shows that 36.2% decisions about family planning are take by someone other else; 18.4% decision about family planning are taken by husband only , 24.3% by both husband and wife and 21.1% decisions by wife



7. CONCLUSION

The idea of women empowerment through poverty alleviation (introduction shows that women can be empowered by education) of women in the prevalent socioeconomic, health and decision making conditions of women in Pakistan sounds complex. Although helping poor women particularly in rural areas of cholistan is always welcomed, it does not seem to be a long term solution to the issue. The lack of government’s will and absence of basic infrastructure necessary to cope the problem have paved way for to solve the problems and empower the women. Women’s empowerment and economic development are closely interrelated. While development itself will bring about women’s empowerment, empowering women will bring about changes in decision making, which will have a direct impact on development. Contrary to what is claimed by some of the more optimistic policy makers, it is, however, not clear that a one-time impulsion of women’s rights will spark a virtuous circle, with women empowerment and development are mutually reinforcing each other and women eventually being equal partners in richer societies. On the one hand, economic development alone is insufficient to ensure significant progress in important dimensions of women’s empowerment, in particular, significant progress in decision-making ability in the face of pervasive stereotypes against women’s ability. On the other hand, women’s empowerment leads to improvement in some aspects of children’s welfare (health and nutrition, in particular), but at the expense of some others(education).This suggests that neither economic development nor women’s empowerment is the magic bullet it is sometimes made out to be. In order to bring about equity between men and women, in my view very desirable goal in and of itself, it will be necessary to continue to take policy actions that favor women at the expense of men, and it may be necessary to continue doing so for a very long time.

7.1Recommendation

- Mostly women are uneducated; government should provide facilities to increase their education which will in turn lead to women empowerment.
- Women of Cholistan are facing many healthcare problems. Government should provide them health facilities.

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