

Chapter 8

Emerging Trends and Challenges Faced in Women's Employment and Self- Employment in Pakistan

Shagufta Nasreen
University of Karachi, Pakistan

Nasreen Aslam Shah
University of Karachi, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Women and work is a concept which is still exploratory although various researches have been conducted related to women and work and its related concepts. Women's economic participation has increased in different jobs as compared to the past; however, the question is how much it has been able to fulfill the goal that women economic participation leads to women empowerment. In developing countries, the economic restructuring influenced by globalization policies of trade liberalization, privatization and fiscal austerity has on one hand increased opportunities for economically stable, educated, skilled and urban oriented population excluding the poor, un-educated, un-skilled and rural population. This chapter aims to explore the concept of women and work by comparing the conditions of work women do in formal and informal sector expanding the scope of analysis to focus not only on women inclusion in paid jobs but to review why it is not changing their status and position.

INTRODUCTION

I am doing my work while my daughter sleeps on my lap (A woman worker)

This chapter explores the concept of women and paid employment in the context of globalization. Women and work is a concept which is still exploratory because of the changing economic and political conditions of the world although various researches have been conducted related to women and work and its

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3018-3.ch008

related concepts. Women's economic participation has increased in different jobs as compared to the past; however, the question is how much it has been able to fulfill the goal that women economic participation leads to women empowerment? In developing countries, the economic restructuring influenced by globalization policies of trade liberalization, privatization and fiscal austerity has on one hand increased opportunities for economically stable, educated, skilled and urban oriented population excluding the poor, un-educated, un-skilled and rural population. To evaluate the status of women, this paper aims to explore the concept of women and work by comparing the conditions of women's work in formal and informal sector. The first part of the chapter is based on review of literature on women's economic status in the global economy. The second part is based on the findings of two researchers one is about socio-economic conditions of self-employed and home-based women workers of Karachi and second is about female workers in industrial sector of Karachi in context of economic globalization. The third part is based on discussion and conclusion.

BACKGROUND

Feminist scholars and researchers have contributed a lot in analysis and redefining of the concepts of work, development and the impact of economic policies on women. Work done by women, whatever might be its nature has been much debated in recent feminist scholarship. They strongly advocate that women's work spans community and industry and 'the social relations of work, its cognitive and affective domains, and its sexual divisions are structured around gender' (Maggie, 1989, p.311). Women constitute half of the world population and are majority of the world poor bearing triple burden of unpaid household work, low wage market and community activities. Although historically women have always remained active generators of income, research regarding the gendered nature of economic development is very recent (Braunstein, 2007). Most of the studies related to women and work tend to focus on women experiences of work in relation to their childcare and family responsibilities and thus ignore the structures and social relations which keep women at a certain place in employment (Coyle, 1988).

Lewenhak, S. (1992) explores the classifying of some human activities as work and giving them a value. It is the domination of middle and upper class men who defined 'work' ignoring some activities that are performed by women. The definition of work has been narrowed to only activities which bring in cash income emerged in the change from subsistence to exchange economies. The concept of work as consisting of all the tasks involved in gaining a livelihood was superseded by the concept of paid employment in a single job. The change happened most extensively in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in countries where the industrial and agricultural revolutions developed. Lewenhak (1992) stress on need of revaluation of work because the overall trend for provision of goods of services by human resource is declining due to a range of technologies.

Ward (1988) synthesized that during development women's economic status relative to men has stagnated and women's position continue to decline because it's shaped by the global capitalist economy. The economic growth in developing countries is dependent on core countries which has resulted in income inequality and lowered the status of women. Another strong argument of feminist theory is that women's work must be seen in the context of the family economy. Frank (2008) observes that the 'prevailing definition of 'work' is waged labour in a formally structured relation – a definition based upon a masculine ideal of 'work'. She further adds that in order to understand the concept of work what is 'equally important is that what is regarded as work is a result of both social and statistical definition

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