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SOCIOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The employment paradox to improve women's empowerment in Pakistan

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Abstract: Gender differences have been widely observed among developing countries whenever it comes to investigate the position of women on research grounds. Therefore, in current research, the relationship between employment and empowerment is being focused generally and particular attention is paid to the individual's ability to approach job opportunities and working environment at the communal level. Moreover, women's access toward resources and contribution level to the accumulated family earnings within the family units is also observed. The study used primary source of data of 500 households which was collected from four districts of Punjab, Pakistan through a multistage random sampling technique. In this study, four indicators have been chosen in order to measure women empowerment and hierarchical multiple regression was applied to have a look at multiple professions and groupings of empowerment. The findings indicated that women in particularly few professions hold the higher chance of getting empowered, in addition, those particular professional attributes seem interconnected by some of



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Gender differences have been widely observed among developing countries whenever it comes to investigate the position of women on research grounds. According to World Economic Forum, women status in Pakistan is very poor and gender gaps are very wide in terms of women education, health services, economic and political participation. Moreover, in Pakistan, situation regarding women empowerment is little better in metropolitan cities, however, it is worst in small cities and rural areas. It is worth mentioning here that 70% of population of Pakistan is living in rural areas and rural women are facing high levels of discrimination in every aspect of life. Therefore, in current research, the relationship between employment and empowerment is being focused generally and particular attention is paid to the individual's ability to approach job opportunities and working environment at the communal level. Moreover, women's access toward resources and contribution level to the accumulated family earnings within the family units is also observed.

the empowerment indicators. Moreover, the study is meant to foster the debate to improve women empowerment through establishing new job market which provides more opportunities to women especially in the rural areas, which is the most neglected part in developing countries.

Subjects: Asian Studies; Gender & Development; Population & Development

Keywords: women empowerment; employment status; income contribution; education level

1. Introduction

Gender differences have been widely observed among developing countries whenever it comes to investigate the position of women on research grounds. This kind of gender differences results in different forms of discriminations and economic imbalances like health-care discrimination, lower access toward basic needs, unequal opportunities toward education and low power in all domains of life (Ashraf, Haq, & Ashraf, 2017, Choudhry, Mutalib, & Ismail, 2019a). Furthermore, this discrimination leads toward economic instability as well. In Cairo, an international conference on population and development approved that empowerment of women is central if we want growth as an end result: to achieve sustainable development, it is crucial to give independence and empowerment to females of the society and to add into their well-being in the scenarios of political, economic, health, social and form a vital end in themselves (Musindarwezo, 2018).

For the prosperity and growth of both genders, males and females, to keep balance for social justice and to attain the precisely defined objectives, it is required to give independence and empowerment to women (UN Women, 2017). Gender equality should be focused to achieve these goals. According to the researchers, economic empowerment of women is more in discussions as compared to women empowerment in the context of political and social empowerment, and this economic empowerment of women is being stated as unique and utmost successful way to eliminate gender discrimination (Noureen, 2015). Moreover, economic empowerment involves women in economic activities, decision-making and distribution of power. The central element of economic empowerment is employment and paid employment in particular (Noureen, 2015).

According to the previous research, control and choice are core ingredients of empowerment and these ingredients are resultant factors of the ongoing process of empowerment which comes with multiple spheres and dimensions (Abrar ul Haq, Jali, & Islam, 2017). Hence, while considering the empowerment issues, we need to notice that from where it comes and the particular dimensions where it exists, also while making decisions the context should be considered and the power structures need to be investigated. Likewise, the characteristics of women also need to be considered who are continuously involved in this ever-changing process (Abrar ul Haq et al., 2017). Moreover, gender is a socially constructed complex structure to exploit women by producing gendered division of labor. They further consider it as a cultural dimension of sexist ideology. Under patriarchal ideology about division of work, women are responsible for work at homes, while men are eligible for public sphere means more power, more money, better status, freedom and more opportunities for growth and self-worth. Meanwhile, women find their experience limited due to discrimination, marginalization, harassment and restricted mobility within public life and also find themselves in a “time bind” as they return home from job, to “a second shift” at homes. This demand of the private life hinders women ability to excel in public life.

One of the basic issues faced by the women is inequality in marriages. Reproductive age in Pakistan is 15–49 years, while average age of marriage in Pakistan is 20 years in urban areas and 18.5 years in rural areas (Shahzad, 2017). According to classic studies of Jessie Bernard (1982), the institution of marriage gives freedom and sexual power to male. According to marriage institution, males are above domestic responsibilities while women become powerless, dependent and self-

emptying in marriage contracts and responsible for providing domestic, caring, emotional and sexual services to men. Traditional marriages are dumping women into isolation within homes. According to the study of Steil (1997), married women and unmarried men have high level stress as compared to unmarried women and married men. “Being free of the limits set by patriarchal, paternalistic and moralistic laws”: patriarchal, paternalistic and moralistic laws control the women according to socially preferred ways of life and restrict women choices.

The situation of women in the Punjab, Pakistan is alarming regarding their status, empowerment and gender gap. According to World Economic Forum, women status in Pakistan is very poor and gender gaps are very wide in terms of women education, health services, economic and political participation. Furthermore, Pakistan is the lowest ranked country in South Asia with overall gender gap of 55%. In Pakistan, situation regarding women empowerment is little better in metropolitan cities, however, the situation is worst in small cities, towns and rural areas. It is worth mentioning here that 70% of the total population is settled in rural areas of Pakistan. Rural women in the Punjab are facing high levels of discrimination in every aspect of life.

The Pandora box of discrimination always remains open in the life of rural women, including restricted mobility, lack of education and health facilities, nonavailability of economic opportunities, unpaid jobs, wage gap, workplace harassment, intimate partner violence, inflexible long working hours, double working shift (at workplace as well as at homes), absence in political process, conflicts with intimate partner and overburdened household responsibilities along with extra care work. Most of the problems faced by Pakistani women (reported by recent studies; mentioned above) are those which European and American women have faced in the nineteenth century. They have liberated themselves by getting their rights through the struggle of the first feminist wave, but Pakistani women, especially in rural areas of the Punjab, are still facing those problems. More research is required in Pakistan to understand women’s oppression in-depth and feminists’ call for action research is vital to liberate them from centuries old patriarchal norms.

Moreover, the issue of empowerment is in need to be considered as a whole procedure which leads to the formation of a complete story starting with the identification of authority’s structures which impose women to remain subordinate, leading toward the cross-examination of this kind of system controls and power structures, bringing the required changes which result in power attainment and finally bringing empowerment in existence as a final product (Women’s Working Group on the FFD3, 2015). In order to get the detailed understanding of relationship amongst women empowerment and employment, the current study analyzed how women can be empowered through their employment status. Furthermore, this study also gives a glimpse that what are the basic roles of women’s job playing for the enforcement of empowerment. To whom with she works? And the relationship of contribution from female’s side to the sum of family’s income.

2. Literature review

Empowering women contains their autonomy and power to control their lives at their own equally inside and outside homes as well as their capability to impact the way of social change to generate a more social and economic order nationally and internationally (Sepotokele, 2018). Feminist theory is generalized which is not a work of individual but an interdisciplinary community. This is considered women-centered because its major objective is to investigate social experiences of women as an oppressed group and to produce a better world for women. Despite variations in thoughts, all feminists believe that patriarchal and traditional way of thinking (gender stereotyping) supports the subordinate status of the women and neglects those issues of community which affect women. Therefore, a new social order rather patriarchy is required for gender equality. Liberal feminism is an expression of gender inequality theory and believes that gender inequality is the result of gender patterning in division of labor and equality can be produced by transforming the division of labor by repatterning of key institutes like law, work, family and education. Women oppression has roots in the institution of private property (Schmitt, 2018). Imperialism has

introduced this institution and capitalism further strengthened it by introducing private ownership of the means of production.

This ownership has created a class system and men supported this system because it is in favor of patriarchy. Although capitalism does not give preference to men over women, still it is the cause of women's oppression. Women are the 50% of the total population of the globe and if this 50% population is liberated, then this liberation must replace the capitalism with socialism where the means of production will be considered as common property and women would be independent economically like men. Socialist feminists agree that capitalism (like Marxist feminists) and patriarchy (like radical feminists) are the two sources of women's oppression and the only way to liberate women is the killing of this two-headed monster.

Presently, Scholars are trying to define a tool to judge and measure the level of women empowerment within society, or the degree (how much women are empowered socially). Past studies used women's status as tool for this purpose as the women who have significant status at family is empowered and the women who have no noticeable family status was considered not empowered. Later, Mason and Smith (2003) used different variables to measure the empowerment such as the status of the women in family, the involvement of women in decision-making, gender inequality and other such variables; however, these variables were not clearly defined.

Moreover, women status was an old term used to know the importance of women socially, now scholars agreed that empowerment is more suitable word than status and independence (Kabeer, 1999). The scholars argued that status is a statistical word which can be measured in number but cannot fulfill the requirement of development, on the contrary, the word empowerment is more reflexive word which not only refers to development but also defines the state of gender discrimination such as gender disparity and gender parity (Malhotra, Schuler, Sidney, & Boender, 2002).

In the scenario of social system, the word independence does not appear much impressive while word empowerment tells that level of rights and choices both for males and females. Evidence, resource and setting are the three steps to measure empowerment level in women. While studying the facts about women empowerment, it is not enough to know the economic strength of the women as evidence of empowerment. It is necessary to know the resources a woman has and the control (setting) which she has over those resources. Without control over resources, empowerment is incomplete. The society also has significant role in the empowerment of women; the indicators of empowerment in developed societies are totally different than those of underdeveloped societies (HHI, 2016). Therefore, empowerment of the women can easily be measured by measuring evidence, resources and settings.

So far, as women's satisfaction is concerned, they are less satisfied and less happy with their family's financial situation both absolutely and relatively as compare to men counterpart (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009). In Pakistan, women are desirous to have agreements with husbands on variety of matters such as girl's education, mobility, working status, recreational activities, household responsibilities, meanwhile, disagreements lead to conflict which diminishes women's satisfaction in life (Yasmeen & Karim, 2014). In addition, Yasmeen and Karim (2014) also argue that freedom seekers in Pakistan were generally women, who had some sort of frustration or disappointment in their paid work and who needed to begin their own business keeping in mind the end goals to pick the kind of work, obligation hours, workplace and the general public they worked with. However, most of the women faced social and personality as well as financial barriers in starting their own business. In this connection, we should know that empowerment can be seen within numerous domains, in addition it also appears with multiple dimensions at the same time.

2.1. Indicators of empowerment

Mostly the women empowerment indicators are their household decision-making and liberty to move. The word women empowerment has been derived from the earlier used words for women

like women's autonomy, their liberty for the purpose of bringing their rights and gender parity in the society as a whole. Because of these earlier defined terms, "the liberty to move beyond the domains of home openly demonstrate autonomy and were immediately embraced as essentials for empowerment." Wiebesiek and Treffry-Goatley (2017) state that the rest of the facets of female's life have become central to empowerment with the gradual broadening of the concept of empowerment to the extent it may include power through multiple domains and procedures and women's control over assets has turned into an especially challenged part of women's empowerment.

How does the women's access toward resources impacts, women empowerment is the next question we confront? According to the Peinado and Serrano (2018), increasing women's autonomy toward economic resources or income works dramatically to eliminate gender inequality and improves empowerment. By increasing control over economic resources within the home, gender inequality can be minimized; thus, it will eventually lead to women's economic power (Peinado & Serrano, 2018). Moreover, the power of being heard within family units gives females self-confidence; they start controlling the life options and can impact communal matters in an influential way (Blumberg, 2005). The undergoing argument is predominantly important for the discussions of the relationship between empowerment and employment because, generally it is stated insufficient just to go to work and to add into income, somewhat the control over earned resources matters (Abrar ul Haq et al., 2017; Blumberg, 2005; Kabeer, 2012). It is possible that a woman might be working but if she has nothing to do with resource allocation she is not likely to gain any kind of control or authority within the household.

2.1.1. *Employment and empowerment*

Among all of the women empowerment debates, strongest argument is that the contribution of women in earning activities will direct them toward women empowerment because the ability to control over resources can empower them for bargaining issues (Guinée, 2012: 2014). Thus, this let her control over the life decisions and choices she choose to make. In case if a woman earns at her own, she is more likely to deal with herself and that is why less dependent on her better half and rest of the family members for subsistence. This makes women's bargaining position strong within household because not only she is adding into the income of the family but also she has got a better fallback position (Datta & Gailey, 2012). This increased level of bargaining power within the household is considered a prominent factor of empowerment because it makes a women's control affirm over herself and her family (Deere & De Leal, 2014).

Few other debates propose that empowerment is the resultant factor of earning to participate in the public domains to communicate with the individuals because it increases the self-efficacy and self-esteem. On the other hand, debates amongst researchers also state that women face many other obstacles standing in their way like a monster to gain control over their life and in the race of gender equality and cannot be eliminated with employment solely. From this, we can infer that the poverty kind of structural factor and low right toward choice enforces women to earn, that is why restrained to stay empowered. Except all this, there is scarcity of job availability to women in Pakistan and rest of the developing countries. From the lower level of education of women and all the philosophies of women, we can assume that jobs for women demand less skill, they are paid unequally, can get no security and are engaged in unfortunate working conditions (Samarakoon & Parinduri, 2015).

This concept is merged with the fact that women's participation for earning and income generating actions cannot eliminate women's responsibilities toward household, therefore, suggested that most of the times working women encounter multiple responsibilities, including employment, household responsibilities and the responsibility of safeguarding the family eventually (Rehman, Moazzam, & Ansari, 2015). The reality of empowerment is quite complicated and lies in the middle of the arguments we have made. It's not necessary that employment can lead to empowerment, the employment and working undoubtedly possess potential to enhance the power of women and

strengthen their position within household domains. Nevertheless, we find the process of converting the employment to empowerment bit complex in reality than the arguments. Therefore, we identified and include the number of central factors in accordance with both, including the circumstances which cause employment to happen and the kind of empowerment as being researcher we seek for.

2.1.2. *Employment status and empowerment*

Once after going through the past research, we find inconsistencies in findings even for the simplest questions like: if employment empowers women or not? Whereas, few of the researchers have argued that yearly rooted cultural norms can be altered with the help of paid employment (Datta & Gailey, 2012), but few of other studies have found that simply an employment has nothing to do with empowerment in the absence of the considerations of conditions of employment. According to the past research, the women from Bengal and poor women from India reported that earning makes women empowered and the ones who go to work look in decision power as compared to those who don't go, enjoy control over resources, possess easy and own mobility and are good in accumulating assets to shelter their own welfare (Klugman et al., 2014).

In our undergoing research, we claimed that the power structures which are stopping women interventions and participation in the society are stronger enough and cannot be challenged by being employed only. The main cause of failure of empowerment because of employment is that women chose to work and earn mostly because of survival and this kind of employment does not affect the gender roles (Singh & Raghuvanshi, 2012). Because of the lower income levels, women are never allowed to participate in politics, nor this employment relief the responsibilities within the house and cannot get the equal property rights (Cinar & Kose, 2018).

Despite these disruptions, the employment under the correct situations can add up as a prominent sum for the collective efforts for women empowerment (Cinar & Kose, 2018). The question raises here is that in what manners employment can be considered empowerment? There is a need to look at this matter thoroughly observing this relation in depth about the factors which trigger the women to jump into the job market, the consequences of this jumping in and more precisely the results of her work which her family confronts and the happenings to her wage.

2.1.3. *Demographics and empowerment*

Empowerment can be influenced by sociodemographic backgrounds both directly and indirectly, indirectly in a sense of its link with jobs availability, social position and prospects about gender roles. Past research indicates the position of couples on the occasions of their wedding and public connections, as far as family frameworks and family unit qualities are imperative to monetary courses of action, basic leadership control and to women's empowerment economically (Frankenberg & Thomas, 2001, Choudhry, Mutalib, & Ismail, 2019b). Few females of the society seem lower inclined to be empowered, like a younger woman, women with lower literacy rate, women from rural areas, deprived woman and women from comparatively lower class or cast (Hunter, Jason & Keys, 2013). The education may be a standout amongst the most vital impacts for the sake of women employment and with its connection to empowering women as it brings life chances and consequences with it. For the local economic power, the employment and education seem crucial issues, hence, no longer involved in public and administrative matters among women (Sonowal, 2013). Thus, the women with more literacy level and employment rate possess comparatively greater authority in financial decision-making as compared to other decision matters.

Most researchers have been pointed out education and working status as key indicators of empowerment in existing literatures (Choudhry, Mutalib, & Ismail, 2019a; Kabeer, 2012; Noreen, 2011); however, women in Pakistan do not have sufficient opportunities of education and paid job (Sadaquat & Sheikh, 2011), especially in rural areas. Moreover, the ratio of female literacy is less than male (as shown in Table 1). Women in Pakistan are unable to start their own business (economic independence) due to lack of education and social norm that prevails in rural areas

Table 1. Situation of education in South Asia

Country	Official age	Net preprimary enrollment 2005–2014		Mean years of schooling of population aged 25 and above 2010		
		2014	Female	Male	Female	Male
			(% of preprimary age population)		(% aged 25 years and older)	
Bangladesh	3–5	23.3	23.8	4.5	5.5	
India	3–5	–	–	3.6	7.2	
Nepal	3–4	54.4	53.0	2.3	4.5	
Pakistan	3–4	38.2	42.1	2.9	5.9	
Sri Lanka	4	–	–	9.6	10.1	

Source: Progress of the World's Women 2015–16, UN Report, Page 264

(Khan, 2010). Thus, there is need to examine; how education helps women to increase empowerment by reducing barriers inhibiting their empowerment.

Pakistani women trapped in vicious circle of traditional patriarchal norms (Awan, 2016) as women are not free in decision-making regarding their lives, even in decision about marriage, divorce, childbearing, health, mobility, inheritance property, education and profession (Adeel, Yeh, & Zhang, 2017; Awan, 2016; Jamal, 2016; Sarfraz, Tariq, Hamid, & Iqbal, 2015). The main cause of this oppression in women is centuries old gender biased sociocultural practices which limited the role of women within society and assign them subordinate status (Awan, 2016). These socio-cultural barriers are difficult to remove (Kirai & Kobia, 2012). These sociocultural factors, as potential barrier to women empowerment, not only provide restrictions to women but also play role in submissive and discriminated status of women (Rafay, Habib, Tariq, & Asghar Ali, 2016). Women considered themselves weak due to societal discrimination and cultural norms. Violence against women is also an accepted norm in Pakistani society. The violence or threat of violence damages the sense of self-respect of women (Baehr & Amy, 2013). In South Asia, the marriage institution and customs like dowry are destroying the women's abilities and make them psychologically weak (Begum, 2016). Society shapes women personality in a docile and submissive manner. Patriarchal norms of society forced parents to groom their daughters in submissive way. Similarly, early weak socialization by family is also the result of societal pressure (Rafay et al., 2016). This weak socialization also is a big hurdle in women empowerment (Kirai & Kobia, 2012). According to Dandona (2015), self-efficacy, self-confidence, self-motivation, trust and competence are important features of women personality to empower them. Dodd (2012) also reports results in her study that lack of confidence level, motivational level and weak socialization is the main potential barrier of women personality to their empowerment. Furthermore, Awan (2016) gave solution in her study that there is a need to transform the mind-set of the overall society for women empowerment through effective education.

Bandyopadhyay (2011) claimed that education and working status have a positive impact on women empowerment. Moreover, Stevenson and Wolfers (2009) stated that education has been rising throughout the period and higher education is associated with happiness. In Pakistan, the men enrolment is encouraging while women have less education than male counterpart (Yasmeen, 2015). The main cause of women illiteracy is restricted mobility due to heightened concerns for safety and security of girls in Pakistan (UNICEF, 2018), other causes include lesser household incomes (poverty), accessibility, reinforcement of customary gender roles (cultural norms) and shortage of female teachers and political apathy in Pakistan (Jamal, 2016). Moreover, Ali and ul Haq (2006) suggested that further research should be examined the role of education on women's empowerment in Pakistan.

2.1.4. *Occupation and empowerment*

The relationship between the profession and women empowerment has been rarely identified. Although few research has been done to investigate the relation among women empowerment and occupation (Singh, 2013), yet enough evidences are found to believe that the profession of women plays an important role for women empowerment. The profession of women is found as an imperative because of its association educational requirements, income and power within the society (Gautam, 2018). It can describe the specifications and skills to get done with that one particular job, the financial returns related to the designation, the conditions of work and position of class (Raj, 2014). Particularly in India, women work at all work groups, but largely they are doing blue collar jobs which are quite lower in income spectrum and are paid less, for example working at agricultural sector, domestic work, performing less skilled labor (Gautam, 2018).

Quite a lower number of women are from saturated working class and in very rare cases hold the position of authority almost at every employment sector. In some cases, where the women are qualified and capable of doing some sophisticated jobs, the jobs which are not manual in nature are directed usually toward service sector industry while doing “feminized” jobs, i.e. teaching, social work and nursing (Singh, 2013). As examined before, profession is an imperative for empowerment not just in its connections to status and educational fulfilment, additionally in lightening the conditions of work, salary public distinction and influence, otherwise scarcity in particular department that accompanies working in one occupation in respect to another.

2.1.5. *Financial contribution and empowerment*

The women getting a prominent feel of control and esteem in their homes is significant may be the results of women’s empowerment which took place in return of wage she earns. The contribution of women in income toward their families helps to enhance their esteem within the household and their ability to control the part of income gives a control on decision-making as well (Anyanwu, Ananwude, & Nnoje, 2018). The researchers in past research agree that one more prominent feature of women empowerment in the relationship of employment and empowerment is their contribution in income and the extent to which they are contributing. The degree to which a family depends on the wage of women can impact the force and control that the working women have in her family since it builds her position in the family unit and it enhances her fallback position by diminishing her reliance on male family members (Kato & Kratzer, 2013). As the contribution level of women’s wage affect her voice within the household. So, if she is adding in half or full income of the family, she will be heard more for the decisions and will possess stronger position, but, if she adds little to the income of the family, her voice is not going to be heard nor she will enjoy giving her opinions for important decisions (Meisenbach, 2010). Furthermore, the research of family earnings and empowerment claimed the positive relationship between enhanced probability of empowerment and higher contribution of income (Grasmuck & Espinal, 2000; Kabeer, 2012; Meisenbach, 2010).

Moreover, Ahmed and Hyndman-Rizk (2018) observed the Bangladeshi women and investigated the link between income addition from women in their family income and domestic violence. Their study found that the women who are accomplished in redefining their gender roles and positions within the household have tendency to be strong and successful financially and their income is being added into family earnings. The rise of empowerment and decrease in domestic violence against women are results of women’s significant income contribution to the family (Demirgüç-Kunt, Klapper, & Singer, 2013). The income from women’s side directly means that they are contributors to the society and deserve to be respected in their homes; this is how income is impacting the empowerment, in spite of the fact that there is no considerable challenge to this patriarchy system (Kabeer, 2012). According to Kabeer (2012), although women did not speak about earnings and claims which signals an increased fallback position in case of up and down, however, women felt appreciated, loved and esteemed. Moreover, he also told that empowering effect has been influenced by the choices women workers make regarding wages earned. By and

large, women empowerment can be increased through their financial contributions to family income, as their contributions increase their worth within family.

2.2. Area of the study

The total area of the Punjab is 205,344 km², the most dens (536 persons per sq. km) populated area of Pakistan having 110 million population out of which 40 million in urban while rest of 70 million settled in rural area. Adult literacy (10 years and above) rate in the Punjab is 71% among male and 55% among female. Punjab has been divided administratively in three parts, North Punjab, Central Punjab and South Punjab, sometime also called Southern Punjab. The infrastructure developed throughout Punjab is almost uniform, however Southern Punjab considered less developed as compared to the other parts of the Punjab. The Southern Punjab consists of three divisions, 11 districts, 44 tehsils, 978 union councils (220 urban and 758 rural) and three big cities named as Multan, Bahawalpur and DG Khan. Most of the economic activities in South Punjab are related with agriculture and livestock; however, there are also little industries about cotton processing, textile and sugar related and the labor force of these industries completely consist of male.

3. Methodology

For this undergoing study, we have used individual level data which were collected through a survey method from four districts of Punjab, Pakistan. The multistage random sampling technique was used with the following detail: at first stage, Sothern Punjab from three zones of Punjab (Northern, Central and Sothern Punjab) was selected randomly (lottery method). At second stage, four districts, Bahawalpur, Multan, Rahimyarkhan and Muzaffargarh, were selected randomly from southern Punjab. At third stage, an equal number of respondents (25%) from each district were selected through stratified sampling technique. Total 500 households were selected as a sample size and data were collected through face-to-face interview of women by using structured questionnaire. Moreover, this undergoing research deals with employment features, sociodemographic characteristics, the measures of women power, liberty of mobility, access and approach toward resources and opinions against domestic violence. While realizing the assorted qualities in Pakistan among districts, this study uses wider information from four districts of Punjab with a specific end goal to distinguish association among women's empowerment and their work as well as it also decides when employment is improving the empowerment and when it is most certainly not. In order to determine the most central factors and internal reliability of variables, principal component analysis (PCA) was done individually at each and every variable. Hierarchical multiple regression is being used in regard to investigate the impact of independent variables on dependent variable (women empowerment).

The following is the regression model:

$$WEMP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ Education} + \beta_2 \text{ Region} + \beta_3 \text{ Metrial Status} + \beta_4 \text{ Age} + \beta_5 \text{ Working} + \mu_i$$

$$WEMP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ Education} + \beta_2 \text{ Region} + \beta_3 \text{ Metrial Status} + \beta_4 \text{ Age} + \beta_5 \text{ Working} + \beta_6 \text{ Occupation} + \beta_7 \text{ Work} + \beta_8 \text{ Contibution} + \mu_i$$

3.1. Dependent variable

The indicators of women empowerment used in current research are frequently being utilized as a proxy of women empowerment and replicate few of indicators which used to signify the women empowerment. There are many indicators of employment and is also operationalized by a number of variables. There are three empowerment measures which are frequently used as social measures which are mostly used as empowerment indicators. In response to getting a different dimension, we have also used one attitudinal measure of empowerment which is not considered often. This measure gives insight to the women brutality within the family unit and particularly the legitimization of spouse beating (Table 2).

Table 2. Measurement of dependent variable

WEMP	
Decision-making	
Who decides about the respondent staying with family	Husband/other
Who decides about obtaining healthcare	Husband/other
Freedom of movement	
Do you need permission to visit friends or family	Yes/no
Do you need permission to go to the market	Yes/no
Control over resources	
You are allowed to have money set aside	Yes/no
Violence against women (Can a husband hit his wife if)	
She does not cook properly	Yes/no
She neglects the house or children	Yes/no
She goes out without telling him	Yes/no
She shows disrespect	Yes/no
Her family does not give money	Yes/no
She cheats	Yes/no

3.2. Independent variables

This undergoing research scientifically investigates the relationship amongst many dimensions of women empowerment and employment status. To get comparatively nuanced comprehension of this relationship which is frequently observed, the fundamental assumption of empowerment and employment is tested through a more profound investigation, thus involves the measurements of occupation as well. Likewise, the addition of employment variables, few more basic sociodemographic features are included as control variables (Table 3).

4. Results and discussion

4.1. PCA

To generate women empowerment index, the PCA was applied which obtains the weights of indicators. The PCA computes the weights (extraction values or factor loading) by standardizing

Table 3. Measurement of explanatory variables

Explanatory variables	
Works currently	Yes/no
Occupation	Professional/clerical/agriculture/unskilled manual/skilled manual/household and domestic/sales and services
Works for	Family/someone other than family/self-employed
Contribution to total family earnings	Less than half/half or more/all of family earnings
Demographic variables	
Education level	Number of years
Region	Rural/urban
Marital status	Single/married/other
Age	Number of years

the indicator variables. Once the weights among indicators were determined, it is multiplied with the indicator values and then get the summation of those variables. Mostly, PCA is applied to ensure that all the indicator variables are independent as well as it also used to minimize the number of items (Table 4).

4.2. Regression analysis

In this section, hierarchical multiple regression analysis evaluates the research model. The R-square value ($R^2 = 0.53$) indicates that the 53% change in dependent variable is due to independent variables as shown in Table 5.

The study has developed two econometric models, in the first model five independent variables were taken to analyze its impact on women empowerment. Analytical results established

Table 4. Principal component analysis

Variables	Factor loading	Score	Cronbach alpha
WEMP			0.761
Decision-making			
Who decides about the respondent staying with family	0.727	8.978	
Who decides about obtaining healthcare	0.783	9.669	
Freedom of movement			
Do you need permission to visit friends or family	0.704	8.694	
Do you need permission to go to the market	0.681	8.409	
Control over resources			
You are allowed to have money set aside	0.648	8.002	
Violence against women (can a husband hit his wife if)			
She does not cook properly	0.752	9.286	
She neglects the house or children	0.716	8.842	
She goes out without telling him	0.771	9.521	
She shows disrespect	0.802	9.904	
Her family does not give money	0.834	10.299	
She cheats	0.680	8.397	
Explanatory variables			
Works currently	0.682	0.137	0.837
Occupation	0.713	0.143	
Works for	0.752	0.151	
Contribution to total family earnings	0.701	0.140	
Education level	0.699	0.140	
Region	0.711	0.142	
Marital status	0.738	0.148	

Table 5. Regression results

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.321* (0.018)	0.219* (0.047)
Education level	0.324** (0.021)	0.276** (0.014)
Region	0.212** (0.039)	-0.188** (0.025)
Marital status	0.338** (0.034)	0.289** (0.055)
Age	0.341** (0.062)	0.311* (0.065)
Works currently	0.252** (0.074)	0.196** (0.048)
Occupation		
Prof/tech/managerial		0.657** (0.076)
Clerical		0.569*** (0.094)
Agriculture		0.102** (0.014)
Unskilled manual		0.275* (0.072)
Skilled manual		0.342* (0.048)
Household/domestic		0.611** (0.083)
Sales/services		0.454** (0.156)
Contribution to total family earnings		
All		0.258** (0.062)
Half or more		0.089* (0.071)
Less than half		0.057 (0.068)
Works for		
Family		0.268** (0.142)
Others		0.081* (0.026)
Self-employed		0.364** (0.183)
$R^2 = 0.53$; DF = 06		
$p = 0.000$; N = 500		

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.1$

significant relationship of employee's performance with all five explanatory variables, namely, education level ($\beta = 0.324^{**}$; SE = 0.021), region ($\beta = 0.212^{**}$; SE = 0.039), marital status ($\beta = 0.338^{**}$; SE = 0.034), age ($\beta = 0.341^{**}$; SE = 0.062) and works currently ($\beta = 0.252^{**}$; SE = 0.074) as specified in Table 5. Thus, the analytical results provide strong support for the relationship of women empowerment with education level, region, marital status, age and work currently.

In the second model, three more independent variables were added in the previous model to analyze its impact on women empowerment. Analytical results established significant relationship of employee's performance with all explanatory variables, namely, education level ($\beta = 0.276^{**}$; SE = 0.014), region ($\beta = 0.188^{**}$; SE = 0.025), marital status ($\beta = 0.289^{**}$; SE = 0.055), age ($\beta = 0.311^{**}$; SE = 0.248) and works currently ($\beta = 0.196^{**}$; SE = 0.048). Occupation consists of further subcategories, prof/tech/managerial ($\beta = 0.657^{**}$; SE = 0.076), clerical ($\beta = 0.569^{**}$; SE = 0.094), sales/services ($\beta = 0.454^{**}$; SE = 0.156), household/domestic ($\beta = 0.611^{**}$; SE = 0.083), skilled manual ($\beta = 0.342^{*}$; SE = 0.048), unskilled manual ($\beta = 0.275^{*}$; SE = 0.072) and agriculture ($\beta = 0.102^{**}$; SE = 0.014). Contribution to total family earnings consists of three categories, such as less than half portion ($\beta = 0.057$; SE = 0.068), half or more portion ($\beta = 0.89^{**}$; SE = 0.071) and all portion ($\beta = 0.364^{**}$; SE = 0.183). The last variable, works for, consists of further three categories, namely, family ($\beta = 0.268^{**}$; SE = 0.142), for others ($\beta = 0.081^{*}$; SE = 0.026) and self-employed ($\beta = 0.364^{**}$; SE = 0.183) as specified in Table 5. Thus, the analytical results of

current model provide strong and significant impact of all explanatory variables on women empowerment.

In this connection, the relationship among several demographic characteristics has been exhibited by regression results in Table 5, i.e. women's employment status and capability to spare money. Knowing that education is important for everyone, yet it is believed that it is a most crucial zone for females (Hunter, Jason & Keys, 2013). Because of women's academic success, long-term ripple effects have been observed amongst families and generations to generations, in addition, to finding education as an entrance point for multiple opportunities (Khan, Mahtab, & Haq, 2012). The education is beyond the boundaries of simple reading and writing tasks. Similarly, countries make an investment in education for the sake of sustainable development, reduction of poverty and to build their bright futures. Educational empowerment is seen as a continuous comprehensive process with the economic, political, psychological, cognitive dimensions to bring enfranchisement (Abrar ul Haq et al., 2017).

Because of the many sides of societal, political and international interrelations, individuals are in need to think thoroughly about the plans and policies for upcoming initiatives to attain these targets. The results of current study have shown that women's empowerment is significantly influenced by women's employment. Factors, like being an educated lady of the family, connections from an urban area and being older in age tend to enhance the women's possession of assets. The questions related to empowerment are that whether employment is linked to empowerment or not, what it does to the women's access toward resources. Money saving or control over money is stronger to women who are working currently instead of women who are not employed these results are similar with previous research (Cinar & Kose, 2018; Datta & Gailey, 2012; Klugman et al., 2014; Termine & Percic, 2015).

The anticipated results of Table 5 propose that generally speaking, women with education, with their belongingness to urban areas, enjoy relatively higher stage of empowerment regardless of their employment position. The model clarifies the linkages between profession, working for and addition in family earning and women empowerment. According to results of regression analysis, women's power of mobility is linked with their profession, thus, the women having the occupation which is nonmanual labor in nature seems to have an increased mobility freedom as compared to the women who are not employed (Abrar ul Haq, Jali, & Islam, 2017a; Gautam, 2018). The current study finds greater coefficient values for women who are employed at clerical, professional, domestic work and sales/services followed by the working women with managerial or technical professions. Within this given situation, the relationship between the increased right of mobility and the household and domestic work could have been the result of activities which such kind of work require. For example, the duties of the job may require from workers to go to the workplaces, thus having increased level of mobility.

The agricultural work and manual labor seem to be positively linked with enhanced number of mobility, while not that much in strong relation with nonmanual professions. Even within the agricultural workers, they have increased levels of mobility as compared to the nonworking women within the agricultural sector. Somehow, in general, we can say that agricultural workers with relatively lower skills tend to have lower mobility as compared to the women from other professions (Termine & Percic, 2015). Moreover, women enjoy greater mobility who are amongst working professions for someone others than family and also the women who are working in sales, clerical and household work (Gautam, 2018; World Development Report, 2012).

According to the results of the second model, the study finds that there exist larger differences in empowerment according to the profession of respondents. Moreover, the results find observable differences for professional workers than those who work for professionals and then those who are independent in earning and then who work for the family. The professional worker only seems to be paid when work for someone else except family, in spite of involvement in a profession related

to increased social status. According to resource theory, in the spirit of contribution to the sum of family incomes, the wages of women should increase their negotiation power (Foa & Foa, 2012). Women empowerment comes into existence because of the wage contribution from women's side and it goes on despite the strict patriarchy structures (Peinado & Serrano, 2018). Moreover, the women considered themselves secure in the relationships because of their addition to income enhanced the chances of having children and allowed them in more negotiating position.

Our study concluded that adding into the family income is linked with women empowerment. Moreover, the current study also revealed that the women adding into all of the family income as compared to half or less tend to have higher decision-making power among their families and more authorized to free the money and the current results are similar with results obtained by Kabeer (2012). Somehow, the results of the study also show that although the women's contribution to the income empowers them, yet this relationship suffers some limitations. Only when women add a larger amount of money to the family income, become able to get the position of decision-making, access to resources, a voice against violence and empowerment. However, the addition to the income lower than half of amount is not sufficient to bring empowerment.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

According to the outcomes, we can draw three main conclusions while taking into account the role of employment for empowerment: (1) work type, (2) the closeness of work toward domestic spectrum if women's task is to bring independence from the control of male family members and (3) merely the substantial income addition seems to bring empowerment among women. By going through the results of this study, we cannot neglect that women are less empowered in all areas of Pakistan. Pakistani women encompass limited power of decision-making, mobility constraints, legalization of domestic violence and lower control over resources. Current result depicts that employment of women is vital in order to upgrade women's empowerment in Pakistan, there are several barriers to getting along with and employment is like only a riddle to get along with under all accurate conditions.

The basic obstacles for women's equality and rights should be taken into consideration within the family units, within the community and within nations all over the world, if we want to see employment as a powerful tool for empowerment, particularly in Pakistan and in general as well. Few basic changes are required to make employment comparatively stronger phenomenon so as to bring empowerment for women. First of all, bringing job opportunities closer to women is a fundamental step for increasing women's empowerment, these job opportunities should be different from typically available job opportunities and the prevalence of women amongst all stages of jobs needs to be focused. Second, the successfully initiated empowerment programs providing on job skills, training and financial support to small businesses are not well enough. Rather there is a dire need to let women realize their self-esteem by bringing cooperative peers altogether in a place and their basic rights need to be realized are not sufficient only. This upgrading of women's awareness should be strengthening their negotiating power. Moreover, their competence to declare themselves for the choice making might seem best for themselves and for their children.

On the third count, the current study declares that level of education never be undervalued. Education does not merely widen the economic prospects for women, but it also has been frequently seen in the marriage delays, delay of age for the first birth and improves women's abilities to resolve the issues as a whole. For the empowerment and for fostering women's rights and equality the assurance of women's rights is central. The last but not the least fourth point suggests that strategies should be in accordance in a way to ensure women's rights and protection. All the given four facts act as a trigger point and take the process from empowerment as a procedure to empowerment as a result. Thus, we cannot neglect to see the phenomenon of empowerment as a condition rather than as a procedure. That is why women are in need to act in an extraordinary way to esteem themselves more and to believe in themselves. Obviously, this

daring task not only linked with women individually, but also society has to take the responsibility of empowering women which seems extremely important, and not vital only for the developing countries such as Pakistan.

According to the previous research, it is also stated that phenomenon of empowerment should have been seen on all levels of the society. This full-time process requires women to prepare and battle themselves for their rights, men should take part and add contribution in the process and governments also need to vigorously support this equality amongst all of the circles of life. Women need to be empowered within the home, within the community, within the economy and within politics at the global and local stages. While observing the facts in this way regarding women empowerment, we can easily find that women empowerment is crucial on an individual level. This is the base from where the revolution begins to initiate. Women empowerment levels of individual women within their homes cannot be undervalued and underestimated. The understanding of the relationship between empowerment and employment should be developed in order to understand the issues which are bringing barriers in the way of employment and to investigate the ways in which employment cause a change in a women's life.

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