



RESEARCH PAPER

Practicing Components of Women Empowerment and Youth Perception: A Study Conducted at PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi

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ABSTRACT

The paper under discussion deals with youth perception about women empowerment. The objective of study was to draw a link between women empowerment and educational attainment. The conducted study based upon hypothesis that educated youth have positive attitude towards practicing the components of women empowerment. The study selected Pir Mehar Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi as research locale. Researcher has chosen explanatory methodology for administering the research with its respective goals. The target population includes students of PMAS AAUR. A sample of about 286 students was drawn by simple random sampling technique. The data sourced through subjects of study proved hypothesis of the study true. The key findings revealed that youth perception is constantly changing in respect to the conception of women empowerment and affirmed education is playing key role in this regards. The researcher has also put forth the significant finding that the educated youth of a country with minor exception is in favor of providing women's with their basic rights such as education, health, freedom of movement, job participation, decision making, property rights, political rights and also women's right of spouse selection. Moreover, research study portrays that a positive change in upcoming generations regarding providing women their rights is one the characteristic way to empower them. The future implications of the study suggest invitation for the researchers to explore more about such anthropogenic practices that could support the youth through empowering the women in society.

Keywords: Components of Empowerment, Women Empowerment, Youth Perception

Introduction

Women empowerment is a multidimensional phenomenon which delves to foster women autonomy in their domestic, social and political spheres. Pakistan is being a patriarchal society was always considered less appreciative towards women inclusion in public, administrative and economic spheres. The study is primarily concerns the young educated population so analyzed this concept with their perspective. The objective of the study was to find out the youth perception about the components of women empowerment. It is hypothesized by the researcher that the educated youth is more understanding and supportive regarding to provide the basic components of empowerment to women's.

Women empowerment involves to provide opportunities to the women's so that they can execute their decision regarding their lives, which were not provided by underprivileged women before that, its tells that rights are the controlling mechanism which are used by the individuals to develop their capabilities and utilized their abilities(Noreen, 2011). Immense gender parity been observed in countries which are underdeveloped or developing, this is because the true human potential is not working.

When women are given equal chance for education and economic sectors they not only improve their own lifestyle but nations fate also transforms.

Previous societies were less conducive for women participation in formal workplace; they were bound to domestic sphere. But with passage of time globalization has transformed people perception about division of labor. 'Women have high level of autonomy regarding to access resources and high level of freedom of movement for their parental, friends and family matters' (Anwar, Shoab, & Javed, 2013). Owing to such studies the given paper intended to analyze young educated people perception towards practicing components of women empowerment. The study indulged to address how young people perceive women status in the society. As what a society perceive regarding any phenomenon ther practically manifest it through their actions.

Women accesses to opportunities are as much as important when we analyzing level of women empowerment. 'Women accesses to resources with gender comparison have lesser control over the resources. Due to patriarchal society women are facing discrimination regarding higher education, job and other income resources' (Paul & Rani, 2017). This gender parity resultantly hindered overall wellbeing of the society. As putting a large section of society out of social, economic and political domains will absolutely cast on overall country's progress. So by addressing people concerns about women participation and by practically manifesting the fruitful outcomes of women empowerment the differences can be resolved.

As women now are participating in every fields 'however there are certain factors such as economic, social, religious and cultural factors that restrict women participation in politics'(Kassa, 2015). South Asian societies are considered to be less inclusive and culturally so strained that women participation outside the domestic affairs perceived negatively. Women right of inheriting property are seems also ingredients of empowerment 'both the Shari ah and the constitution of our country provides women their inheritance rights but in the Punjab we find that denial of their rights is pervasive' (Rubab & Usman, 2018). The given paper is instituted to check the intervening phenomenon of perception of women empowerment and practices of components of women empowerment.

Women right of spouse selection is also an important ingredients of women empowerment which depends upon various other factors 'Women role in spouse selection may be dependents upon certain factors such as the social status of the family and education'(Malhotra, 1991). Having right to select spouse is permissible both in religion and the constitution of Pakistan. The given paper also intended to analyze people perception regarding women right of selecting a spouse. As in patriarchal society women are less independent regarding their financial domains so they are more prone towards arranged marriages and even unfortunately forced marriages. It is mandatory to study what our young generation is perceiving regarding women right to select a spouse.

Literature Review

An intensive review of literature will helpful in examining the determinants of women empowerment and its application in the society. In anthropological perspective 'Power' is control or domination of once to influence the other's decision and behavior (Niezen, 2018). Power considered being subjective when it comes to gender specificity. Men and women are not considered to be equally powerful when it comes to economic and political spheres of the society. Women empowerment is the concept of gaining women control over their own lives and their participation in decision making at domestic and community level (Rehman, 2013). Empowerment gives the women privileged to exercise their economic rights and vice versa.

Empowerment can be measure through four approaches; first it is relational with respect to local, national, and global context. Secondly understanding of 'power', thirdly it is a process and fourthly empowerment is both the process and an outcome (Quiroz, 2006). Hence empowerment is a broader concept which at first demands the basic rights of education, health and security. Letter it endorsed political and legal framework for practicing the components of empowerment. Empowerment of women is a multidimensional concept that enables them to realize their capacities and power which they practice in all spheres of their lives (Rasul, 2014).

Education of the women plays a significance role in the process of empowerment. At domestic and social circle through educating the women it is possible to remove the inequalities and improving their status (Channawar, 2016). Women's occupies more than half population in the society. In order to make a good social person it is important to educate them. Through education women can only learn the difference between right and wrong, and transfer this to the next generations (Mustafa, Khan, & Jameel, 2016). Women identity, decision making power, mobility and socio-economic status is closely interlinked with women education (Nowak, Dahal, & Hossain, 2016).

Women's decision making ability in the domestic affairs is recognized as women's autonomy. It is noticed that women's who are more likely to go outside the home freely have more influence on household decision making (Mahmood, 2002). Women role in decision making process vary with respect to socio-economic status. It also seems that women's decision regarding the health care of the family member is positive while negative with regards to household constructions and repairing (Bagudu, Khan, & Roslan, 2016). Women usually show less ambitious towards the job of more distance from their home while living with their partner. This could be understandable with regards to gender norms (Abraham, Bahr, & Trappmann, 2019).

Women participation in labour market is three times lower than of men. They usually involve in agriculture sector or informal kind of economy having a lot of risk of vulnerability(Khan, Mehmood, Akhtar, & Mahmood, 2014). Along with economic factor cultural milieu is also important in women participation in labor force. It is noticed that women of Islamic countries and those of from Latin America have very less share of labor force in 1980(Clark, Ramsbey, & Adler, 1991). The equal political participation of men and women is important for a balance of societal composition in a democratic and responsive system so that all perspective of the society should be concerned (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019). Women are usually discouraged by public in political sphere, except for those who comes from political families.

It is common societal behavior that women place is at home and men will deals the political ground(Awan 2018). There are different factors that effects the women political participation such as socio-economic status, equal rights, gender discrimination, unjustified quota, and poor political structure creates hindrance in political participation of women(Ghafoor & Haider, 2018). In order to get empowerment by its true way it is important for both the women's and general population to understand the problems and knowledge so its leads towards a societal change smoothly (Fonjong, 2001).

Material and Methods

The explanatory approach is used in the given research study. . By using this approach researcher highlight the existing situation of the problem. The study is conducted on PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi. The target population was students of different programs. A sample of 286 students is selected by using simple random sampling technique. This methodological approach was effective for researcher to explore perceptions of students regarding practicing the components of women empowerment.

For the purpose of data collection researcher formulate questionnaire. More than thirty questions were formulated by the researcher to evaluate the phenomena with various dimensions. Researcher thoroughly prepared these thirty questions and evaluates each component of women empowerment with different perspective gathered from respondents. Quantitative data were collected which were analyzed by using SPSS software. For the purpose of data analysis and discussion researcher arrange the data in tabulated form.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Demographic Background of the Respondents

Gender			Age of the Respondent					Education				Total	
Male	Female	Transgender	Total	18-22	23-27	28-32	33 & above	Total	Bachelors of Science	Masters of science	Masters of Philosophy	Ph.D.	Total
143	142	1	286	225	52	6	3	286	217	55	12	2	286

The above mention table shows the demographic information of the respondents. As mentioned before 286 sample were studied by the researcher in the given study. In this table the gender of the respondents, age and educational level is mentioned to tell about the demography of the respondents. Students from different age group and educational level are studied by the researcher along with their gender differences.

Table 2
Responses regarding health, education, movement, decision making and spouse selection

Categories	Responses in Percentage				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Women accesses to health facilities	47.2	42.3	7.0	2.1	1.4
Women right of education	54.2	33.2	3.2	2.4	7.0
Women freedom of movement	22.4	42.7	19.2	12.9	2.8
Women right of inheritance property	25.5	37.4	23.8	11.5	1.7
Women participation in decision making	29	52.4	13.3	2.8	2.4
Women right of spouse selection	30.4	49.7	14.7	4.5	0.7

In this table the researcher elaborate difference responses of different questions asked to the respondents. By using Likert scale researcher used to estimate the respondents attitudes towards the specific components so that to analyzed the phenomenon. The above mentioned tables shows that there were 47.2 % respondents who strongly agreed with women accesses to health facilities. And 42.3 % were also agreed with women accesses to health facilities. There were 7 % respondents who were replied as neutral, while researcher elaborate that there were a few percentage such as 2.1 % and 1.4 % respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed with women accesses to health facilities. When researcher asked the educational right of women's from their respondents it were also observed that there were massive population which were in favor of that women's should have right to get education. About 54.2 % respondents strongly agreed, 33.2 % were agreed, 3.2 % respondents shows their neutral response, there researcher also seems that 2.4 % respondents were disagreed and 7 % respondents were strongly disagreed with women's right to get education.

Women freedom of movement is also another important component with regards to women empowerment. Researcher asked the question about women freedom of movement from the respondents. There were 22.4 % respondents were strongly agreed with women freedom of movement, 42.7 % were also agreed while 19.2 % shows the neutral behavior. There were also 12.9 % respondents who were disagreed with women freedom of

movement, and 2.8 % were strongly disagreed with this component of women empowerment. Women right of inheritance property have been debatable topic since decades. Property rights are also ingredients of empowerment. Researcher also discussed this in the given research and asked the questions from the respondents. There were 25.5 % respondents who strongly agreed with women right to inherit property, while 37.5 % were agreed with this. Their researcher also seems that about 23.8 % respondents shows their neutral behavior, while it were also observed that 11.5 % respondents were disagreed and 1.7 % were strongly disagreed with women's right of inheriting property.

Another point of discussion for researcher in this study were women participation in decision making process at domestic level. Women participation in decision making process is also a defining factor of level of empowerment. Researcher wants to analyzed the respondents views regarding this so that to enable to estimate the level of women empowerment. The 29 % respondents were strongly agreed while 52.5 % were agreed with women participation in decision making process. About 13.3 % respondents said neutral while 2.8 % were disagreed and 2.4 % were strongly disagreed. Another very important factor that were discussed by the researcher with their respondents were women's right of spouse selection, which is also an integral part of women's empowerment. The above mentioned table shows that 30.4 % respondents were strongly agreed with women's right towards spouse selection while 49.7 % were also agreed. Table shows that there were 14.7 % respondents who were showed their neutral response while 4.5 % and 0.7 % were disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Table 3
Responses regarding job practice, job quota, vote casting, political participation and availability of opportunities

Categories	Responses in Percentage		
	Yes	No	Neutral
Women should participate in job	75.5	8.1	16.4
There should be a job quota for women	75.2	14.3	10.5
There should increase in job quota for women's	68.5	17.8	13.7
Women right to caste the vote	79	10.8	10.2
Women should participate in election	82.5	12.9	4.6
Boys possesses more opportunities to accesses the resources than women's	59.4	21.7	18.9

The above mentioned table shows respondents attitude towards women job participation, job quota for women's, women right of vote casting and women's political participation. Researcher asked various questions from the respondents so that to analyzed their responses regarding different factors. As mentioned in the above table shows that researcher questioned about women job participation from the respondents there were 75.5 % respondents who were replied yes while 8.1 % were No with women's job participation. While there were also 16.4 % replied neutral regarding women's job participation. Another questioned that respondents asked were women's job quota, there about 75.2 % respondents said yes that there should be a separate job quota for women's while 14.3 % said no. Similarly 10.5 % respondents showed their neutral attitude. Researcher elaborating this asked about increase in job quota for women's so there were 68.5 % respondents were replied yes, while 17.8 % replied no. And 13.7 % respondents showed their neutral response.

The researcher also discussed the political participation of women, which were also an ingredients of women empowerment. As the above mentioned table showed that researcher asked the question that women should have right to cast the vote, there were 79 % respondents who were replied yes while 10.8 % replied no. while 10.2 % respondents replied neutral towards women right to cast vote. The researcher further elaborate the concept and asked questioned about women political participation. As above mentioned table shoes that there were 82.5 % respondents were replied yes towards women should participate in politics while 12.9 % said no and 4.6 % respondents replied neutral. The

researcher also discussed an important factor that boys possess more opportunities than women's. So there were 59.4 % respondents who replied yes that boys have more opportunities than women's and 21.7 % said no. While researcher also observed that there are 18.9 % respondents who were replied neutral.

Conclusion

The given study primarily concerns with practicing components of women empowerment with specific opinion of university students. Researcher discussed various components with respondents to elaborate their perception regarding women rights so that to empower them. As it seems that the target population belongs to education so one can analyze the results with the previous study that describes that 'Education, governmental rules and political will are the tools to ensure women empowerment' (Raudeliuniene, Dzemyda, & Kimpah, 2014). So this can be seen in the given study that educated youth shows their positive attitudes towards women empowerment. Women seem to be participating in different fields to be economically independent, when this was discussed with respondents so they agreed with their participation in the formal income generating activities as it is beneficial both for them and their family. 'Female participation in the economic sphere leads to economic growth for herself, their community and alternatively on country development' (Awan & Sadia, 2018).

Getting higher education and pursuing occupation are the most crucial components for empowerment while social norms and cultural practices directly or sometimes indirectly influence the process in a negative way (Aryan, Ashraf, Azam, & Zehtabi, 2009). As mentioned in the table most of the respondents agreed with women's right of getting education and their job participation in the formal sector, so we can say now the social norms are changing towards women's rights. In the given study we can also observe that the majority of the respondents shows their positive behavior towards women's freedom of movement. On the conclusion researcher found out that as the target population were students so if we take education as an independent variable and women empowerment as a dependable variable so the study reveals that respondents show their positive behavior towards women empowerment. The sample population was in favor of providing women all the ingredients of empowerment from education to health, resources, property rights, decision autonomy, spousal selection, political rights and control over their resources.

Recommendations

- As society is becoming gender inclusive more focus should be given on education and skills development of women
- Wider the economic and political opportunities for women for sustainable development of the society
- Ensure safe working environment for women by fostering anti-harassment laws.
- Safeguard women's rights by strengthening legal and institutional framework.
- Encourage gender inclusive environment through awareness campaigns by utilizing mass communication tools such as social media

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