Level of Satisfaction of Working and Non-Working Women in Relation to their Socio-economic Conditions and Education

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at examining the satisfaction level of women with their socio-economic conditions and education, based on survey data relating to 262 married females. It is suggested that education enables women to earn, resulting a higher level of satisfaction. Another important predictor in the study is social class of women, which plays an important role in their satisfaction level. The main assumption of this study is that working women, irrespective of their education are more satisfied.

Keywords: Education, working women, non-working women, socio-economic conditions

JEL Classification: I00, I24, I25, I31

Introduction

Neo-classical economists believe that women in the labor force are due to the education, which is the prime epitome. It is also evident that the more the woman is qualified and equipped with education, the superior the contribution is found in the labor market (Mincer, 1980). However, the structuralism thought has a different view that there are additional factors besides learning, which coerce a woman to step into the labor workspace (Strobe 1980). The principle factor compelling women to sell their labor is income. Therefore, according to Struturalist school of thought the lower is the women's family class (income), the greater is their compulsion to enter the labor market. How does this justify with neo-classical theory? The Structuralist school of thought states that family class (income) is the primary determinant of women's sale of labor power. Therefore in a society divided by income group, lower income class women will tend to sell their labor power more. However, within each earning group, a raise in education will add to the contribution of women's employment and its return (satisfaction).

Social and Legal impairment is known to the most of the women in Pakistan that are the cause of low literacy rate, productivity and bad health. In addition, being unhealthy/weak and solely dependent on family creates more issues and ads on to the ill women status in the society she is living. The supply of women's labor power depends on family structure, which reflects the socio-economic characteristics of a family. Although data on women from urban Sindh taken from Labor force survey 2007-08, shows very low involvement of women in

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labor force that is 12.50%. According to household integrated economics survey 2007-08 over all literacy among women of urban Sindh is around 53.5%, out of which only 4.02 % women are Post graduate or PhD.

Variation in socio-economic conditions is a major factor, influencing women's participation in earning activity. In view of their vital role in economic activity a study was carried to know the satisfaction level of women with their socio-economic conditions. Due to inadequate data, relatively little analytical work on this issue has been undertaken, however the present study is an attempt to explore why some women, engaged in economic activities are more satisfied while some of them are not, irrespective of their education and social class.

Methodology

The study was carried out in three social classes of Karachi. Data was collected through multistage random sampling on the basis of social stratification (13% from upper class, 32 % from middle and 55% from lower class). Total sample size is 262 of married women (22 women from upper class, 86 from middle and 154 women from lower class group). Data were collected through an interview schedule from married females because normally they are equal to their partner's status and considered as independent. Married females have relatively more choice in entering the economic activities compared to unmarried women. A comparison of this kind will help us in identifying factors influencing women's satisfaction level.

In present study, different variables (i.e. social class structure, educational level, satisfaction level with respect of education for working and non working women etc; have been analyzed. We applied three basic extension of Chi square that is Pearson's Chi square, likelihood ratio and Mantel Haenszel statistics (Wrigley, 1985; Agresti, 1990; Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996).The basic aim of applying these three statistical tools was to strengthen our conclusion and findings.

Conceptual Frame Work

We now present the conceptual framework of those variables, which affect the satisfaction level of a woman.

Figure 1:
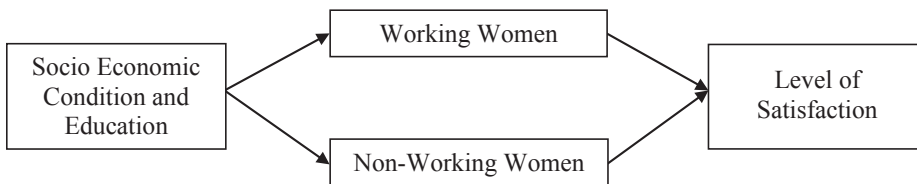
Social Class

Social class is the most powerful variable in this study as it influences almost every other factor of interest. Classes are divided as upper, middle and lower according to family income level of respondents. A social class in Pakistan plays a significant role on different aspect of lives of Pakistani women.

Education

Educational level is categorized as low, medium and high. Low describes those respondents who were Inter or less, whereas medium were graduate and high were post graduate or above respondents.

Satisfaction level with Socio economic conditions

Socio-economic conditions of women are studied with reference to the existing cultural assets, income, material chattels and membership in the group activities of the community. This concept was used with the assumption that the satisfaction level (i.e. completely satisfied, to some extent, not at all) with socio economic conditions might have had influence on the status of women.

Working women

Working women contribute in the economic system and a part of creating revenue via their economic activities. The working experience and the profession give the female individual a social standing in the society, which is known by the division of labor within the society. Operationally it is assumed in this study that working women's prestige, class, position and style of life might get affected by the social structure.

Major Findings

Based on the data set of 262 female respondents, 125 (47.7% were non-working whereas 137 (52.3% were working women.). Most females belong to labor force due to larger sample size. An over whelming majority of respondents (75%) were between the age group from 31 to 50 years. As for education level, 74.7% females were either intermediate or less, 46 (17.5%) were graduates and 22(8.31%) were postgraduate. As of marital status 04 respondents were divorced whereas 02 of them were separated.

Almost all respondents (92.4%) strongly favor female education 89.35% had favorable opinion towards working women, 94.4% believed that women play a very important role in the wellbeing of their families while 96.4% believe that women should play important role in economic activities. Higher proportion 151 (57.31%) of married couple opted living in joint family system as problems like security and care of the house or children in absence of parent is solved easily in joint family system.

Analysis and Discussion

Social class Relative to Economic Activity

In a society like ours, females were known to play only a role of housewives. Male members would become more dominant as female members become dependent. Economic dependence is a major cost of less confident female in the society. It is, but assumes that urbanization may result in a different scenario. Most facilities at the door step particularly education makes females more confident and less dependent. We tested the level of social class to which a female belongs to see the effects of their particular status that is employed or not. Findings of this particular question are summarized in table 1(a).

Statistical analysis shows that being a non working (housewife) or working is independent of family's status. Note that the measures of association are with p<0.01. however , a close look at the table 1(a) reveals that the highest proportion of working females belong to either middle or lower social class . Almost three fourth of the middle or lower social class (74.4%) are working women.

According to World Bank, labor force participation rate of Pakistani female population with age bracket of 15-64 was 40.7%, 30.2% and 35.6% in the year 2000, 2004 and 2007, respectively.

A proceeding of World Bank (1991) has reported that women in lower economic strata are much more likely to be employed than women in higher strata. Indeed, while poor

women have lower status in the community, they obtain a higher status within the family, whereas the converse is true of women in higher economic groups.

In society where urbanization is taking place, people of lower social class are moving to the group of middle and high social class, we observe that high proportion of female are now earning. It is observed that female employment and income they generate is a significant component of the overall family income in many countries (Mincer, 1980; Hafeez, 1981).

Bahr (1991) have emphasized that working women share one third to one half of the total family income, thus families move from lower to middle or higher social groups. Availability of facilities such as education and access to jobs results in working females. A comparatively larger proportion of lower social class women are engaged in employment (42%) most of these women perform in house jobs and provide a helping hand to the other earning members of the family (Sathar, Crook, Callum, & Kazi, 1988; Hamid, 1991). Desai and Jain (1994) have advocated that high percentage of women who are involved in labor market belong to poor class which is compelling them to sell their labor for income.

A comparatively low proportion of working women are associated from high class families. A large proportion is not doing anything except being housewives, male members of this class are usually well off with sound business or jobs while women only work for enjoyment or to pass their time.

Socio Economic Condition Relative to Education

Satisfaction of human beings depends upon various factors some people get satisfied due to different facilities available to them while some feel more satisfied in religious environment. However the force of satisfaction mostly is related with economic benefits. A family, and thus society, which is economically sound is usually more satisfied. Although exceptions are there, due to importance of this criterion we have studied the response of women on their level of satisfaction due to their socio-economic conditions. As its known education in turns add to higher economic levels and thus results in families with high income (Becker, 1980; Mincer, 1980; Hafeez, 1983; Turner, 1984; Shah, 1986). Alba-Ramirez and Segundo (1995) considered satisfaction levels with respect to the education levels. However, since all educated women do not work to earn, we have studied the effect of education on satisfaction level for both working and non-working women.

Table 2(a) summarizes the observations regarding satisfaction level with respect to education for non-working (housewives) women and Table 3(a) summarizes the data for working women. Tests of association were employed and their corresponding results were given in Table 2(b) and 3(b) for non-working and working women, respectively. Table 2(b) for non-working women reveals that the satisfaction level due to socio-economic conditions is independent of the education level. Undergraduate women are "to some extent" satisfied with their socio-economic conditions, while comparatively same proportion (32.6% and 39.1%) are completely satisfied. The proportion of women who are completely satisfied is quite high (57.1%) for highly educated unemployed women. If we look at this result it accentuates to another social behavior of our society. Women who do not work (housewives) irrespective of their qualification behave similarly, and think in the same way. It is however strange to note that a very low proportion of respondents are "not at all" satisfied with their socio-economic conditions, although usually it is believed that majority of housewives are satisfied with their socio-economic conditions.

Table 3(b) clearly reveals that the satisfaction with respect to the socio-economic conditions strongly depends upon the education for working women. Small p-values ($p<0.0001$) associated with various measures of association are evident of these facts. This contrast between the attitude of working and non-working women towards satisfaction is strange enough. Table 3(a) shows that this proportion (of completely satisfied) is very low

(6%) for working but less literate women. Large numbers of literate people are coming out of the institutions, especially in urban areas, but the jobs for them are scarce. People do not get jobs according to their expectations, which results in frustration. In addition, those who are earning less and have insecurity with respect to jobs add more to unsatisfied people in the society. Working women who are highly qualified, on other hand, are more (53.3%) satisfied with their socio-economic conditions. Graduate working female share the highest proportion of completely satisfied working women (51.7%). Among all graduate working women (65.3%) who have comparatively better job opportunities with respect to their educational level, are more satisfied. Education helps in providing satisfaction to people with respect to their socio-economic conditions, which can be observed in figure 2 that there is a continuous rising pattern for graduate and postgraduate working women and a sharp decline for the undergraduates. Figure 1 reveals that after a certain period housewives start thinking in a similar way irrespective of their education. Major reason may be that all these females irrespective of their education depend on the income of their husbands (Shah, 1986).

Table 1(a): Female respondents' social class and their occupational status

Status of female	Lower	Middle	Upper	Total Frequency
Housewives	72.0%	17.6%	10.4%	**125**
Working women	46.7%	46.7%	6.6%	**137**
Total Frequency	**154**	**86**	**22**	**262**

Table 1(b): Statistical analysis

Chi square	Value	d.f.	Sig.
Pearson	25.13	2	0.000
Likelihood ratio	26.01	2	0.000
Mantel-Haenszel	7.17	1	0.007

Statistics	Value	t-value	Sig.
Pearson's R	0.165	2.710	0.007
Spearman's Correlation	0.215	3.533	0.000

Table 2(a) Educated Housewives and level of satisfaction with socio-economic conditions

Satisfaction level	Inter or Less	Graduate	Post Graduate
Completely	70.5	20.5	9.0
To some extent	76.6	20.3	3.1
Not at all	88.2	5.9	5.9

Table 2(b) Statistical analysis

Chi square	Value	d.f.	Sig.
Pearson	3.851	4	0.426
Likelihood ratio	4.340	4	0.361
Mantel-Haenszel	2.025	1	0.154

Statistics	Value	t-value	Sig.
Pearson's R	-0.127	-1.429	0.155
Spearman's Correlation	-0.127	-1.422	0.157

Table 3(a) Educated working women and level of satisfaction with their socio-economic conditions

Satisfaction level	Inter or Less	Graduate	Post Graduate
Completely	20.7	51.7	27.6
To some extent	86.4	5.6	8.0
Not at all	85.0	15.0	0

Table 3(b) Statistical analysis

Chi square	Value	d.f.	Sig.
Pearson	51.373	4	0.000
Likelihood ratio	50.166	4	0.000
Mantel-Haenszel	27.023	1	0.000

Statistics	Value	t-value	Sig.
Pearson's R	-0.445	-5.785	0.000
Spearman's Correlation	-0.485	-6.445	0.000

Conclusion

Women get themselves engaged in jobs based upon the social class to which they belong. It is also to be noted that respondents haven't been classified in different social classes based upon their family background instead present income was the only criterion for allocating a specific social class.

A female satisfied of her socio-economic conditions could also play an important role in the society. It is expected that education change the behavior and attitudes. As a result hypothesis was tested concerning the dependence of satisfaction level according to education level. The behavior also depends upon the economic conditions. Thus, we studied the outlined hypothesis for working and non-working women, separately and the independence of satisfaction on socio-economic conditions and educational level (for non-working women) is rejected. On the other hand, the hypothesis that satisfaction level and the educational level are independent was accepted for working women. It is mainly due to the fact that women earn and therefore are more satisfied, even if they do not belong to higher social status.

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