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Feminization of Poverty: A Case Study of Hazara Division of Pakistan

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Abstract:

The present study aims at to analyze the feminization poverty in Hazara Division of Khyber PakhtunKhwā province of Pakistan. Sample of 200 respondents both from rural as well as urban has been selected for 50 female headed house holds and 150 male headed house holds. The study employs logistic regression estimation technique to find the correlates of poverty. The findings of study suggest that probability of a house hold being poor is positively and significantly correlated with house hold size, dependency ratio, and single parenthood, living of house hold head in rural area, female headed house hold ship. Variables that are negatively and significantly correlated with probability of being poor are: Age of house hold head, Secondary and post secondary education, employment and residing in urban area. The study recommends policy interventions necessary to reduce poverty particularly focusing female-headed households including direct transfer of cash to such families and access to free education to their children.

Keywords: *Feminization of poverty, Logistic regression, Hazara Division*

1. Introduction

Feminization of poverty is one of the issues which gained the enormous attention of researchers and social practitioners since 1970. The Feminization of poverty, phenomenon coined by Pearce in 1978, got major breakthrough in literature of gender poverty analysis in 1990s specifically. This phenomenon influenced greatly the research and strategy because gender poverty is more pronounced in some of advanced countries of the world (Mykyta, 2013). Male- Female poverty gap is wider in economic giants like United States 18 percent, Canada 10 percent, and Australia 11 percent (Steven, 2002). Poverty is increasing because of higher rate of divorce and illegitimacy, so this concept attracted the attention of social welfare promoters (Bane, 1986).

The feminization of poverty can be defined as the increase in proportion and severity of poverty in women headed households and the rise in women's participation in low paying urban and informal sector economic activities (Tahira Abdullah, 2012). The feminization of poverty may also be defined as a change on poverty level that is biased against women of female headed households (Medeiros and Coasta, 2008).

Fukuda- Par contend poverty not mere a lack of money income. According to him poverty of choices and opportunities is more important than income poverty (Fukuda- Par, 1999).

Feminization of poverty was first coined by Pearce in an article in 1978. Pearce noted that in 1976 about 2 out of 3 persons over age of 16 years of age were women. Female headed households rose from 10 percent in 1950 to 14 percent in 1976. In 1976 almost half of all poor families were female headed (Diana Pearce 1976). Bradshaw (2002) termed women's poverty not only multi-dimensional but also multi-sectoral.

The World Bank estimates that 1.29 billion people live in absolute poverty, 70 percent are women among them (Rodenberg and Brite, 2004). Globalization and World Trade Organization policies have negatively affected women all over the world. As Bradshaw (2002:12) argued women's poverty is not only multi-dimensional but it is multi-sectoral phenomenon. Women's poverty is experienced in different ways, at different times and in different spaces. Women face the triple burden of child bearing, child rearing and domestic unpaid labor. The role of women is still underutilization in spite of 21 century. As we are living in patriarchal society so women are subjected to dishonor, exploitation, discrimination and violence. Women are deprive in terms of basic needs like right to eat, health, education, decision making and employment as compared to men and the female / male poverty ratio 3:1 is quite shameful (SDPI Report, 2013). As women in Pakistan face cultural and religious taboos, minimal institutional support and social restrains so their status has become unprotected and vulnerable although they comprise half of population.

1.1. Women Poverty in Pakistan: A Glance

Women in Pakistan face many obstacles in sustaining their own identity, as a result skilled and capable females are either excluded from economic activities or whatever labor they performed are not accounted in statistical figure and deprive women to access to higher income and capabilities (SDPI, 2008). Women have to face Intra household disparities because boys are breadwinners of the family. According to UNICEF, the children working as Domestic help is common in Pakistan and 17.6 percent children are working and supporting their families and comprises more girls (Asia Despatch,2015). The evidence showed that Pakistan's women contribution to labor force has trapped from 33 percent in 2002 to 21 percent in 2011 (Yasir Amin, Economistan 2012). Pakistan and Bangladesh inhibit the availability of women for work due to patriarchal family structure (Moghadam, 2005). Pakistan and India have been ranked 141th and 137th respectively of 142 countries for gender equality across the world in Annual global Gender Gap Report 2015.

Even in advance countries of the world, feminization of poverty is still challenge although its viscosity is becoming thinner over the period of time. Some studies revealed that poverty rate stood at approximately 17.6 percent among single male headed households while it was recorded 36.9 percent for single female headed household in 2005 (US Census Bureau). By the late 1980s, it was estimated that world's total households, female headed ones constituted 17 to 28 percent (Todaro 1989).

United Nation Development Fund for Women identified following causes responsible for poverty.

i Temporal Dimensions:

Household duties and child care are mostly the responsibilities of women. To earn livelihood in order to help their families financially, they may also contribute in tiring agriculture work in developing countries. So women have no time to contribute towards compensative jobs and as a result their earning is less than their male counterpart.

ii: Spatial Dimension:

To search jobs away from their families, females have limited mobility because of their engagement in performing child caring and household tasks.

iii: Employment Segmentation Dimension: Due to absence of choice and opportunities, women may join sectors which lack high compensation and stability such as textile factory, children caring, teaching and the elderly domestic servitude.

iv: The Valuation Dimension:

Unpaid responsibilities which are done by women are less valuable as compared to jobs which require education and technical training because the later are viewed as more worthy.

The present study aims at to analyze feminization of poverty in Hazara division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The study is carried out due to some specific characteristics of poor women of Hazara. Women in Pakistan largely eke out their existence by doing low paid and tedious jobs. Women in Pakistan in general and in Punjab particular undertake agricultural activities, livestock related jobs (Tibbo et al, 2009). They also participate in low paid industrial service sectors. They also manage to fill roles as wage laborers and small-scale entrepreneurs. Opportunities are amply available for women, but social norms hinder the women to seize the opportunity. Scenario of Hazara is a bit different. Major part of Hazara consists of mountains and arid land. Opportunities for the women to seek even stereotype job are limited. Women in Hazara division find greater hardships to find jobs. Trend to allow women to work out side is shifting dramatically in educated families, but dilemma of women of Hazara is the lack of opportunities of work due to dearth of industries, agricultural and farm activities and poor network of service sector. Educated women prefer to get job in private schools because they can manage both types of responsibilities, that is., looking after children and earning livelihood. But wage discrimination in favor of male is more pronounced in private educational institution. That is why women are doubly marginalized since most of them have to bear the burden of male – domination at homes simultaneously; hence independent working women suffer from acute poverty

2. Literature Review

Enormous literature prevails on feminization of poverty and the work on this topic got spur since first coining of this concept namely Feminization of poverty by Pearce (1978). Casper et all (1994) showed that US women were 41 percent more likely to be poor than men in the mid of 1980s. Large number of researchers converges on opinion that female headed households are positively and significantly related with poverty (Josep, 2012, Bastos et all,2009, Kimenyi and Mbaku, Tinker, 1990:5), Asian Development bank (2003:11), Sylvia Chant (2003)). Various studies carried out on this topic also suggest that increase in Household size and family structure is positively correlated with poverty (Lanjouw and Ravallion ,1994) Anderson, 1987,World Bank,1991 a, and WorldBank,1991 b) . It is also argued that poverty increases with old age as productivity of individual decreases (Gang et all, 2012, Dalt and Jolliffe, 1997). It is widely argued that large families tend to be poorer in developing countries (Lanjouw, 1994). Some feminist researchers focused the human poverty rather than income poverty to draw real portrait of women's poverty (Fukuda- Par, 1999, HDR 1997)).

Dalt (1997) examined poverty profile of EGYPT employing governorate level fixed effects model for urban and pro rural sectors. The paper used unemployment based on data from Egypt Integrated household survey, land ownership and education variables to assess poverty. The paper concluded that education is instrumental in alleviating poverty in Egypt.

Gorge and Rodriguez (2002) examined the determinants of poverty in Mexico using data taken from 1996 National survey of Income and expenditure of house hold. The study employed logistic regression model with probability of house hold being poor as the dependent variable. A set of economic and demographic variables are used as experimental variable. The study suggested that

education level of house hold head, his/her age and his/her professions are negatively correlated with probability of being poor. While size of household, living in rural area, working in rural occupation and being a domestic worker are positively correlated with probability of being poor.

Chaudhary and Rehman (2009) investigated the impact of gender inequality in education on rural poverty in Pakistan using logit regression analysis on primary data sets. The paper concluded that gender inequality in education has adverse impact on rural poverty. The findings of paper suggested that female male enrollment, female male literacy ratio, female male total ratio of schooling, female male ratio of earners and education of house hold rural poverty whereas house hold size and female male ratio are positively correlated with probability of being poor.

Anyanwu (2012) examined the correlates of poverty using “Qualitative response variable technique” using data from Nigerian national consumer survey of 2003-04. The paper took male household and female household age, household size, and education, being single or Muslim as independent variable. The finding of paper suggested that age of household head, quadratic of household size, residence in urban area, post-secondary education attainment, being a Christian and residence in south-south, south .east, south west, and north east zone of country are negatively and significantly correlated with probability of being poor.

Various studies carried out on gender poverty gap agreed that increase in female house hold head, house hold size, lack of education and old age are positively correlated with poverty (Tinker (1990:5), Lanjouw and Ravallion (1994), Bastos et all (2002), Gang et all (2002)), whereas female house hold heads age, high level of education, rural household being living in urban are negatively associated with poverty (John Anyanwu (2013), Rodriguez and Gorge (2002)).

3. Methodology

This section serves the methodology employed by this study. Population, sampling technique and econometric method are discussed in this section

3.1. Population

The current study is conducted to analyze the feminization of poverty in Hazara division which is situated at north side of country. On the east border of Hazara Azad Jammu and Kashmir and district of Muree is situated. GilgitBiltistan province joins it on north side. Punjab is situated on the south side of Hazara. On west side Indus River separates it from rest of province KPK.

3.2. Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique has been used to select the samples from population. The total population is stratified on the basis of gender, that is., male headed household and female headed household. Since female headed households approximately account for only 8 to 10 percent of total population, so samples are selected accordingly. Out of 200 samples the study takes into account 20 female headed households. Questionnaires were distributed among educated respondents. Information from illiterate informants has been gathered through interview to make entries in the questionnaire correctly.

3.3. Econometric Model

The study employs a logit model to estimate male and female – headed households for both types of households (Anyanwu, 1997, 2011; Anyanwu and Erhijakpor, 2009, 2010; Rodriguez, 2002; Ghazouani and Goaid, 2001; and Gang et al, 2004).

This is logistic regression model where the probability of being poor is represented by cumulative distribution function $F(Z)$ which is regress on exogenous variables. Model has specification as:

$$\text{Prob}(\text{Poor} = 1) = F(Z) = F(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X)$$

Where $F(Z) = \frac{e^Z}{1+e^Z}$ is cumulative Logit distribution

X is vector of explanatory variables.

The model will use explanatory variables according to Anyanwu(2004)andAttanasso (2005). The logistic model can be specified as:

$$\text{Prob}(\text{Poverty}) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots \dots \beta_k X_k)}}$$

Where Prob (poor) = dichotomous which indicates poverty; it takes value 1 if household is poor and 0 otherwise.

X_1, \dots, X_k = set of regressors which are:

Household size, age of household head, number of children under 15 years of age in household, number of adult in household, marital status, Single parenthood, Dependency ratio, education level, employment, sector of employment of household head, rural or urban

A simple and broadly used measure of female poverty is the proportion of household whose income falls below the poverty. The dependent variable is defined as 1 if average per capita household income is below the poverty line and 0 if it is above the poverty line. Household head is dichotomous taking value 1 if household is male and 0 otherwise. Age of household is measured as continuous variable. Explanatory variable education level is discrete variable measured in number of schooling years. For market characteristic, dummy takes value 1 if household head is employed and 0 otherwise. For residence variable, dummy variable takes the value 1 if household resides in urban area and 0 otherwise.

Since logistic model is non linear, the marginal effects of each independent variable on dependent variable are dependent on the values of independent variables. (Greene 2003). Thus to analyze the effects of independent variables upon probability of being poor we looked at the change of odds ratio as dependent variable changes. Odd ratio is the probability of being poor divided by probability of being non poor.

4. Findings

Binary estimation results have been presented in the following table

Characteristics	Co-efficient	St.Error	Z	odds ratio
Household Size	0.16	0.055	2.88	1.137
Dependency ratio	0.28	0.055	5.02	1.33
Age of household Head	-0.19	0.06	-2.76	0.83
Children of age less than 15	0.07	0.024	2.72	1.072
Employment	0.33	0.58	5.6	1.39
Urban	0.045	0.0099	4.54	1.046
Single parenthood	-0.55	0.15	-3.58	0.577
Education	0.63	0.19	3.24	1.88
Illiterate	0.06	0.009	6.3	1.06
Primary	0.81	0.51	1.6	2.24
Secondary	-0.97	0.146	-6.65	0.378
Post Secondary	-0.88	0.28	-3.11	0.414
C	4.23	0.97	4.33	1.26
McfaddenR_squared 0.341		Log Likelihood -62.628		
LR Statistic 130		N 160		

*Table 1: determinants of Poverty in Hazara Division, Pakistan
Calculations are based on E.View 7.1*

**Indicates significant at 1 % & ** indicate significant at 5 %*

Results reported in table (1) suggest that house hold size, more number of children, Dependency ratio, children of age less than 15, single parenthood, House hold head with no or primary education are positively correlated with the probability of house hold being poor. Interestingly all these variables except illiterate and house hold with primary education are significant at least at 5 percent level of significance. This implies that the probability of being poor increases if house hold head is female, family have more number of children of age less than 15, household head dwelling in rural area. Similarly, risk poverty increases for house hold head if house hold have high dependency ratio and is single parenthood. From odds ratios house hold size increases the odds of being poor 1.137. Dependency ratio increases the odds of being poor by 1.33 times as compared to house hold having no dependency ratio at all. The variables which are negatively correlated with probability of being poor are, age of house hold head, secondary and post secondary education, house hold being located in urban area and employment of house hold head.

Odds ratios reported in the table above indicate that House hold head being female increases the odds of being poor by 1.0725 times more than the house hold head being the male. Dwelling in rural area has also palpable impact on the poverty. From odds ratio living in urban area decreases odds of being poor by 0.5769. House hold size also increases the odds of being poor by 1.137. These results are very consistent with (Rodriguez, 2002), (Hanna, 2013)

5. The Policy Proposals for the Reduction of Poverty in Pakistan

This paper examined the feminization of poverty in Hazara division of Khyber Pakhtun haw province of Pakistan employing multivariate models that predict the probability of being poor. Probability of a household head being poor was examined for male headed as well as female headed house holds using data both from rural as well as from urban areas of Hazara. Results obtained through logistic model suggest that feminization of poverty is more pronounced in this part of Pakistan. So the study suggests few policy recommendations necessary to reduce poverty prevalent particularly in female headed house holds. Results of this study indicate that education is important in reducing poverty, so cash transfer to female headed families and expenditures for education are effective measure to reduce poverty among masses. (see Levy, 2006; Kanbur, 2008; Anyanwu and Erhijakpor, 2010).

There is pressing need for fundamental curriculum reforms so as poor may acquire skills complemented with increased employment opportunities through public works and infrastructural development so as to encourage children to go to school and hence have greater assurance of finding jobs on graduation.

Women and poor need to be specially focused while spending on education. It may have double return, reducing poverty on one hand and increase the chances for poor children and women to access formal jobs. Government needs to design socio-economic policies to promote remunerative jobs for women who head their families.

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