

FEMALES' PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

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This study was conducted to observe females' participation in economic activities with special reference to women of kachi abadis. The universe for the study consisted of the married working women living in the kachi abadi of 'Islam Nagar' in Faisalabad City. Out of 3000 house-holds a sample of 150 respondents was selected with the help of random sampling technique. Data was collected through interview schedule. Significance of relationship between certain variables were observed through chi-square test. Ratios were calculated to find out the extent of females' contribution to their family income.

INTRODUCTION

Women are important and integral part of every society. However, the status and role played by them differ from society to society. Generally in the developing countries they are considered as dependent and liability. They are encircled by the age-old customs, low literacy level, unpaid manual labour and an unbroken cycle of child bearing. With all these handicaps they stand the test of the changing situation and time demand, as they now form a large part of the home and industrial labour force.

Situation in Pakistan is not different. According to Economic Survey 1985-86 the population of Pakistan is estimated to be 97.67 millions, during the year of 1986 and females form more than 48% of it. The population is growing at the natural rate of 3.20 percent per year. This is the highest in South Asia and among the highest in comparable Muslim Countries. Active population of Pakistan is about 25.89 millions where as the female active population is only 4.80 percent as compared to 93.50 percent males. But the figures of active female labour may force not give a true picture as it indicates the women working only in public and private organizations. The women who are engaged in other

economic activities privately such as sewing, embroidering clothes, spinning, carpet making, taking care of animals etc., are generally ignored. Such women in thousands are contributing in the development of their country but their labour is unrecognized. Therefore, we can hint out that women is not economically an unproductive individual. The irony of fate is that her work in rural as well as in urban areas is not only unrecognized but she also gets a prejudicial treatment. Purdah, false prestige, males' opposition, over work, repeated child bearing, hinder many women in seeking better paid jobs outside their homes.

With these handicaps she is still willing to do whatever petty jobs she can get for making a few extra rupees which she can utilize in making her home conditions better. She supports her children directly and contributes towards the country's development indirectly. Need of the time is that her job and efforts must be recognised. This cannot be achieved without bringing certain attitudinal changes in the society towards female education and employment. It is, therefore, necessary that females may be trained in such trades and professions in which they could get employment and perform their duties comfortably. The training of new generation should be according to the needs and requirements of the country so that they can contribute properly towards the development of the nation.

The present study aims to find out the economic contribution of females living in kachi abadis without even knowing the comforts of modern age. It is to be found how far they are contributing to their family income and the extent of time spent by them in such activities.

Major objectives of the study are :-

- i) To find out the type of economic activities in which females are engaged.
- ii) To assess the extent of females' contribution to family income.
- iii) To measure the time spent in such activities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

With a view to pinpoint this important problem a universe consisted of married women engaged in some economic activities living in the kachi abadies of Islam Nagar, in Faisalabad city, was selected. Due to time and finance limitations at the disposal of the researchers a sample of 150 respondents out of the total universe was drawn with the help of random sampling method. To

draw the sample statistical table of random numbers was used. Keeping in view the low literacy level of the respondents it was decided to use interview schedule for the collection of data. After developing the instrument pretesting was done to test the validity and workability of it. Chi-square test was utilized in order to observe the significance of relationship between certain variables. Ratio was counted to assess the extent of females' contribution to family income.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Female Employment, Income and Time Spent

After interpretation of data it was found that majority of the females were pursuing skilled or semi-skilled economic activities as 39.30 and 42.00 percent of them were engaged in sewing, spinning and carpet making respectively, while only 18.70 per cent of the respondents were pursuing non-skilled activities i. e., working as housemaids in various houses or looking after the animals. The findings agree to those of Khan and Bilquees (1976) and Gardezi (1964). A large number of working women worked more than five hours daily in order to meet their family expenses. These results are consistent with those of Palmer (1977) and Marilyn Carr (1982), as they found that females have to work longer hours to meet their family needs. The data indicate that more than fifty percent of the women in the study area earned a very meagre amount of Rs. 250/- per month in spite of putting longer hours in work daily.

In Table 1 a significant association between type of female employment and their husbands' occupation was found as the calculated value of chi-square is greater than its tabulated value when it is seen at .05 percent level of significance. The percentages also indicate that wives of the skilled workers and servicemen were mostly involved in semi skilled jobs rather than pursuing petty jobs like animal care or household chores.

Table 2 reflects that calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value at 0.05 percent level of significance. It means that there is significant association between the two. However, the percentages indicate no clear cut trend. The percentage distribution reveals that majority of the respondents from low income families could earn only upto Rs. 250/- monthly.

Table 1. *Type of female employment in relation to their husbands' occupation.*

Husband's Occupation	Type of Employment							
	Sewing		Spinning & Carpet Making		Animal Care and Housemaid		Total	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Skilled worker	31	36.5	44	51.8	10	11.7	85	100
Service Men.	20	52.6	14	36.8	4	10.6	38	100
Petty business Men.	8	29.6	5	18.6	14	51.8	27	100
Total	59	39.3	63	42.0	28	18.7	150	100

$$\text{Calculated } X^2 = 27.68 \quad df = 4 \text{ (significant).}$$

Table 2. *Respondents' income in relation to total family income.*

Monthly family income (in Rs.)	Respondent income (in Rs.)						Total	
	upto 250		251 - 500		501 and above			
	F	P	F	P	F	P		
Upto 1500	49	71.0	15	21.75	5	7.25	69	100
1501-3000	16	38.1	19	45.2	7	16.7	42	100
3000 and above	15	38.5	13	33.3	11	28.2	39	100
Total	80	53.3	47	31.3	23	15.4	150	100

$$\text{Calculated } X^2 = 17.2 \quad df = 4 \text{ (significant).}$$

Ratio of respondents' income to total family income.

Average income for all the female respondents as well as their families were calculated as Rs. 386.87 and 2302.67 per month respectively. Respondents' family income includes the respondents' contribution as well. The total family income appears quite reasonable. The proportion of respondents' income has been calculated and it came to be 16.80 percent with a standard error of 1.54.

Application of chi-square establishes no significant association between income of the respondents' family and the type of employment pursued by the respondents. Income of the respondents and family income were found to be

associated significantly with each other. Even the attitude of the people was not found to be significantly related with the monthly income of the respondents.

Discussion and Suggestions.

The study indicates that majority of the respondents were in medium age group and were illiterate. They were making marginal contribution to their family income. Majority of them had largesized families and their husbands were also pursuing semi-skilled occupations with a very low level of literacy. Mostly these women preferred to work within the four-walls of their homes. Most of these working women were forced to do these petty jobs by their circumstances. The study reveals that :-

1. Working women have to put in longer hours for a nominal earning. It, therefore, demands that such measures should be undertaken through which they could earn more and spend less time. The lesser input of time will help to improve their health.
2. Better technology oriented jobs may be provided which will increase their earning and reduce physical labour.
3. Women skills may be channelized through women cooperatives at the mohalla level in urban and rural areas. Vocational centres may be instituted where females can easily go and work.

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