



Role of Women in the Economic Development of Pakistan: Theoretical Insight

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ABSTRACT

It is an undeniable fact that women have marched alongside men in every sphere of life for the enrichment, development and progress of the human civilization. Similarly, their vital contribution has been realized in every walk of life, from the bond of family to the collective notion of society and within this societal role their valuable emancipation in economy is commendable. Today, the history has also witnessed and acknowledged women's participation in all the related fields. Accordingly, this study is focusing the role of women particularly in the economic development of Pakistan. Qualitative analysis techniques are used in finding the purposed objectives of this research. Reference from past researches are taken in support of the given idea and building the final analysis. The results show that women can play a proactive role in the economic development of any country if they get enough support in the respective fields and the government will also provide some beneficial policies in this regard. The study also concludes that by giving due share, providing opportunities and respecting the rights of women throughout their lifetime, women are capable to do marvelous in all fields of life as the society and economy expect from a productive member of a society.



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1. Introduction

"No nation can rise the height of glory unless their women are side by side with them...It is crime against humanity that our women are shut up with in four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live" (Muhammad Ali Jinnah, 1944). The most desirous and pursued objective by every country is its economic development, which is characterized as a cycle which brings about a sustained increase in per capita yield. A nation struggling for development should make full and efficient use of factors of production for preferred outcomes. In this process factors like machinery, raw material is indubitable significant, but the role played by human resource cannot be ignored and

is one of the vital element. In fact, optimum level of production can be achieved only when human resources are fully utilized in the developing countries, which means that both gender should participate equivalent in the economic activities of the country (Singh, 1987).

In this world whether it is developed or emergent nations, women development is pivotal in development process of the nation. International Monetary Fund (2013) expressed that application of skills of women on equivalent premises on the men will result in increased productivity as women performed better than men at administrative level in their jobs furthermore increase efficiency through the ability of decision making. This proves that women play a significant role in expanding business enterprises. As well as women play an important role in generating the youth of the nation as they grow them and prepare them for the future of the nation that leads to fortune, productivity and development (Mustafa, Khan, & Zafar, 2016).

It is evident that women's empowerment is an intricate and multifaceted topic and it varies from society to society. Women empowerment and development continues in parallel as women empowerment leads to development and also development leads to reduce inequality gap. Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan (2000) specifies that admittance to alternatives, ability to make decisions, resources and education, knowledge, right to rule over own life are the principle makers of women's status in Pakistan. Women have a significant part in economic growth and development as they are around half of the population as they perform their role which leads to economic prosperity (Ashraf & Ali, 2018).

Inequity between genders are partially rational according to human capital, but this cannot illumine the difference in wage gap between various cases, both genders are equal, but women are paid less than men (Levin-Epstein, 2003). Since Pakistan is an agricultural country, so to increase the income of the families, women also work with their men, this indicates that women are economically active yet not independent economically (Alvi, Hanif, Feryal, Waraich, & Mortaza, 2012). Women in urban areas also constitute in labor force but more in rural areas even more than men. In agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing women participation is more and dependent on them. Statistics shows that 73% of women work in this field while only 33% men work in this field (Mustafa et al., 2016). One of the significant component of economic growth is education, without investment in education no nation can lead to economic growth. A valuable amount of investment is needed in human capital to attain economic development. Education gives knowledge about themselves and also their surroundings. Standard of living is improved and there are also social benefits to it. It plays vital role in acquiring progress in economic and social sectors. Ozturk (2008) Same case is with Pakistan, if Pakistan wanted economic growth, education is important for all the genders.

In Pakistan, 49 percent of population is of women, but government does not give much attention to this part. There are numerous researches that concluded a positive relation between GDP growth and higher education of female in the long run (Zahra, Yasin, Sultana, Haider, & Khatoon, 2021). But on the other side women are also considered as denominator in third world countries because of economic crisis, patriarchal society and colonial power (Momsen, 2008). The role of women is moving in economic life due to many drivers but still discrimination exists, and contribution is restricted. There should be more focus on training of women in beginning of their work life and keep a positive attitude towards women in labor force (Johnstone, 1968).

2. Women Empowerment and Economic Development

Both women's empowerment as well as economic development is interconnected with each other and lonely economic development can easily reduce the gender disparity in the society and can play a significant role. In the same direction, women's empowerment can help economic

development. Is it possible that merely pressing one of these two levers will start a virtuous cycle? A number of studies examine that the data on both sides of the empowerment and development linkage and propose that interconnections are likely too low to be self-reliant and that achieving gender equality may need a continuous policy commitment to equality (Duflo, 2012).

Women's engagement is also found in the socioeconomic development in Pakistan's agricultural regions. In the perspective of women's socioeconomic development in Pakistan, development strategies and programs, particularly in urban areas, tend not to consider women as fundamental to the economic development process. Gender-based violence is deeply rooted in Pakistani culture, regardless of language or ethnicity, according to the socio-cultural landscape. Women are not given the positions, privileges, or respect they deserve. We have seen many examples by looking at the current situation, which is severely deficient in social and financial support systems, as well as poor law enforcement regarding women rights. We must put some focus on the idea of legal security, the patriarchal structure of society, socio-traditional customs, and gender discrimination in our society, as they are all important problems that must be addressed as a multidimensional problem (Alvi et al., 2012).

Women's empowerment has snatched a lot of attention in other developing nations also. But the objective of this study is to discover something about the role of women in economic development in Pakistan. A number of other studies were also conducted previously, where the findings revealed that the attainment of education, women's economic involvement, and better economic opportunity are helping to improve the conditions of women's empowerment. Those women holding a bank account have a highly significant positive impact on women empowerment. This improves a woman's power by enhancing the economic opportunities accessible to women. These are some determinants that may be targeted to expand and strengthen women's position in our society (Bushra & Wajaha, 2015).

Woman empowerment is key to development of economy. It has various shapes which include economic, family, social, legal etc. In Pakistan a lot of policies are related to women in the field of work or women rights but on the other side women are facing biasness or economic dependency. There are many cultural and societal factors affecting negatively on woman economic empowerment in Pakistan, the socio-cultural factor includes education barriers, decent work conditions and access to property. These are all the barriers of woman empowerment and government also failed in following the policies related to true letter and spirit (Choudhry, Abdul Mutalib, & Ismail, 2019).

Since many decades, scholars have been interested in women's empowerment as a study topic. They also worked on the objectives to examine that how improving women's awareness, consciousness of their rights, economic strengthening and general development may assist them achieve their objective of women's empowerment. Their findings show that women's rights awareness, economic empowerment, and general development have a positive and important impact on women's empowerment, as evaluated by the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) index. It may be seen as a final aim as well as a means to other development objectives (Chaudhary, Chani, & Pervaiz, 2012).

2.1 Women as Labor Force in Pakistan

The female labor force is essential for economic growth since it increases a country's development potential. Different studies were also conducted on this theme by using multiple scaling techniques. The studies' findings exhibit that ideal financial arrangements elevate female labor supply to participate in monetary and useful exercises for both long and short run durations, the data corroborate this pattern. According to the results, the government should develop

policies that encourage women to participate in the formal economy. Cottage industries must also be supported, and the informal sector must be restructured through empowering women (Mujahid, Muhammed, & Noman, 2013).

Since women is the main part of the economy of the country and the refined LFPR (Labor Force Participation Rate) of female population is 12 percent and independent women FLFPR is 20-30 percent which include part time or full-time work. 72.2 women work in agriculture, female labor force is 13%. Studies tell that women play the major role of contribution in four subsector of the rural economy which includes farming, livestock feed, village industries etc. The research also highlighted the total population of women in different province of the country which includes NWFP (89.54%), Sindh (74.36) Punjab (55.6%) while Baluchistan (82.84). Two million woman are informal labor and they are outside worker from home. The woman participation in economy in both rural and urban areas, includes indoor and outdoor workings, this is how they participate in economic development (Qamar, 2000).

2.2 Women Participation in Agriculture Sector

Similarly, agriculture is an essential part of the economy and a strong engine of development in most of Less Developed Countries (LDCs). Pakistan is no different in this regard, since it has an agricultural based economy for national income and jobs that relies heavily on agriculture. Agriculture industry employs the majority of the people, either directly or indirectly. In many sectors of agricultural activities, women overshadow men in terms of productive involvement, yet their contributions are sometimes overlooked at the national level. Gender is at the top of the list although many reasons limit the proper acknowledgment of their function where she is subdued and examined not only by skill or talent but also by the cultural base of gender. This situation is additionally compounded by policymakers who neglected to find sexual orientation explicit ways to perceive and advance women's commitment in agribusiness, as a result of which the nation can't completely profit from the useful capacities and endeavors of women. The findings also tell us that, in order to gain maximum benefit from agriculture, Pakistan must prioritize the development of women in agriculture in order to meet rising population food demands while being internationally competitive in the current environment (Begum & Yasmeen, 2011).

Pakistani society is a multiracial society with a diverse set of values. In Pakistani society, modern values predominate which have both bad and good consequences. Women in traditional culture are confined to their houses. On the other hand, both in public as well as private spheres of life women are now participating. They are playing an essential role in the development process, due to modern values. They acknowledge both the positive and negative features of modern principles based on Western philosophy. It is also observed that women play an essential role in economic progress or development or growth, but they also blindly follow Western culture (Menhas & Afreen, 2015).

2.3 Women Employment in Pakistan

In Pakistan the men are doing job and mostly homes are run by man salary but the population of women in Pakistan is more or less equal to that of men. Women in Pakistan face lot of problem in work field. When women do work outside the home, but their man are not allowing them to work outside. In this they are facing the main issue that women are suffering a lack of proper care and they are targeted by their family terms like they are girls, so they are not allowed to work outside or in family women work in home and take care of their children is the only responsibilities of women. Similarly, the women who live in rural areas are facing more problems than those living in the cities.

Since Pakistan is a developing country and its development is now in the early stage, side by side women participation in the field economic growth is also low. According to the Global Economy report, in which they stated about Pakistan, that women participation in economy and the opportunities they have is measure in ranked 143 out of 144. Researches were also conducted on these issues they find the complex government policies and financial institution procedure are the two-main reason for the failure of women participation in the economic uplift. It was also highlighted in those studies that the lack of confidence in woman for dealing the things or do the work, females are less educated in Pakistan, they are not aware with the market ups and downs and they don't have bargaining skills and last one is women is bounded (Noor & Isa, 2020).

Female employment rate in Pakistan is in the bottom end in comparison to the rest of the globe and ends up less than five percent. Pakistan's ladies' workforce rate is 22.6 % (International Labor Organization) which is very glooming figure. In financial support, Pakistani ladies positioned 126 out of 128 on the planet, 123 out of 128 in educational fulfillments, 121 out of 128 in wellbeing and 43 out of 128 in political strengthening. Almost 65% of female doctors don't work after marriage. 80% of business graduates sit at home after marriage and under 10% of taught and uninformed ladies are business visionaries. Anyway, for the most part Pakistani ladies' occupations are regularly obliged to educating, planning, call centers etc. (Hakeem & Aijaz, 2017).

Pakistan's GDP can be boosted by up to 30% by reducing gender inequality. Women represent half of the Pakistani pollution. Pakistan ranked 148 out of 149 countries in the global gender gap index 2018, according to the World Economic Forum. For Economic Development of any country women's strength in works field is necessary. Effective policies and programs should be adopted to enhance female involvement in the job market. Furthermore, applicable regulations and policies are to improve working conditions. Support, facilities are available for women who are currently working. Women must be given with a safe working environment because when they are working in a safe workplace, they are more productive (Aslam, 2019).

3. Gender Issues and Economic Development

No one can deny the positive role of women in the economic development of any country. As women population is half of total in Pakistan so their economic contribution can affect the rise in GDP. Furthermore, women have unique abilities, if they take advantage of them it can have positive result in the form of human capital. Females must pursue in education and career pathway in order to prove their abilities. Women should be given equal rights and also a platform to perform efficiently. Working women should also be respected same as house women. They should perform indoor and outdoor activities even in the international markets crafting is one of the sources of income. They should be encouraged and provide them security in our society (Sohail, 2014). In recent period, women have huge portion of their population on high ranks in academic world, trade unions, politics and professional field. However, gender discrimination still continues and in various parts of the world men are dominated on women (Glenn, 2004).

Pakistan is also one of the country where women life is controlled by patriarchal society. There are strict social and culture norms, so it is very difficult to have women empowerment. All the decisions are made by men. In Gender Gap Index (GDI) our country is graded at 121st countries out of 142 in 2014. In Human Development Index (HDI), Pakistan is at 146 out of 187 countries in 2014. Moreover, Pakistan stands on 141st for economic participation and opportunity for women. The research also show that female participation has improved in labor force both rural and urban areas. From 1975 to 2013 female participation in urban areas has increased from 3.5% to 10.8%. In rural areas major difference is shown as from 7.6% it has increase to 27.2%. The total participation has increased from 6.4% to 25%. The unemployment rate of

female is 6.8% which shows that women are willing to enter the labor market and support in economic development, but job opportunities are not ample (Mujahid, Ali, Noman, & Begum, 2015).

Women are an important part of our society, yet they still face challenges in obtaining their rights. Women's right should be strengthened like: firstly, the education and health system should be improved. Secondly, their security should be reinforced. Lastly, women's jobs, skills and decision-making authority enhanced in order to higher the quality of life. In order for society to thrive, men and women should cooperate, and women must speak out for their rights and must be self-assured as well as it is very important for the development of economy (Sohail, 2014).

4. Economic Role of Women in Islamic Perspective

While it is true that a woman's home and family are her primary sphere of activity, and that she has been relieved of financial burdens to give the best of her time and energy to the sustenance and growth of the family, it isn't a fact that she has no option to do whatever else, or that all roads for financial movement have been closed to her. Islamic history shows that, alongside paying their obligation to family and home, Muslim ladies have delivered extraordinary administrations outside their homes too (Umri & Umri, 2008). Islamic Sharia doesn't segregate Muslim ladies financially nor socially as regularly depicted in the Western media. Islam traces the particular rights and commitments of people to guarantee advancement of a solid society (Ridley, 2016).

They have additionally been engaged with financial exercises as per the circumstances where they discovered themselves. Women can embrace any occupation or business as indicated by their circumstances and conditions, capacities and tendencies. They can look for occupations just as put resources into exchange, industry, or farming. They can oversee and regulate the endeavors where they contribute or which they own. They can even set out new open doors for themselves (Umri & Umri, 2008). While ladies in the West actually battle with the rights to rise to position and pay till today, Islamic instructing furnishes Muslim ladies with the rights to acquire and spend as they wished just as chosen to lead monetary exercises dependent on their own legitimacy and astuteness (Ridley, 2016).

More than a billion Muslim ladies are living in 45 Muslim greater part nations and in excess of 30 nations have a huge Muslim minority populace. "Muslim ladies matured between 15 to 64 make [up] about 8% of the world's all out populace." Muslim females and young ladies of any age make up around 12% of the world's 7.3 billion populace starting at 2015 (Awan & Parveen, 2020). As per Pew Research Center projections, "Muslims are the quickest developing strict gathering on the planet" (Lipka, 2017). Because of their sheer number, clearly Muslim females can assume a huge part in the advancement of their economies and social orders. Despite they remained popular figure in the masses, an ordinary woman remains subject to violence and discrimination with fewer opportunities to flourish and survive with dignity (Khan & Hashmi, 2015).

The commitments of women in the public eye are acknowledged in various ways. For instance, because of their job in making human resources through youngster raising, ladies have a significant effect on the future. At the point when they enter the work market in more noteworthy numbers, they add to development in GDP per capita. This rundown could continue endlessly. Because of the significant and bunch jobs of females, they and their strengthening have turned into a point of convergence for advancement centered NGOs and government arrangements (Azid & Ward-Batts, 2020).

5. Conclusion

It can be refuted that the role of women in development and especially in the economic development of Pakistan is crucial. Some issues related to women empowerment were also highlighted in the above script. The leader of our country Quaid-e-Azam also spoke about women empowerment a lot and always supported them in every race of life. The world's largest Intergovernmental Organization UNO also put exceptional emphasis on the rights of women and women issues throughout the world, whether they live in urban centers or rural areas.

"Rural women play a key role in supporting their households and communities in achieving food and nutrition security, generating income, and improving rural livelihoods and overall well-being." – UN Women watch Organization. In our society, like in Pakistan, woman faces a number of issues related to their empowerment because Pakistani society is mainly considered as men dominated society. We have also seen that in the statistics of world organizations the ranking of Pakistan with respect to women empowerment is very low. Similarly, the women participation in the economic development we are also very low but with the passage of time and with the concerns of related higher authorities this percentage is increasing slowly and gradually. In the same way the unemployment rate of females is also very high.

Previously a number of researches were also conducted on the relation between women empowerment and economic development. Those researches show that both the concepts are interdependent and the improvement in one sector continuously improving the other sector, which is the economic development. With the economic development the socio-economic development is also affected, and by women empowerment the society is also facing huge benefits. When we empower our females in their respective fields we will see the positive changes in those particular fields. So, in order to empower women gender biasness and other negative philosophies should be curtailed. Researches in the past also show that if the women were given due share and are provided with the opportunities then they can prove themselves and will play a proactive role in the economic development of Pakistan.

According to reviews, fundamental education is really important to achieve country's goals and targets. Exploration shows that schooling can work on agricultural usefulness, improve the situation with young ladies, lessen population widening, upgrade natural security, and broadly increase the expectancy rate of life. "There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a great competition and rivalry between the two. There is a third power stronger than both, that of the women." - Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Accordingly, G.D. Anderson- an Australian activist and writer argues that, "Feminism isn't about making women stronger. Women are already strong; it's about changing the way the world perceives that strength."

It is the women in the family who asks offspring to join in and stay in school. In every sector you will see the role of women and how it's changing over years. In today's world women of the worldwide labor force is 45.4 percent. Notwithstanding analytic snags, female private ventures in rustic making networks not exclusively can be a more distant family's life saver; it can frame an organized financial establishment for people in the future. The job of women in the provincial labor force has extended several years.

Another factor contributed in the development of the status of women in our society is the participation of women in the labor force. It has been seen that nowadays a number of public and private organizations when posting their job advertisement, they clearly mentioned that 'they are equal opportunity provider' and sometimes it has written that 'women are encouraged to apply.' All this means that our institutions and other related organizations want a bigger share of women as a labor force. If we see through the past statistics we clearly noticed that, the

women participation in the labor force has increased with the passage of time. The main reason behind this increase in the labor force is the enrollment of women in our educational institutions, since our girls are educated then as a result we can see the increase in the women labor force.

If we study the religion, we also come to know that Islam never prohibit women to work for their family. Islamic history is fully-equipped with the best examples of women working in professional life. Side by side the religion also given the due rights and commitments to the women who believe in Islam, even in the capacity of a daughter or a wife or as a mother or as a sister. Our religion also permits women to work in any occupation or business according to the circumstances and their tendencies. But unfortunately, a negative propaganda is also there in which it is assume that our religion is not giving the due right to the women or restrict the women in participating in the economic activities of her family when in need. We also know that a greater part of the population, in around 45 Muslim countries is of women and among them a huge number of women are working successfully in their respective fields.

Authors Contribution

Muhammad Arif Khan: study design and concept, drafting, paper setting

Ali Imran: introduction, critical revision, incorporation of intellectual content

Shahnawaz Muhammad Khan: literature search, drafting, paper setting

Hafiz Khuram Jamil Qureshi: literature search, proof reading, recommendations

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