

# **Women disempowerment in Baloch and Pashtoon culture of Baluchistan; causes and constraints**

(Authors: Muahmmad Shafiq, Nosheen Rafiq)

## **Abstract:**

In terms of area, Balochistan constitute the largest province of Pakistan: however, it has the lowest population density in the country. It is considered a backward province that lacks industrialization and infrastructure. Inhabitants are traditional in their culture and rites. Hence, women are marginalized and deprived of their basic right and opportunities. The purpose of the current study is to examine the women empowerment which was constraints by the number of factor. Women of Balochistan have the potential to participate in every sphere of life. However, they are constraints to domestic chores rather than to serve the society beyond the boundaries of home with respect and dignity. This disempowerment is due to socio-cultural restrictions, which causes financial and economic difficulty for women in the province. Lack of self-confidence, conservative family background, and lack of support from the government are the few factors which cause disempowerment of women. Women are supposed to be remained within the boundaries of house. Generally, they have no such permission to access the outside without the consent of their male member. As a matter of fact, they are not permitted to contribute in the earning of household by approaching outside the home side. In many cases, women are allowed for selective job opportunities which entirely depend on the male member mental approach. The willingness of women to choose their life partner is almost impossible or/and considered taboo. Early marriages are also rampant in rural areas of the province. Women are constraints to get education. Most of areas in Balochistan, girls are marginalize from schooling. Lack of self-belief and confidence, financial difficulties, unawareness of laws are the few other causes which disempowered the women in the Baloch-Pashtoon cultural province. This paper is an attempt to measure the causes of disempowerment in the Baloch-Pashtoon cultural society of Balochistan. Due to remote and long distances and constraints of fund, convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data using five scale Likert scale self-constructed questionnaire with proper steps taken to ensure reliability and validity of measurement. Hypotheses were tested using correlation and hierarchical moderated regression analysis. Results indicated that there is a constraints for women for her economic growth and development, causing disempowerment for women.

**Keywords:** Pashtoon Baloch culture, women empowerment, causes, constraints.

## **Introduction:**

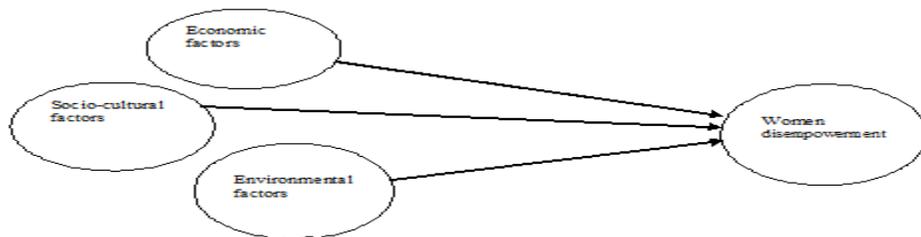
Baluchistan constitute the largest province (in terms of area) of Pakistan: however, it has the lowest population density in the country (GoP, 1998). Quetta is the capital city of Baluchistan situated at an average elevation of 1,680 meters (5,500 ft) above sea level, (Pakistan Paedia, 2012). The province constitute a traditional culture in which tribalism is overwhelmingly seems from each corner of province. Women have to live within the boundaries of home in

Baloch and Pashtoon cultural society. They have to take permission from the male members to perform. Hence, women are not empowered in Balochistan. Disempowerment in cultural and traditional society is when individuals or groups that are discriminated against by other individuals or less powerful groups will feel disempowered. They may be willing to fight against this and in some cases will win their case. However, many do not and they lose the will to fight against discrimination. Women empowerment in cultural society means having decision making power of their own, having positive thinking on the ability to make change, ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power, increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma. Women who seek to be equal with men lack ambition. Timothy Leary (1920-1996) the thing women got to learn is that nobody gives you power. Empowering women in Baloch-Pashtoon culture means assuring the benefit to women. These benefits incurred by them are not only restrained to the self of women but they have a sort of ripple effect. In the 20th century women rights movement ran parallel to that of men's rights. In the charter of United Nations equal rights for men and women were demanded. Since that period the women activists have been resurging all over the world. Muslim reformers brought reforms in education and tried to empower women through education. However, it is generally considered that women living in Pakistan are disempowered. This is because of number of causes which create the constraints for women to empower themselves, such as; low entitlements, non-recognition of their active participation in all sphere of life, and low payment as a laborer. There is almost no relax time for her recreational activity for her own seeks. If we look at the life of a domestic lady, i.e. a house wife then it would become apparent that her whole life is just oriented towards serving her in laws, husbands and kids if we take the case of a joint system. Her miseries in actual know no bounds in most households. She is subject to a great deal of derision and humiliation for little mistakes, and whichever sacrifice and service she renders for them is simply a thankless job. There is an extreme marginalization of women where men would like to enjoy their so-called culturally instituted right of subjugating them. They would eagerly control and dominate women throughout their entire lives. Women are, in general, a neglected lot of society especially in the remote areas of Baluchistan. One very strident fact is that her role is undermined at so many different levels that she feels greatly dismayed and disgruntled. Discrimination against women must be brought to an end. Now is the time to recognize that women, in real, have a vital role to determine the direction of social change. They must be given an honorable place in society. The purpose of the study is to identify the causes and constraints of women disempowerment. It mainly focuses on hurdles of women disempowerment that does not let women to be empowered. The study is important to those women who are not empowered who have no rights to make decisions and get education. This paper is an attempt to determine what the causes by which women are disempowered.

Cultural barriers are brought by cultural differences. Three ways in which culture interferes with effective cross cultural understanding include cognitive, behavioral and emotional constraints. Greater economic independence is possible when women have choice in education, training and work and are able to make the best use of their skills in order to achieve better outcomes for themselves and their families over their lifetime. For most women greater economic independence can be achieved through improved lifetime incomes and a better return on the investment in their skills. Young women, in particular, can make education and employment choices that strengthen their ability to be economically independent over their lifetimes.

When a woman feels inadequate, she will be fearful of stating his true feeling, won't believe she has the right to ask for what she wants, may be reluctant to confront others, and may think that she has nothing to offer. She may also be so fearful of rejection that she is reluctant to state her opinions or ideas, especially with people she doesn't know well or in groups of people. This fear of communicating is difficult for friends, partners, and others who want to discuss issues but find the person with low self-esteem unwilling to listen, unwilling to take part in discussing or coming to a better understanding of the issue. Women's poverty is a violation of their human rights to life and well-being, food, adequate housing, a safe and healthy environment, social security, employment and development. Women's limited access to education, employment opportunity, and media, coupled with cultural factors, reduces their decision making power in the society in general and in household in particular in cultural society. Regarding their participation in decision making at national level, though the number of women in national parliaments has been increasing, no country in the world has yet achieved gender parity.

Figure 1 Theoretical framework of Causes and Constraints of Women



### Economic Factors

Women has no access to get education and no employment opportunities so that's why they cannot make their own decisions well in society and as well as at home. Because of that reason women are not empowered in most of the countries. (Addis, 2005). There are many reasons of disempowerment of women, one of them is no proper education because of improper facilities, as after performing home chore, she fully contribute in the income of family, get no financial reward (Faiza, 2005). When women restricting four walls of house and making her deprive from education, she has to work for economic activities, having no respite (Shehzadi, 2012). Value and skilled labor can be produced when empowered and education, so is the case to women in Baluchistan. (Cochrane 1999; Safilios, 1980). Women have no opportunity to learn their rights and take action to improve their lives and those of their family members (Naila; et al., 2002). Empowered women can work in all sphere of life even in cultivation of crops (Rubina 2006). When a woman takes her decisions regarding the business expansion, she can manage better than men. They have to across a number of socio-cultural barriers when they want to work for income generation (Tahir, 2013).

### Social And Cultural Factors

Many families husbands do not allow their wives to go and work outside, is because of fear of disobeying and unfaithfulness (Naila; et al., 2002). It is also thought in some societies in province that letting women working outside will create stern environment, making women unfaithful and disrespectful to them, ultimately increase her independence.

Penurious women are captive and confined to their households, having no freedom to make their decision, lack of formal education causes women disempowerment. Illiterate women in rural areas of Balochistan are double to men. Early age marriages are also rampant and frequent in man dominating society in the province. Women are denied a voice in the decisions

that affect their lives. This situation can be improved when there is change in the perception of the society and increase the opportunities for women (John 2011). Girls work more than their brothers as parents engage their daughters more than sons, making her difficulty to study or to perform any duties outside home. Furthermore, established social customs support investments in the education of sons over daughters. (Naila; et al., 2002).

It is women are forced to register land and asset on entitlement of their husband, sons or brothers (Kabeer, 1998). There is a need to involve community leaders to empowered women to give awareness to men that women are not servant. (Herbert, 2003). Women are alienated from their intellectual capacities. Woman is so trained that she feels unsure for herself and dither to express her opinion or ideas in public or sometimes even in the house, for fear that her thought are not significance to express. Women never feel comfortable on the terms and conditions of thought and discourse men set for her. Women always hesitate to express her feelings and emotions in public and as well as at her home because men set her mind that women cannot do anything without them. (Farooq 2003). A female child is enforced from the very beginning of her childhood to think of herself as less than the male child, whose entrance into life is preceded by prayers and marked by festivity (Naila; et al., 2002). His worth is uncontested. He is free to play in the streets. She must earn her right of existence in the family by serving to the family. She must stay at home and do household chores. From the birth the thought is developed that the girl is born to serve the family. She cannot play with friends and enjoy her life like men. The concept is developed in her mind that she has no right to live happy life. In the family system of Pakistan authority rests with the male. It is assumed that the supreme duty of women is to take care of males of the family, children and household (Naila; et al., 2002). The home and the domestic life are thus considered the natural and most important sphere of a women's activity. She forfeits all her rights, comforts and necessities for the sake of the family, restricts all her movements within the sanctioned boundaries laid down by her parents or husband and believes to be secondary to men (Farooq, 2003). Pakistani men particularly in rural and tribal areas, remain selfish and careless about the rights of women conferred on them through religion and law of the land (UNESCO, 2007). They believe that women are inferior by birth and lower status than them. For example, state law and (Islamic law) confer upon women the right to choose her life partner. However, in Pakistan society this righty is entirely usurped. If a woman tries to exercise the right, the male kin of her family consider it a big challenge to their honor. Women to choose her life partner considers taboo (Farooq, 2003). Society views abuse of a wife as a private matter. Pakistani women are not empowered that's why she is considered as disempowered (Oyewumi, 2004). Wife battering is a cultural phenomenon in Pakistani society. Giving education to a daughter usually implies that she leaves the protection of home and thus increases the possibility of tarnishing the family honor. Women's are dependent on male family members. Thus their transitions from private to public sphere, including going to school or for training or for any other need is reliant on men (M Farooq 2003).

### **Environmental Factors**

Women think that they are not as strong as a men and this thinking is a reason of uneducated women (The PROBE Team, 1999). Behavioral changes in the women, her spouse and other members of household are also important component of women empowerment, (Naila; et al., 2002). A woman's response on a possible situation of verbal abuse, psychological and emotional abuse is all indicative of changes that might ultimately impact her empowerment. Increase self-confidence along with greater involvement in all decisions of family may also be inferred as greater empowerment. If women have an opportunity of decision making and she

involve in all family matters she can be empowered. (Ranjula and Fan 2011). In middle class families, women have no voice against of any injustices which is direct outcome of male members mind set. "The most vulnerable are the women of the lower strata, as she neither have resources to recent against unjust treatment, especially domestic violence, nor she is aware of her basic rights – what to say of her desire to get education and empowerment". Self-confidence is extracted when women get married in older age than adolescence, it makes her more autonomous and relatively more empowered (Cain 1993; presser 1975). Women’s acceptance of their secondary claims on household resources, their acquiescence to violence at the hands of their husbands; their willingness to bear children to the detriment of their own health and survival to satisfy their own or their husband’s preference for sons; are all examples of behavior by women which undermine their own wellbeing. Due to acceptance of women that she is an after men she cannot be empowered. She is willing to take care of all household work and children’s due to that reason she lost her identity. (Naila, 2003).

**Materials and method**

Due to the peculiar nature of circumstances in the province, the convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data through five scale Likert scale self-constructed questionnaire. Based on Morgan Table the good sample size to be taken is 220 respondents. According to the possibility of unreturned questionnaires, an additional 20 per cent samples are included. After the administration of the questionnaires, we finally received 200 questionnaires. All respondents were females. The demography’s for respondent in this sample had an average age of 30.2 years (a mean of 40, S.D. =31.6) years. For reliability of questions, content reliability and factor reliability used. The results were then analyzed by using the statistical tool. Basically seven (07) districts out of 30 districts of Balochistan were selected considering the different factors. These were: Quetta, Pishin, Loralai, Killa-Abdullah,, Turbat, Kharan, and Machh, (Districts of Balochistan). In these areas majority of population consist of Baloch and Pashtoon tribes who have traditional living setting. The response scale has been five point Likert-type scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree).

**Hypotheses**

Hypothesis1: There is a positive relationship between economic and of women disempowerment in Baloch-Pashtoon cultural society.

Hypothesis2: Socio-cultural constraints causes women's disempowerment.

Hypothesis3: If environmental factors increase then women disempowerment increases.

**Table I: Correlation Matrix for economic constraints, Socio-Cultural, Environmental Constraints and Disempowerment**

	Mea n	SD	Varia nce	Correlations				B
				1	2	3	4	
1. Economic constraints (EC)	4.55	.59	.46	1				0.82
2. (Socio-Cultural constraints) (SC)	3.55	.61	.79	.81	1			0.83
3. Environmental Constraints(ENC)	3.55	.49	.73	.80	.9	1		0.81
					1			
4. Women Disempowerment (WD)	4.01	.44	.65	.87	.8	.7	1	0.78
					0	9		

\*. All items are Correlated significantly at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

b = Cronbach Alpha (Cronbach, 1951).

## **Result**

Results indicate significant positive relationship. Economic Constraints (EC) regarding disempowerment proved to be significant and positively supports the H1. Hypothesis1 investigated the relationship between economic constraints, and Women disempowerment. The findings also supports Hypothesis 2: Socio-cultural constraints causes women's disempowerment. In the same way the third hypothesis was also supported by the data of study as Hypothesis 3 If environmental factors increase then women disempowerment increases. Multiple regression was calculated to predict whether the hypotheses are supported by the study or not. It is observed that EC ( $\beta = .60$ ), has a significant and positive relationship with development at 0.05 level. Additionally, the dependent variable disempowerment was (.000) and EC, SC and ENC (.000) are significant predictors (or related significantly) of overall WD. The standardized beta tells the strength and direction of the relationships between EC, SC, ENC and WD. Three predictive variables are positively related to outcome variable.

## **Discussion**

Hypotheses were supported by the results. However, this finding indicates that economic, socio-cultural and environmental factor very imperative that permit the study to consider it for further extensive research work to draft out framework for improvement of situation. As the Hypothesis1 is tasted positively showing the positive relationship between economic constraints and disempowerment of women. There is an obligation of society to assist deprive folks to stand on their feet order to achieve the economic development and prosperity in the province. Women participation in different sectors of economy can generate the sufficient income which leads to poverty alleviation. On the other hand, in other words, the perception about the women has to be adjusted. Since, majority of population living in Balochistan is Muslim, injections of Islam are very clear about the status of women. It gives equal rights to women to progress, learn and participation of all sphere of life. It showed that EC and WD are positively related and significant. This means that women do not have enough resources to pave their business on strong footing. Lacking of finance compel them to depend on male members who ultimately takes all decision making power and control the resources. Additionally, women mostly run micro-businesses in all over the province. However, they are not good businesswomen due to lack of proper marketing practices. As a matter of fact, if they get out of this ordeal of primitive evolution and to adopt modern tips and techniques. The role of government has emerged to be meagre and weak support for women empowerment. Hypothesis2 was tested positively as effect of socio-cultural factors have an impact on women disempowerment. This highlights the importance of perception change about the women role in the society. Decision makers may have a look at Malaysian Model regarding women role in society and perception of society where women are empowered and making accommodation in society within the socio-cultural settings. This finding suggests that women are not so empowered to perform their job with their will and desire, hence, they are susceptible to constraints.

## **Conclusion**

There are various reasons for disempowerment of women. It is due to economic, socio-cultural and environmental factors. Financial difficulties and lack of economic independence catalyst to disempowerment of women. There are some other factors as well, such as: early marriages, cultural barriers, no right to take decision for herself and for her offspring, lack of confidence and conservative family background are the few important factors. Furthermore,

there are some environmental factors which do not let women to empower. Ultimately, it adversely, impact of the family, society and on the province growth and development women are unaware of their right, they are not educated and they do not take part in different sphere of life as actively as men are: causing disempowerment of women. Given the empowerment to women means proper, health and civilized society.

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