

Women's Contribution in the Household Economy

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Abstract:

This paper focuses on the research findings regarding economic empowerment of women. In this paper an effort has been made to evaluate the effectiveness of recently getting popular and interesting phenomenon of women employment. This paper highlights the impact of women employment on family structure. The study was conducted in a town of Sarai Saleh, Haripur District in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. This research identifies the reasons of women employment, benefits and the problems they face at the work place. The study covers wide range of women contribution in the household economy directly and indirectly. Women in the village had been contributing to the economy since a long time. Initially they were participating in agriculture activities, but now the women are more inclined towards direct sources which include employment sector. Women in the village are working as teachers, nurses, labour in industry and many others. This shift from agriculture to employment sector has brought some changes in their daily life. The impact of women employment on their social position and the family life has been discussed in this article. The data presented in this paper has been collected by using qualitative anthropological research techniques.

Key words: economy, family, women, employment, direct and indirect contribution

Introduction

Many social scientist, scholars, reformers, philosophers and specialists think that socio-economic development and political modernization is not possible without enhancing the status of women in the Third World Countries. Here by status we mean position of women as an individual in the social structure defined by her designated rights and obligations. The status and equality issues became very popular in developed countries especially in Europe and remained dominant during 1980s and 1990s. After an experience of more than 20 years the ladies have started demanding for equity rather than equality. It is true that women's traditional roles are thought to be confined mainly within the household. Egler (1964) argued that a nominal definition of household is: "A household consists of the people who live in one compound and who from either a simple conjugal family or a joint family. Such a Joint family is considered to be a single household, if the income is pooled and expenditures are made from a common purse".

Economy is another important concept used in this article which is defined by Dalton (1967) as: "A set of institutionalized activities which combine natural resources, human labour and technology to acquire, produce and distribute material goods and specialist services in a structured repetitive fashion". But the economy here is used in more general and simple meanings than it is used in the science of economics. Here the economy simply means all those activities which generate income or cause savings, while household economy means all those activities of the members of the household which generate income or cause saving. Here the term production as the activity of residing material items and making them available for human use. In the household economy the production is

defined as the different materials and items used by the household members for the existence of that group. The household unit which consists of men, women and children may show a considerable division of labour. Normally this concept refers to that rules which govern the assignment of jobs to the people. The main emphasis of the study has been laid on the women, their role within the family and economic contribution in the household economy. A woman is the companion of a man in all sorts of development including her contribution in the economic activities of household economy. The woman in its various roles as mother, wife, daughter, grandmother, daughter-in-law helps in household affairs to boost the economy. So the household has been taken as the basic unit of analysis for studying women economic contribution. Sharma (1982) in this regard says: "The household is experience as a basic economic unit on which its members depend for economic survival and advancement, that it is the institution through which people seek to satisfy their basic needs, that its resources are human as well as material, that the household deploy its member, female, male, child and elderly, for maximum socio-economic advantages".

There are many other people who define the household as a basic unit of production and reproduction. According to Benjamin (1977), "The basic unit of production, reproduction, consumption and of social, ceremonial and political interaction, in short the only early identifiable starting point for any kind of social-economic investigation." Household is the basic unit where production, consumption and distribution of goods and services take place for the subsistence of the members of the society and women play a central role within the household, as her all works are mostly related and confined within the household. Household works are subjected to include everything, which is done to organize and care for a family and a home, including regular domestic, and social work and also economic work, which are conducted while remaining at home.

As far as the women's daily works are concerned, they are mostly undefined and thought as obligation rather than a work. Direct economic activities simply mean all those activities which generate money and by indirect economic activities I mean all those activities which cause saving. So women's economic contribution in household economy means all those activities of the household women which generate income or cause saving. (Ambreen et al, 2013). In this way rural women's economic participation in agriculture, other occupations like teaching, selling things etc. and household activities are income generating as well as expenditure saving. A rural woman contributes a lot in the household economy, which is an important part of rural economy. They are the vital human resource in the improvement of the quality of life because earning of these women is crucial for family survival and its improvement. Keeping peace and good atmosphere in house is considered as female's responsibility. God has granted equal status to both men and women and he has endowed them with different specialization skills with respect to their concerning fields. The woman often remains unable to manage between her activities and her relationships with her family. This inability creates tension and problems not only for her but also for the other members of the family. It can be argued that women play a crucial role in the socio economic development of a country. But both in the industrially developed and less developed countries, a woman's household activities are never treated as equal to economic activities (Mohyuddin et al 2012a). These situations are worse particularly in the case of rural women and they suffered the phenomenon in its more intense and spiral form.

Methodology

Methodology of the current research was based upon qualitative anthropological research methods which include

socio-economic survey, participant observation, key informant interviews, interviews, case studies and focus group discussions were used to collect empirical data. For socio-economic survey one *mohallah* which comprises of 61 households was selected. Out of this *mohallah* further sample was selected through snowball and purposive sampling to ensure the maximum presentation of the sample size. We choose two key informants in the village on our personal judgment basis, which knew most of the people in the village and their socio-economic conditions. Participant observation was used in order to get first hand and accurate information about the respondents. In-depth interviews were conducted with the elder members of society to get detailed information. Structured Interviews were used to collect information from the teachers and other working women. Case studies were conducted to get a detailed presentation of data related to different events. This research was conducted in 2011.

Locale

Village Sarai Saleh is one of the 44 union councils, administrative subdivisions, of Haripur District in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. This village is located about 5 kilometers away in the north east of Haripur City. It is a beautiful green valley surrounded by the low hills located in northern part of main G.T Road called Shahr-e-Resham. Sarai saleh is known as land of teachers here literacy level is 75%. Mostly people are doing their jobs inside and outside home. Another specialty of this area is that it's located near Hattar Industrial Area. Many people including the women are working in these industries. Another economic resource for town people is subsistence through nurseries, gardens and fields in the locale. Population composition of this village according to 1998 census is as follows.

Table 1: Total Population of Sarai Saleh

Gender	Frequency
Males	9494
Females	9120
Total	18614

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Mohalla Masjid Noor which has 61 households was taken as the research locale. In this locale mostly women were doing jobs outside their homes. Those women were associated with different profession like teaching, nursing, industrial workers, house maids, lady tailor, lady former and mid wives. Population composition of those 61 households was as under:

Table 2: Sample Population

Males	184
Females	204
Total	388

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Results and Discussion

In Pakistan male and female have different roles to play in the society. There is the biological difference between men and women which forced them in different social roles in all the societies. In past women participate in household economy by doing inside household activities like home management, children care and other activities inside their homes and men participate in household economy by doing outside activities. But due to economic problem faced by all over the world men and women both engaged in income generating activities in order to fulfill their basic needs. Now women are contributing in their household economy directly and indirectly. This scenario has been changed due to the education, economic empowerment, awareness, technological and media development.

In our locale a number of women were indirectly contributing in household economic by performing household chores like managing their home, look after their children and perform other domestic responsibilities. Both literate as well as illiterate women remained busy in these activities. Housewives and the other nonworking women were doing good job at their homes but in comparison with working women their position in the household was weaker. They were less authoritative as far as the decision making was concerned. In general the condition of the houses of working women was found better as compared to the nonworking women. Some people think that housewives are more responsible but here the case was different, working women were providing financial support to their families, sending their children to good schools and also managing their homes in a proper way. Women in the village were working as teachers, nurses, labour in industry and many others. The statistical data of working women of the village is as under.

Table 3: Total Number of Working Women

TYPE OF ECONOMIC EMPLOYMENT	FREQUENCY
Teachers	23
Nurses	9
Worker in industries	4
House maids	7
Midwives	2
Lady tailors	12
Lady former	11
Magician or spiritual lady	1
Business women	4
Total	73

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Teachers

Sarai Saleh was considered as land of teachers. Out of 61 households we found 23 lady teachers. Some teachers were teaching in Government schools and others were in private schools.



Pictures 1 & 2: School Teacher in Government Primary School in Sarai Saleh

There were various benefits as well as problems associated with this profession, which is briefly described below.

Well Managed Domestic Life: Women related to this profession were good managers in their life. They could maintain a good balance between their domestic and professional life.

Case study: We came across a lot of amazing stories regarding working women. These were amazing in the sense that these could be followed by other too as a role model. They were managing their house and their outside jobs in a beautiful way. One of them was a teacher. She was married in an age of 22 years. She had three children one son and two daughters. Her husband committed a murder and was imprisoned. She became alone with no source of income for her family. She was a graduate. She decided to work. Many people in her *biradiri* (descent group) did not allow her to do so but she felt that people were just giving her moral support where as she needed financial support. Then by ignoring all the restrictions of her family and society she started teaching in a private school in Haripur. She also hired one lawyer for her husband bail. She took all the responsibility of her family she didn't stop her children education as well. After some years her husband got

death sentence from the court and was hanged. She didn't give up and started working hard and managed all the problems. She kept an eye on her children's activities. She found that her son is inclined towards delinquency. She watched his activities and found that he had a company of bad friends. Then she arranged some other positive activities for all of her children including outing etc. slowly she turned her son in a positive direction and he became a good college student. She suffered a lot of problems but she stood up right for a safe future for her children. It all happened as she is an educated woman she faced all the problems with courage and maintained a good environment in her family.

Less Marriage Issues: During our research we found that marriages had become a problem in the village especially for the girls as they were not finding suitable spouses. Lady teachers were not facing this problem or at least the intensity was lesser then the others. Most of them were getting reasonable marriage proposal from their own society because people thought that teaching was an honorable profession.

Table 4: Teachers' Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency
Married teachers	9
Unmarried teachers	14
Total teachers	23

(Source: Socio- Economic Survey)

Table 5: Teacher's Employment Status

School	Salary	Qualification	Medical facility	Frequency
Government	15000-25000	B.A/ B.Ed/ M.A	Yes	6
Private	1500-2500	B.A/M.A/MSc	No	17

(Source: Socio- Economic Survey)

Table 6: Reasons and Problems in Teaching Profession

Reasons/ problems	Frequency
Employment as hobby	4
Employment as for financial support	19
Having house maids for help	3
Transportation problems	1
Problems faced by co-worker (males)	-

(Source: Socio- Economic Survey)

Honor: The natives were of the opinion that teaching was the only job in which girls could maintain their honor. So in many families they did not allow their daughters to go for any other professions.

The only problem stated by the women in this profession was low salaries especially of teaching staff engaged by private schools. In private school teachers were doing tuff duties as compared to Governmental teachers, however their salaries were not equal to them. Salary of private teachers ranged from Rs.1500 to 2500 whereas the government teachers were getting from Rs.15000 to 25000.

Women Working in Industry

Hattar industrial area was situated very near to the village. So number of men and women were employed there and earning their livelihood. Working environment was not comfortable and congenial for the females but still some women were working there. Their number was not as high as it was in teaching. They were 4 only one of them was a widow, others were poor and destitute girls want to support their families.



Pictures 3, 4 & 5: Hattar industrial Area and the Women Employees

Table 7: Marital Status of Industrial Women

Marital status	Frequency
Married	1
Unmarried	2
Widow	1
Divorced	-
Total	4

(Source: Socio- Economic Survey)

Table 8: Reasons and Problems in Industrial Working Women

Reasons / problems	Frequency
Employment as hobby	-
Employment as for financial support	4
Having house maids for help	-
Transportation problems	2

Problems faced by co-worker (males)	3
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(Source: Socio- Economic Survey)

Problems of the Women Working in the Industry

Reputation: Most of the natives did not like women's employment in industry. All 4 of them had chosen this profession to meet family economic needs as they were very poor and had no other option. Mostly girls were not very happy working there but they said that as long as they were supporting their families they did not care about the problems and the people.

Marriage Problems: Both the unmarried girls reported that they were facing problems regarding their marriages. They were not finding suitable proposals. They complained that the people of their caste (*baradri*) did not like them because of their work. Their parents were finding spouses for them from outside the family. Traditionally they were endogamous but due to their job they were willing for out of caste marriages which normally were not preferred. Many parents were complaining that due to their daughters' employment their *baradri* had socially boycotted them.

Long Duty Hours and Transportation: Another problem related with this profession was their duty hours and transportation. They had to work for very long working hours. Duty timing was very tuff. Girls were doing their jobs in very tuff duty hours. Sometime they had to work for more than 12 hours a day. The transport further added into the timing as they had to travel long distance from their home to the workplace. They left early in the morning and returned late in the evening. This made their job very tuff and difficult to manage.

Table 9: Duty Timing

Buss timing	6.00 am
Duty timing	7.30am- 6.30pm
Departure from factory	6.30pm

Patriarchal Society: Previously the natives were very rigid and the society was purely a patriarchal society. During the research many people reported change in the attitudes. They thought that the women were working in all walk of life and they were free to do anything they wanted as compared to the past. But still there were many males who never wanted to allow their women to work.

Health Issues: Women kept themselves busy at their workplace and gave less time to the household chores which increased their reliance on the consumer products especially the food items. The edible products did not match the nutritional level of the homemade items and thus caused malnutrition leading to health problems. The women striving for more money often worked more than normal and took less care for their diet. While working they ate whatever was available, so their health started deteriorating because of the malnutrition and overworked (Mohyuddin et al 2012b, 2012g). In spite of their health issues they did not get time to take rest. They had only one day off as their weekend. No sick leaves were allowed and if ever needed had to be unpaid.

Poor Salary Packages: Salaries of the women working in employment sector were not very good. Majority of them were getting Rs.8000 to 15000 per month. Most of them reported that the input and the output do not match. They had to put a lot of hard work but in the end got a very minimal amount of money. It was hard to fulfill their basic needs even. The only consolation was that they were being paid and providing some assistance to their family income. Some of them were able to manage their household expenditures within their salaries.

During our research we came across some amazing case studies where some women were supporting their families very successfully after the death of their husbands or fathers.

Case Study: Father of one of our female respondents was a teacher in Government School who died with tuberculosis 16 years ago and left three daughters and one widow. Our respondent was the eldest among the sisters and had no brother so all burden to run the family came on her shoulder. She was just 14 years of age when her father died. She quit her studies after passing primary and started working as labour in factory. She successfully supported her family and got one of her younger sister married. Another sister was suffering from asthma. She was arranging resources for her treatment on regular bases. Her mission was to support and live for her family. Her mother was old and had a poor health due to which she could not help her supporting the family. While fulfilling her responsibilities her age of marriage had passed then. If she didn't support her family while scarifying her own life her family would have been spoiled.

Case Study: Our 2nd respondent was 33 years unmarried women. She belonged to Arain caste. When she was in 8th class she becomes seriously ill. Due to her illness she left her school and education. Then she mostly spent her time in her home with their family. After some years she became physically fit but then she didn't have any interest in her studies so she didn't continue. After some years her father died so then she was living with her brother and mother. She thought that being unmarried she should do something for herself and her old age. She decided to take employment in any of the field. So she visited the factory located in Hattar industrial area and submitted her documents and application for job long time she got employment in this factory. She was surprised to see her job description list. Her work was very tuff she had to work for

12 hours a day in a standing posture. She reported that work was not a big problem however the whole working environment of the factory was not so good and friendly. Women coworkers were not friendly and besides that the people were also not supportive.

Nursing

Nursing was another profession which we found in our locale.

Table 10: Marital Status of Nurses

Marital status	Frequency
Married	3
Un married	6
Total	9

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Table 11: Reasons and Problems in this Profession

Reasons/ problems	Frequency
Employment as hobby	-
Employment as for financial support	9
Having house maids for help	-
Transportation problems	3
Problems faced by co-worker(males)	2

(Source: Field Data)

Benefits

- *Salary packages in nursing were better than the others therefore many women were attracted towards this profession.*
- In army nurses could wear army ranks due to which this profession has become attractive and prestigious. Nurses had different ranks like Lieutenant, Captain, Major and even higher. Parents are proud to get employed their daughters in Army nursing corps.

Problems

- In this profession women were also facing marriage problems. Unmarried girls were not having marriage proposal because of tuff duty timings. Married women were unable to manage their job and home in a proper way.
- In our society many families do not like this profession. People think that dealing with the male patient is not good for girls. In our locale people were very sensitive about tradition and culture so they are very concerned with the honor of their daughters. They even become furious if their daughters go outside without purdah.
- Another problem related with this profession was working atmosphere. Many harassment cases at work place during work hours were reported. Mostly girls didn't have any idea about the laws related with harassment and many others hesitated to share this situation with their families.

Business Women

Many women had their own small level business of cloth trading. Usually they sold bed sheets and cloth in the surrounding areas. Through stitching, crochet work, knitting sweaters and embroidery women made different variety and earned money. Some women hired other women for this work and sold their product in cities market which earned them more profit.

Table 12: Marital Status of Business Women

Marital status	Frequency
Married	4
Un married	-
Total	4

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Stitching

From ages, stitching clothes and preparing dresses had remained an integral part of a girl's skills. A lot of native women were doing this job and supporting their families. It was considered as a beautiful art of these women.



Pictures 6, 7 & 8: Lady Tailor

Table 13: Marital Status of Lady Tailor

Marital status	Frequency
Married	6
Un married	6
Total	12

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Table 14: Type of Stitching

Sr.	Type of stitching	Time	Price	Monthly Production	Monthly Income
1.	Simple suite	3 hr	200	15	3000

2.	Modern suite	4 hr	280	18	5040
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(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Embroidery

Embroidery was one of the most common skills among the native women. Almost every woman knew embroidery. This was their hobby as well as a source of income. The women did beautiful embroidery on shirts and *dopatta* (scarf) with thread of different colors in beautiful designs. They also did it on bed sheets, cushion, cover, table cloth; pillow covers and makes all these things for house as well as for earning. The women started learning this art from the early age.

Table 15: Time Spend in Embroidery

Time	Domestic work	Time spend on embroidery
Morning	6.00 to 9.00 am	9.30 to 12.00 pm
Afternoon	12.00 to 2.00 pm	3.00 to 4.00 pm
Evening	5.00 to 9.00 pm	–

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)



Pictures 9, 10 & 11: Embroidery by Locale Women

Table 16: Type of Stitching

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Sr.	Type of stitching	Time	Price	Monthly income
1.	Bed sheet set	4 or 5 days	2500	Not fix
2.	Sweater	3 days	250	
3.	Embroidery suit	2 days	500 or 1000	

Benefits

- This work could have done by women in their homes. So they did not need to go anywhere. They easily did their domestic chores and this work simultaneously.
- This was also known as an art among the women. Many girls were expert in the field. This skill was transmitting from mother to daughter. These women could easily use their professional skills in the way they wanted. Sometimes they follow their inherited traditions and sometimes contemporary fashion.
- Embroidery skills were often beneficial for the native girls to attract suitable marriages proposals. Families prefer those girls as their daughter-in-laws who are expert in this art.
- In this profession working hours were not fixed. It depended on the will of the women whenever she wanted to work to take rest unlike office women who were depended on other will for rest/leave.

Problems

- In this profession health problems were also involved. We found that the women who were doing stitching clothes from many years are suffering eye sight problems.

- While running their own business they had to face loss or profit on their risk. There were no specific salary packages for them like other jobs.
- For uplifting their business women had to take lots of responsibilities. To run business was more challenging than any other job.



Pictures 12, 13, 14 & 15:

Homemade Products

Women in Agriculture

Rural Women in Pakistan carry out these tasks in addition to their normal domestic chores but in this area woman were working in the nurseries and fields on daily wage.



Pictures 16, 17 & 18: Farm Activities



Pictures 19, 20 & 21: Farm Activities

Table 17: Marital Status of Lady Farmer

Marital status	Frequency
Married	11
Un married	-
Total	11

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Benefits

- Women working in agriculture have never been taken by surprise in our society. People don't take it in negative sense. These have social approval.
- Women were providing facilities to their husbands and near ones in the fields. They took part in all activities like sowing, transplanting, weeding and harvesting.

Problems

- In this profession health problems were very common. Women were involved in many skin diseases. Especially in summer dehydration was a major problem due to extensive heat and lack of water in the body.
- If women were doing work in their own fields then they don't take salaries from their husbands. In case of daily wages women were also earning low wages.

Beauty Parlors

Beauticians were also serving in the locale. Two girls, one native and the other outsider, were running their own parlor.

Table 18: Marital Status of Beauticians

Marital status	Frequency
Married	-
Un married	2
Total	2

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Table 19: Beauty Parlors Treatment and Rates

Sr.	Name of treatment	Time	price	Monthly income
1.	Party makeup	2 hrs	550	Not fixed
2.	Hair dye	1 hr	500	
3.	Hair cut	30 min	200	
4.	Eye brows	15 min	40	
5.	Upper lips	10 min	20	
6.	Lower lips	10 min	20	
7.	Facial	1 hr	1500	

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)



Pictures 22, 23 & 24: Beauty Parlors in Locale

Benefits

- In recent past this profession had become very popular especially among young females. Mostly working women or college girls were attracted towards this profession.
- Beauty parlor depended on the will of beautician. They had flexible timing. They were not bound like office workers.
- Beautician could easily use their professional skills in the way they wanted.

Problems

- While running their own parlor they had to face financial risk. Sometimes they earned more and sometimes they did not have customers.
- There were no specific salary packages for them like many other jobs.
- For uplifting their business women had to take a lot of responsibilities. To run business was more challenging.

Midwives

There were two mid wives in the locale. Both were very experienced and qualified *dais* (TBA). They could handle delivery cases and also gave medicine to patient.

Table 20: Marital status of mid wives

Marital status	Number of women
Married	2
Un married	-
Total	2

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)

Benefits

- *Midwives are performing in many different cities and villages of Pakistan. They are serving in government as well as the in private sector. Midwives are serving since times. So people can trust on them.*
- *In this job women don't have to go to the far-off places. Midwives usually visit the homes in their own locale.*

Problems

- Local midwives are not so skilled and in many cases they are not aware about new technologies so they treat females in a wrong way.
- Actually people also blame midwife for any complications that occur during and after delivery.

Housemaids

It is common for women in the third world to earn money by doing services for others such as laundering, food processing, serving, grooming etc.(Lone et al 2013). In our locale housemaids were also playing a significant role in the economic activities and supporting their families.

Table 21: Marital status of house maids

Marital status	Frequency
Married	7
Un married	-
Total	7

(Source: Socio-Economic Survey)



Pictures 25 & 26: Housemaid Activities

Benefits

- In this profession women are mostly uneducated. Women who are expert in household chores and want to support their families choose this profession.
- In this job experience is not involved. Women start this job in any time and without any experience.
- This job is based on physical abilities instead of mental labour. So women can do it in a positive way.

Problems

- In this profession health problems are highly involved. Women do a lot of work so their own health suffer a lot.

Conclusion

Women play a very vital role in human progress and have a significant place in the society. They are not at all inferior to men. They are capable of sharing all the responsibilities of life. Man and woman have been rightly compared to the wheels of the same carriage. Islam has accorded an equal position to women in the society. Islam realized the importance of women and granted them a very dignified position equal to man.

According to statistics taken after a survey of 61 households, I found that 73 women are doing jobs outside homes. They are affiliated with different professions like

teachers, nurses, and industrial lady workers, lady tailor, lady formers, and others. But I also focus on the employment impact on their families and their own self. I found out some positive and negative impact of women employment on their families.

In the town, many cases were observed which shows that women are supporting their families by doing outside and inside activities. They faced lot of problem by doing both jobs but they are satisfied because in their point of view the advantages are more than their disadvantages. Widow and divorced women are responsible for the economic duties in their families. So we cannot ignore their sacrifices for their families by doing both jobs inside their homes and outside.

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