Predictive Strength of Individual, Familial and Socio-Cultural Determinants of Women’s Empowerment

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Abstract
Interest in finding out the factors that support women to attain empowerment is deepening in developing countries including Pakistan. In the present study we determined the relative strength of the individual, familial and socio-cultural factors of women’s empowerment. Sample of married women aged 18-49 year (n=1000) from Punjab, Pakistan was taken. A step wise regression analysis was run to see the relative contribution of independent variables in women’s empowerment. The latent women empowerment variable is measured using observed indicators. The results show that individual level factors (paid job, personal income , property, self-esteem, gender awareness perception ,internal locus of control and legal awareness) appear to be the most salient predictors of women’s empowerment followed by familial level factors (conjugal term, family head, and husband’s support), and socio-cultural factor(use of mobile phone). The value of R²= .57 indicates good fit of the model. The study concludes that in a patriarchal culture like Pakistan, women’s personal attributes emancipate them from their state of disempowerment. Although individual factors are the most important enabling factors to empowerment, yet achievement of women’s empowerment also depends on the attitude of the family. Role of mobile phone cannot be overlooked in strengthening the individual and familial factors. Scope of the study and Policy is also discussed.

Key Words: Women’s Empowerment, Individual Factors, Familial Factors, Socio-Cultural Factors.