



International Journal Of
**Recent Scientific
Research**

ISSN: 0976-3031
Volume: 7(2) February -2016

**ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FEMINIST PROPAGANDA
OR GLOBAL REQUIREMENT**

Leela Choudhary and Afnaan Ali Khan



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH (IJRSR)
<http://www.recentscientific.com/> recentscientific@gmail.com



ISSN: 0976-3031

Available Online at <http://www.recentscientific.com>

International Journal of Recent Scientific Research
Vol. 7, Issue, 2, pp. 8926-8930, February, 2016

**International Journal
of Recent Scientific
Research**

RESEARCH ARTICLE

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FEMINIST PROPAGANDA OR GLOBAL REQUIREMENT

Leela Choudhary and Afnaan Ali Khan

ETHames Degree College, Hyderabad

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 16th November, 2015
Received in revised form 24th
November, 2015
Accepted 23rd January, 2016
Published online 28th
February, 2016

Keywords:

Pressure ulcer, and elderly

ABSTRACT

“There is no force equal to a women determined to rise”- W.B.Dubious

Economic empowerment of women is a branch in the extremely vast field of feminist economics. It not only deals with gender roles in the economy but also with situations oppressive to women in the society which has an underlying impact on the economy of the world. The proverb ‘it is a man’s world’ should be questioned now a days as studies show in rich countries girls do better than boys in school, filling in the most amount of new jobs. In an economic super power such as America, two-thirds of women hold a paying job that is almost half the population. If other developing countries in the world were to follow the same path then undoubtedly poverty would be a problem of the past, as studies prove women are responsible for 40% of GDP (gross domestic product) of developed nations. Women are the horsepower in the engine of global growth, yet they remain the largest untapped resource. How can we emancipate this quagmire of inequality? It is neither easy nor impossible; it requires a universal change of thought with one common aspiration ‘the economic empowerment of society with equal opportunities given to all genders to help achieve this goal. The primary objective of this subject is to show if economics and women are intertwined for the overall development of the economy or if it is a propaganda of the feminist societies for their own upliftment.

Copyright © Leela Choudhary and Afnaan Ali Khan., 2016, this is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is an individual’s psychological perception of being self-actualized. It is the basic foundation which fosters the hierarchical needs as mentioned by Maslow. As an individual is empowered the mental apprehensions that he holds are subconsciously repelled. Yet this empowerment is not allowed to be equally indulged. The seedbed of this issue is deeply rooted in the cultural aspects of the society. Where old fashioned customs remain as backwaters of a narrow mind. This destabilizes the matrix of ambition and hinders creativity to prosper. Empowerment leads to significant improvement in the innovation and implementation. A country can only reach its full economic potential when every individual of society can contribute towards its overall development. In this dynamic and ever changing world, women now days are challenging the benchmarks set by men and are evolving out of the cocoon in which they were once entrapped within.

Women are now diverging into different streams in a vibrant manner which bolsters them to break out of the mental trepidations that are rooted in their minds by the prejudiced society.

Women's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product

The gross domestic product is one of the primary indicators used to gauge the health of a country's economy. According to McKinsey analysis, without women's contribution, GDP would be three-quarters of its current size. This clearly shows the impact women have on the economy is indispensable. A report from the International Monetary Fund estimated that due to the gender gap in the labor market, the global economy has missed out on 27 percent of GDP per capita. The IMF also states that if there were equal number of men and women in the labor force it could increase the economic growth by 5 percent in USA and by 34 percent in Egypt.

The growth of GDP is hindered due to various reasons depending on each region. In South Asia the female work force participation rate is below 25 percent in urban areas. In other developing countries such as Mexico and Honduras women faced 70 percent of all layoffs during the economic downturn. Where as in stark contrast Norway implemented a 40 percent quota for women on the boards of publicly traded companies, which led to an estimated annual growth rate of GDP at 3.8 percent. Therefore it is suffice to say if women are able to

*Corresponding author: **Leela Choudhary**
ETHames Degree College, Hyderabad

develop their full labor market potential then there can be immense macroeconomic gains.

Gender Pay Gap

At the European Union level the gender pay gap is defined as "the relative difference in the average gross hourly earnings of women and men within the economy as a whole" In simple terms gender pay gap as defined by Cambridge Dictionary "it is the difference between the amounts of money paid to women and men often for doing the same work." The most natural question that would arise in one's mind is why are women paid less than men? Is this statement actually true or is it just hyperbolized beliefs of the feminists of the society, if we are to believe the authenticity of this statement then concrete proof is required along with the open mindedness from all sections of society to rationally accept the given proof and formulate a concrete resolve to change for the equality of society and the overall betterment of the society.

Gender Pay Gap around the World

America

In 2014 a research done by IWPR (Institute of women's policy) showed that in the United States the women full time workers were paid just 79 percent of what men were paid full time. A gap of 21 percent. It has just increased 20 percent from 1974-2014. A slow rise considering the progress of women's education and workforce participation. Several factors influence this gap, one of the major factors being racism. A survey conducted by AAUW (American Association of University Women) in 2014 shows that in the United States women of color are paid less compared to their non-colors counterparts. African American Hispanic American and Indian American women have lower median annual earnings as compared to their male counterparts. Hispanic women are paid on an average of \$29,791 annually whereas Hispanic men are paid roughly 32,272\$ annually in stark contrast while non-Hispanic females are paid \$41585 annually and men are paid \$53,267 annually.

Europe

Eurostat an organization responsible to provide statistical information to the European Union showed that within the 27 EU member states the average pay gap in 2008 was 17.5 percent. There are drastic differences in the pay from one member state to another in the EU. In countries like United Kingdom where according to the office of National statistics, women in their twenties are out earning men in their twenties by an average of 1,111 euros. Wherein less developed countries like Austria and Estonia the gap is as large as 27 percent. Causes for the gap are many but one of the major factors is segregation in the labor market. In Europe women are predominant in sectors such as health, education, and public administration. In the health sector alone 80 percent are women. Their work is lower valued and lower paid as compared to men even in these sectors. Segregation in the labor Markets is proved by staggering figures that show the under representation of women in certain sectors such as the corporate world, where

women in managerial and top level positions are only 17 percent. In the big publicly listed companies if the EU only 4 percent of women are chairmen of the board. Hence the European commission states that the gender pay gap has a far reaching ripple effect with the potential ability to destabilize their European economy.

India and the other developing countries:

In developing countries people may argue that lack of resources, funds and infrastructure are the main reasons for their low productivity and overall contribution to the world's economy. In a rising economic power such as India a salary survey was conducted by paycheck India in 2011 which showed that a gap of nearly 40 percent existed in the country, ranging across the states with figures as high as 64 percent and 59 percent in the states of Assam and Rajasthan whereas the state of Delhi showed a stark contrast with a gap of just 20 percent.

According to a survey conducted by the WEF (world economic forum), India was ranked among the bottom 10 countries in the world in terms of women's participation in the economy. Also among the developing BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) nations India was ranked the lowest in terms of gender pay parity. New research's conducted by Euromonitor showed glum results in their data stating that in the Asia pacific region by 2030 women will earn 41.2% less than men as it is clearly stated instead of reduction in the pay gap there will be an increase in the near future. So can lack of funds and resources be the only reasons for this stunted growth of economic and gender equity in the developing nations? The answer is no, in these developing nations an under-developed mindset is the root cause of all inequality. In countries like India, China and Africa gender income inequality is not only deeply seeded in the culture and traditions of these countries but also legal difference in treatment of men and women (such as laws preventing women from owning property in china) are greatly influential to the mindset of the people, making it impossible for them to grow as individuals which in turn does not let them as a nation rise above all their social and economic problems.

Standard of Living

The chief determinant of economic growth is productivity of labor, which is reflected in the per capita GDP and ultimately elucidates the standard of living. The standard of living of women in particular is comparatively low in the underdeveloped and OECD countries. Women's participation in the economic development of a nation can not only scale down poverty but also help in sustainable development. As rightly said "Development is a process of expanding freedom equally for all people".(sen2009)

Women contribute to the overall productivity. The food and the agriculture organization of the United Nations assessed that if women had the same access to productive resources as men they could increase the yields on their farms by 20-30%. This serves as evidence of how deep rooted gender discrimination depicts itself in the economic conditions in an economy.

Education

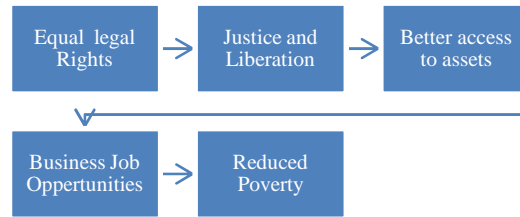
Education for women has significant effects on population growth. The infant mortality rates are reduced, striking a balance with lower maternal mortality rates. Education empowers them to understand and exhibit their skills better. Educated women have shown better agricultural productivity thereby contributing to the economic growth. According to UNESCO'S Education for all Global Monitoring Report, 2/3's of 774million illiterate people in the world are female. This is due to barriers (such as abduction and sexual abuse of girls who try to pursue education in countries like Pakistan and Nigeria), poverty, and early marriages. Most of the girls do not pursue secondary education. A study in sub-Saharan Africa has shown that the percentage of girls starting primary education narrows from 75% to 8% by the time they finish. The role of the government cannot be denied. Less number of schools and inadequate training to the lecturers has impaired the quality of education. Health is one such influential factor that cannot be neglected.

Employment

Apart from productivity, low savings rate and investments also show its effects on standard of living. Women usually are paid less and are bound by the conservative nature of the society; this traces the female employment rates. The female labor force participation rate (LPTR) in 2009-2010 in India was 31.6% compared to 80.4% of men. Studies have shown that females on an average earn between 10-30% less than men. Social and cultural factors like major involvement in unpaid household activities, early marriages, lack of education, work restrictions, etc. have been dominating women employment. Employment opportunities help women to achieve a desired level of standard of living, it enables them to make financial decisions and promote education and nutrition to the family.

Legal Rights

Given the legitimacy of rights that a person is entitled to, one contributes to the economic growth resulted by individual prosperity. Equal rights establish a scope for an all-round participation in an economy. This requires a strong foundation of discrimination prohibiting legal system. There has definitely been a change since an era of male dominated politics, where women never voted or signed contracts and had restricted access to property. Their existence was oblivious to what politics was and how it shaped the welfare of a community. The major constraint was and still is the lack of awareness regarding legal and property rights. Equal rights liberate women at a personal as well as social level where every move of hers is dictated. Be it the choice of work, night shifts etc. she is confined to enslavement. In the report 'Women, Business and the Law 2016: Getting to Equal' it was stated that in about 18 countries it is legal for the husbands to stop their wife's from working. Apart from this there are some jobs for which women are not even considered. Another World Bank study says 155 countries have at least one law that restricts the economic freedom of women.



Property Rights

Coming to property rights, the prevalence of gender bias shows in fact that majority of the inheritances are by the male members of the family. In the agrarian economies, the land distributions are governed by the male head, this directly affects their livelihood which becomes difficult without dependence of a family. Property rights are not just restricted to the ownership of land and houses. It reflects on a broader spectrum of an individual's accessibility to financial sources, bank accounts, insurance, and microfinance loans etc. Ownership of any sort of property to some degree defines the social status which determines her ability to participate in decision making process. It also encourages them to raise their voice against violence when they are no more under the trap of financial dependence. There exists culture norms and social pressure which threatens women and restricts them from the practice of such rights. Women are often tricked due to the lack of legal redress. The UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) article 17 states "Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others".

Political Rights

Politics enables women to voice her opinions and strengthen the power of women by promoting equality and giving an identity to her existence. Women should be allowed a voluntary right to vote along with participation in the elections, as the policies and laws affect both men and women. This ensures that the issues that women face are not neglected. It cannot be called a democracy when the majority of female population is denied the right to vote, yet the laws are to be abided by. Politics becomes an opportunity where the opinions, disapproval and needs can be engaged to bring reforms. In the rural areas of India, women are barely a part of village panchayats. It is not considered respectful for women to stand and speak at a level it is only appropriate for men. Reservations have significantly changed the scenario only to some extent. Even if a woman is elected all the responsibilities are fulfilled by the husbands. She is confined to household chores and is only required to sign documents.

The elections for the municipal councils of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia held on 12 December 2015, was the first one where women were permitted to vote and also run for the office. This was a result of Saudi Arabian women's revolutionary campaigns for their right to vote. Though the announcement by King Abdullah allowing women to participate in the 2015 elections looked like a progressive step, there is more to do. The entire decision making process regarding the political

issues is centered on the king with a consultative council (Majlis Al Shura) of 150 members. Half of this council is appointed by the royal officials and the other half by voting, which basically implies that women vote only for half the seats, which again is highly subjugated by the palace. Apart from this improvements are yet to be seen regarding the rights of women, they are always to be accompanied by male companion. It is not legal for them to drive and the existence of religious police who are constantly vigilant of women's activities in public curbs their freedom. The western countries exhibit a leading edge when it comes to political rights of women. Six of every ten Finnish ministers are women. In most of the European countries women have acquired equal rights, whereas in the United States of America only 17% of congress members are women.

CONCLUSION

"We need women at all levels, including the top, to change the dynamic, reshape the conversation, to make sure women's voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored." — Sheryl Sandberg

It is needless to say that the social upliftment of women and economics are enlaced with one another, each directly proportional to their progress. Yet the shackles of socially constructed brume weigh down the potential progress that women and society can make if given the chance to propel out of the quicksand of the male dominated society. The only way to emerge out of this black hole is to be able to construct skyscrapers of equality and consolidate them with concrete resolve for justice and equality in each individual mindset. Along with these intangible measures certain general tangible measures can be taken to empower women at an economic level, these are:

Education

Education is the key that can unlock true economic empowerment. Male and female education ratio gap should be filled by legislating appropriate policies such as free education, scholarships, education provided in the rural and underdeveloped areas of the country etc. Education should take precedence in the to- do list of the government.

Development Programmes

Programs to develop special skills should be undertaken so as to provide financial stability even to those women who were not able to complete their education or pursue their higher education. By doing so, job opportunities open up even for the less educated class of women.

Removal of Government backed Constraints

The government should liberalize their gender specific policies by passing laws which make it easier for women to attain land, start their own ventures, easily available credit extension information, readily available raw materials and technology and the opportunity to enter new markets without facing discrimination.

Support Programmes

Support programs should be initiated by the government to provide aid to working women who have to juggle their work and professional lives. In order to support such women programs such as day care centers for their children, flexible work hours, subsidized food rates at work, psychological work groups. These are the different programs that should be undertaken in order to support women so they can attain financial individuality.

Therefore economic empowerment of women helps to reach the untouched pinnacles and new frontiers are explored. This empowers the mindsets to tackle hurdles which are sometimes unforeseen in nature. If we as a global race help to shape each other's mindsets towards equality then we can excavate wide horizons which give individuals insightful experiences and knowledge to help them grow in terms of an equal and unified global economy.

References

1. M. H., Driemeier. (2013, September 24). Economic Development = Equal Rights for Women? The World Bank. Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/09/24/Economic-Development-Equal-Rights-for-Women>
2. The Economics and Politics of Women's Rights. (December 2011). Matthias Doepke, Michele Tertilt, Alessandra Voena. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17672.pdf>
3. D., Bradshaw, D., Catellino, & M., Diop. (2013, May 20). Women's role in economic development: Overcoming the constraints. Retrieved from <http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/womens-role-in-economic-development-overcoming-the-constraints/>
4. M., Kaur, B., Mishra, P., Singh, A., Singh, & S., Rathore. (September 2007). Empowerment of Rural Women: An Analysis of Constraints. Indian Research Journal of Extension Education, 7(2&3). Retrieved from <http://seea.org.in/irjee/upload/v07327.pdf>
5. Girls' education – the facts (Rep.). (2013, October). Retrieved <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/girls-factsheet-en.pdf>
6. B. K., Herz, & G., Sperling. (2004). What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World. Council on Foreign Relations.
7. Toward The Realization of Women's Rights: Legal Reform And Implementation. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4311e/y4311e07.htm>
8. L., Ford, & M., Anderson. (n.d.). Women's prospects limited by law in 155 countries, finds World Bank study. The Guardian. Retrieved September 9, 2015, from <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/sep/09/women-business-and-the-law-2016-getting-to-equal-world-bank-report>
9. A., Shah. (n.d.). Women's Rights. Retrieved from [http://www.globalissues.org/article/166/womens-rights#Lack of Progress](http://www.globalissues.org/article/166/womens-rights#Lack%20of%20Progress)
10. In the Developing World, Property Rights For Women Are About More Than Just Housing. (2014, November

- 5). Retrieved from <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/blog/developing-world-property-rights-women/>
11. Gender, Women and Democracy. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ndi.org/gender-women-democracy>
12. P., Mondal. (n.d.). Essay on The Role of Women in Politics. Retrieved from <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/essay-on-the-role-of-women-in-politics/31315/>
13. Casari, Marco and Lisciandra, Maurizio, Gender Discrimination in Property Rights (December 10, 2013). Quaderni - Working Paper DSE N° 914. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2365893> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2365893>
14. K., CAULDERWOOD. (2013, September 24). How Women Can Save the Global Economy. International Business Times. Retrieved from <http://www.ibtimes.com/how-women-can-save-global-economy-1410348>
15. C., Hill. (n.d.). The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap (Spring 2016). Retrieved from <http://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>
16. Gender Pay Gap. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_pay_gap#European_Unin
17. N., Chandran. (2014, July 30). Gender wage gap in Asia set to get worse. CNBC. Retrieved from <http://www.cnbc.com/2014/07/30/gender-wage-gap-in-asia-set-to-get-worse.html>
18. S., Javeed, & A., Manuhaar. (april.2013). Women and Wage Discrimination in India: A Critical Analysis March 19 - 2013. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, 2(4). Retrieved from [http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v2\(4\)/version-1/B240612.pdf](http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v2(4)/version-1/B240612.pdf)
19. Encyclopedia.com. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Norway.aspx>
20. Pay Equity & Discrimination. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/pay-equity-and-discrimination>
21. Women in the economy: selected exhibits. (april.2011). Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/5CG3273JTR/Downloads/WomenEconomy_Exhibits_V3_10282011.pdf
22. Gender pay gap in India. Retrieved from <http://www.paycheck.in/main/world-map-gender-pay-gap/gender-pay-gap-in-india-1>

How to cite this article:

Leela Choudhary and Afnaan Ali Khan.2016, Economic Empowerment of Women Feminist Propaganda or Global Requirement. *Int J Recent Sci Res.* 7(2), pp. 8926-8930.

T.SSN 0976-3031



9 770976 303009 >