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Assessing the Socio-Economic Determinants of Women Empowerment in Pakistan

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Abstract

Women empowerment is one of the most important that has been discussed in developing countries. In this paper, an attempt is made to explore the determinants that have an influence on women empowerment in Pakistan. Sample consisted on 200 female respondents from two renowned universities in Lahore. The empirical results showed that the content of education, economic participation of women, poverty and economic opportunity available for women increases their empowerment. In this study, apart from conventional variables, a variable, Women having a bank account was also tested which showed a extreme significant positive impact on women empowerment. This supports the economic opportunity available to the woman increases their power. Finally, it is concluded that these significant factors influences empowerment of women, so one can focus on these determinants to increase and enhance women's role in our society.

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Keywords: Empowerment; conventional; economic opportunity; economic participation.

1. Introduction

Women's empowerment has been a very important issue of the contemporary world. Education is vital for the growth of human mind in order to attain equal opportunities and status to achieve their goals and objectives. Empowering women has been neglected for long and was applied in the 1970's. The scope of study is to see the

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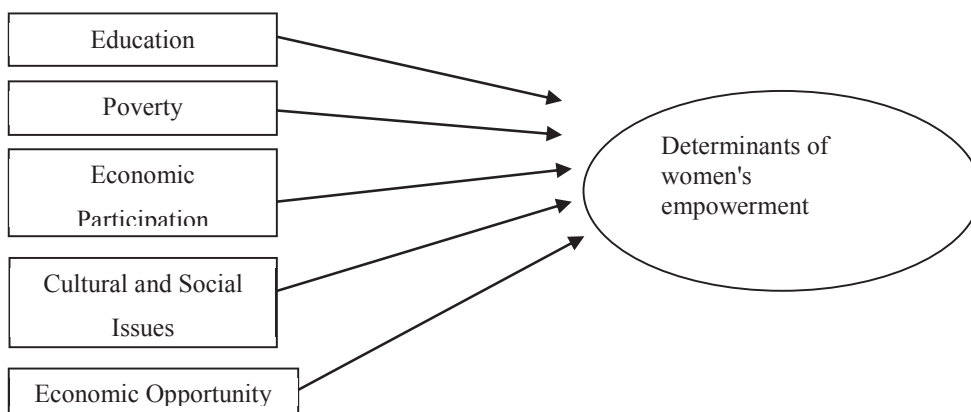
present situation of women in Pakistan and to distinguish the important determinants and barriers restricting women's empowerment in education. Chitrakar (2009) states that there was a huge gender gap in youth literacy and adult literacy rates. This paper indicated clearly that women were lagging behind in education due to women's conditions of gender inequality, health, education and equal rights.

Empowerment of education has deprived women from gaining knowledge, attaining equal job opportunities, control, power, status, decision-making capabilities, knowing self as to be a productive asset for the child growth etc. The women's circumstances in Pakistan as to the cultural and social values, traditions, poverty, religious grounds, illiteracy, public awareness, high fertility rate all contribute to the powerlessness of women in under-developed economies. Women's powerlessness shatters self confidence and self esteem. In rural areas in Pakistan the women are mostly isolated, fragmented and are unable to discuss and share their wishes, concerns and problems. Different factors contribute on both micro and macro level to women's empowerment of education in Pakistan. The government plays an important role to having no supportive women education policies and strategies. Recently government, Non-government organizations (NGO's) and political parties have been trying to take steps for women education by opening a number of schools around the country for girls and women. Manisha Desai (2010) states that there was gender disparity at primary and secondary level primary education should be made compulsory for the females till they reach the age of 16. The paper discussed the needs for government policies regarding this issue to make basic primary education to secondary education compulsory for both men and women.

Women's empowerment has been neglected since the creation of Pakistan. Women have been deprived of their basic legal rights to have an equal status and opportunity to grow as a human being. Women have been isolated from the development process and social factors including health, basic needs, education, information, access to power and authority, decision-making. The problem has not been served since 1947. Women's Empowerment helps women gain confidence, knowledge, gain experience and bring up their children in a more disciplined manner and contribute to the decisions. It will also create awareness and exposure to females and allow them to have equal opportunities to have an equal position on the managerial level contributing to the organization and the economy of the country

2. Methodology

2.1. Theoretical Framework



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