



RESEARCH PAPER

**Dynamics of Women Empowerment: A Qualitative Investigation of Gender-based Discriminatory Practices in Punjab, Pakistan**

Dr. Hina Rashid

Assistant Professor Political Science, Higher Education Department, Punjab, Pakistan

DOI

[http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022\(6-II\)86](http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022(6-II)86)

**PAPER INFO**

**ABSTRACT**

**Received:**

March 28, 2022

**Accepted:**

June 28, 2022

**Online:**

June 30, 2022

**Keywords:**

Dynamic Forces,  
Gender Equality,  
Punjab  
Women  
Empowerment

**\*Corresponding  
Author**

hina.rashid@punjab.gov.pk

The paper intends to explore the way toward gender equality and greater empowerment of women in traditional and diverse societies like the province of Punjab, by exploring the key contributing dynamics forces that are supportive to accomplish the goal of empowerment. The paper adopts a qualitative research design to investigate the selected problem. The case study method is selected by the researcher. In a diverse and traditional society patrilineal tendencies, manifold cultural patterns, lack of resources, religious dogmas, and their multiple interpretations make the understanding of the term more ambiguous. They explored key barriers that include low access to educational, health, and financial resources, less awareness of legal rights, low self-esteem, passive role of the state, and inactive role of women voters and representatives in political activities and decision-making process. Gradual social transformation, re-distribution of power in social and political structures, re-defining the gender roles and responsibilities, ensuring women's share in inherited financial assets, support of male, formation of self-help groups, allocation of general seats in elections, and definition of the scope of work for reserve seat holders is mandatory to accomplish the goal of empowerment.

**Introduction**

The term "Empowerment" was firstly used in Seventeenth-Century by Hamon L'Estrange but in recent history "Julian Rappaport" a social scientist has a credit to generate this theory. (Mishra & Tripathi, 2011). The concept is developed with the instigation of various feminist movements in 1960 and somehow related to the feminist thoughts included liberal, radical, reformists. (Lone & Amin, 2017). These movements in developing countries were spreading awareness to organize a radical program for getting gender equality. The efforts developed an understanding of the concept as a socio-political process, in which power distribution was essential phenomenon (Reed, 2007).

Due to a large number of interrelated emerging themes, the concept of empowerment was gradually converted into an intellectual approach. Proponents of different approaches including the consciousness-raising approach, economic development approach, and integrated development approach interpret the term according to the particular objectives, situation, or scale. With time, the use of the

term shifted from the dilemma of oppression to gender equality and then to development goals.

The commencement of the last decade of the 20th century put the term in development jargon. New terminology suspended its earlier use that was more related to participation (Tandon, 2016). In 1995, the fourth world conference on women in Beijing played a significant role in taking empowerment from a development perspective (Arnfred, 2001). The Beijing Platform for Action, the Beijing +5 Declaration and Resolutions, the Cairo Program, MDGs, CEDAW, and all other international initiatives, put forth Women's Empowerment as a top priority (Malhotra, et. al. 2002). With the advent of the 21st century, much attention has been paid by United Nations to women's rights. MDGs replaced by SDGs in 2016, directed all member states to adopt policies that can ensure women's inclusion in developmental sectors and decision-making structures.

The government of Pakistan has also taken certain measures to uplift women's status and to increase the degree of empowerment in society included, the National Policy for Development and Empowerment of women, women empowerment package, allocation of quota in national and provincial legislative assemblies, etc. Despite all these initiatives, there has been no significant improvement in the status of women socially, politically, and economically.

Punjab is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of population. Here, women are more in number than men and constitute 51.8% of the province's total population. Despite being outnumbered, women lag far behind in terms of availability and access to resources and opportunities. A notable disparity can be observed in the economic, political, and social sectors. The literacy rate of women in Punjab is 48 percent as compared to men's 67 percent. The female labor force participation ratio in Punjab is 25.4 % which is comparatively very low of males' 71.3%. Female political participation in the Punjab Assembly is 19.7% while men are enjoying 80.3%, so there is a gap of almost 70.6% (Khan,2010).

### **Literature Review**

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term "Empowerment as the action of empowering; the state of being empowered" (Lincoln, et. al. 2002). The Social Work Dictionary defines it as a theory that directs communities to achieve shared interests and gain collective control over their lives (Adams, 2003) and to exercise this control without infringing upon the rights of others (McWhirter, 1991). Empowerment seeks to change the unequal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities in the existing structures (Sohail, 2014) Researchers suggested it as a sole solution to counter subjugation and injustice against curb communities (Beteille, 1999). The definition of Empowerment is relatable to one's interpretation of power which is its root concept. Several researchers support different aspects of power concerning gender. Nanette Page and Cheryl Czuba hold empowerment "as an idea of the power that is intimately related to the change of power- gaining it, using it, diminishing it and losing it" (Cavalieri & Almeida, 2018). The gender power model recognizes that power is gendered. Men, as compared to women, enjoy better access to resources, power positions, and fewer social restrictions (UNDP, 2015). Yoder and Kahn opined that males seek 'power over' that leads to domination and influence while women look for personal empowerment that is more close to 'power to'. Dixon

also stands along with the same stance. Riger contended and relate it to ‘power over. Jenkins related empowerment to Interpersonal power behavior (Itzahky & York, 2000). Another dimension named *Power through*” highlights the dependence of power holders upon other individuals. One can gain or lost his power, due to the change of power status of others and can be empowered or disempowered without acting (Gali & Farnworth, 2019). Keller and Mbwewe, cited by Rowlands, Jo, emphasized its ability to organize a community, to increase their self-reliance, to assert their right to make choices and to control resources, and to challenge and eliminate their subjugation” (1995).

According to UNPF, to bring change to all levels of society, such policies and programs are needed to adopt that can ensure women's progress, the elevation of their living standards, access to resources and opportunities, eliminate their hardest duties regarding housework, remove legal barriers to ensure their public participation, and promote social awareness through media and educational channels (UNPF, 1994). Scholars agree that the following key *Conditions or Dynamic Forces* are essential to accomplish the goal of women empowerment.

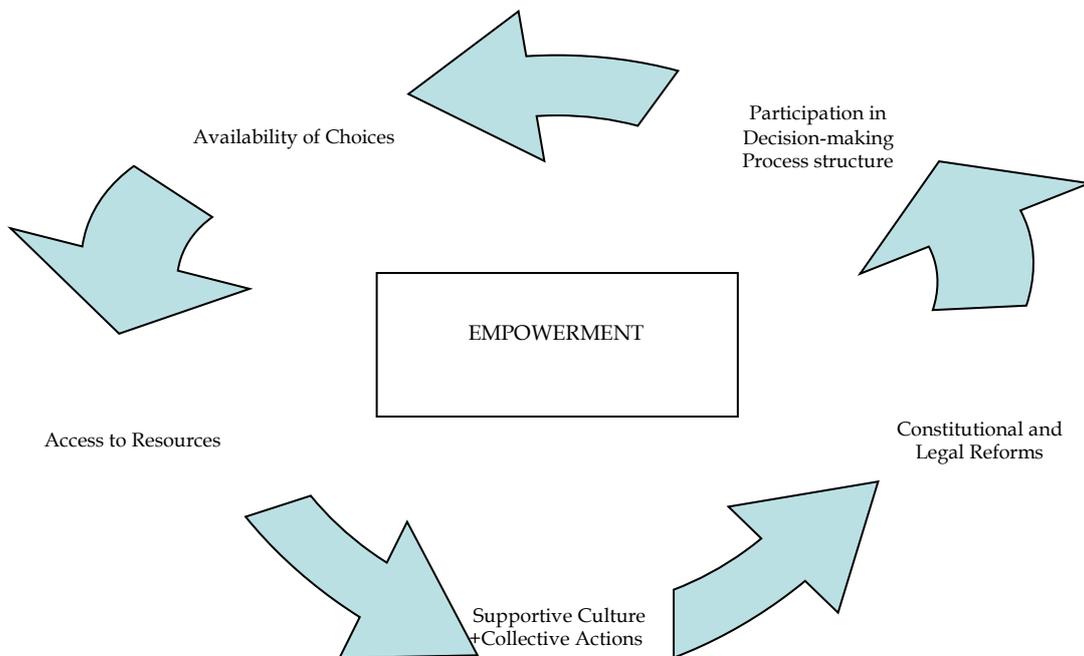


Figure1 Dynamics of Women Empowerment Source: Developed by the Researcher

### **Availability of Choices**

The choice is perceived to be an act of choosing between two or more available options. On the other hand, availability refers to the degree or level to which a specific system is capable to initiate or fulfilling the set goals. Composing choices are decisions that keep an individual heading up in the desired direction. So, if a state or society wants to empower a community, there is a need to ensure the availability of choices for them in every significant sector, including political, economic, social, etc. Thus, women would be able to make their desired decisions in life and feel empowered.

### **Access to Resources**

According to Kabeer, "Resources are the medium through which agency is exercised by a specific community. They are distributed by various individuals and institutions. How resources are distributed is worth noticing. If a woman's primary form of access to means is as a dependent, it will restrict her capability to make strategic choices (2005). Many developing states in the world have fewer resources compared to the population's requirements, but in many others besides enough resources, deprived communities like women, often complain about resources being out of their access. Certain policy measures can be adopted by ruling authorities to ensure the availability of resources and their access for women.

### **Supportive Culture**

If existing socio-cultural patterns are less supportive of women, the rest of the sub-systems can never be cooperative too. It is desirable for empowering women and socio-cultural norms should be encouraging. According to Neil, et. al. most developing countries have gender hierarchies and patriarchal arrangements. These patterns are barriers to equal distribution of power between both genders. It is obligatory to transform the existing dogmas and approaches about specific roles of gender. Such a vast structural change can only be brought through constitutional and legal reforms (2014).

### **Constitutional and Legal Reforms**

A social system that is less concerned about the empowerment of women can be changed gradually through legal and constitutional reforms. Though a gap would always be there between theory and practice (women's rights on paper and in practice), but still legal and constitutional protection of their rights is a significant channel to empowering them. The example of Europe, North America, and many countries in the South is noticeable in this regard, where since the 1970s, due to incremental legal reforms, considerable development has been observed regarding the acknowledgment of women's rights (Neil, et. al., 2014).

### **Participation in Political Decision-making Structures and Processes**

Participation refers to being part of an action or a process like decision-making. Empowerment is commonly defined as the ability of women to be an effective part of the decision-making process and to influence it. To empower women, the state and society must adopt policy measures that can ensure women's inclusion and effectiveness in decision-making. Kabeer, stated that women's presence in governance structures will lead to the elimination of partial policies (2005). Saeed's statement supported the mentioned argument that "providing women with leadership opportunities and making them a part of decision-making can go a long way in achieving women empowerment" (2019).

### **An Analysis of Dynamics Contributed Towards the Powerlessness of Women in the Province of Punjab**

The subservient status of women vis-à-vis men is a universal phenomenon, though the nature and extent of subordination may vary across the territories. Gender hierarchal trend places a woman in a less valued position and to endure the

prevailing gender status quo, family, society, and state all allocate meager resources for the human development of women. (Bari, 2005). An analysis of various government documents, reports and literature shows that in Punjab, the following dynamics contributed to the lower degree of empowerment of women. A few substantial gender-based discriminatory practices are given below.

### **Limited Availability and Access to Basic Material Resources**

A noticeable disparity exists between men and women regarding access to *education* in Punjab. The literacy rate of women in Punjab is 48 percent as compared to men's 67 percent. According to the statistics of 2013, in Punjab, the percentage of the population that has never attended school is 36%, out of which, 50% are females and 28% are males (Imran, 2015). According to the data of the Punjab Commission on the status of women provided in, the Punjab gender parity report, from 2014- to 2016 Literacy Rates in Punjab, for 10 years and above age group remained static at 63%. However, during the mentioned time, the literacy rate of men increased from 71% to 72% and the literacy rate of women dropped from 55% to 54% (PCSW, 2018). According to the Pakistan Education statistics 2015-2016, the percentage of girls enrolled at various levels of education in the province of Punjab is as mentioned, at Pre-Primary level 46.7%, at Primary level 47%, at Middle 47%, and at Upper-Secondary it was 48.3%. (PCST, 2016). Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education proclaims that in 2016, 40% of girls were out of primary to secondary level schools in Punjab. The literacy rate in female adults (above 15 years) in the province was 51% during the same year (PAGE, 2017). The provided detail indicates that about half of women's total population in Punjab is deprived to get access to basic education.

Another significant dynamic is access and availability of *health resources*. The Provincial government of Punjab acknowledges that the health status of the majority of people is below the required level. Per 1000 live births, the infant mortality rate is 77, while under five; this rate is 112 per 1000. The ratio of maternal mortality is 300 per 1 lac live births. About one-third of total pregnant women are anemic. Moreover, the major factor behind maternal deaths is malnutrition. (SHMED, Punjab Health profile, 2018). According to UN Women, imbalanced power relations between men and women, conservative social norms, the traditional focus on women's reproductive role, and Gender-based violence hinder women's access to quality health services (Minhas & Jhanzaib, 2019). According to the report of the Asian Development Bank, the development of nutritional deficiencies in girls is due to intra-household partiality in food distribution. Few other elements are women's financial dependency, control of family over women's sexuality and restricted and limited mobility (Bari, 2000).

### **Lack of Control over Financial Assets**

Control over finance is an indispensable element to raise the social and economic status of women (Minhas & Jhanzaib, 2019). Women's access to financial resources and ability to make finance is a valid pathway to reduce the gender gap (World Bank Group, 2018). Financially independent women have greater control over resources and self-confidence. In Pakistan, due to customary socio-cultural structure, women have limited access to financial resources. (Batool, et.al. 2020) In Punjab, the overall situation is in the favor of men and fewer numbers of women

have control over domestic assets. (Nosheen, et. al. 2009). In most urban areas, women employed in the modern sector enjoy better status at home. In Northern Punjab, women have greater decision-making authority and mobility as compared to women of Southern Punjab. In Southern and Central Punjab, they have more employment opportunities, particularly in the agricultural field. (Sathar & Kazi, 2000). Women, living in urban areas are more empowered as compared to women in rural areas. (Khalid, et.al. 2019). It is essential to pay special attention to women's education and employment prospects (Fatima, 2014). Though the government has formulated many policies that grant them legal rights, but unfortunately, these policies and programs are not implemented properly. (Lone, et.al. 2020).

### **Socio-Cultural Challenges**

The life of every individual living in a particular society is influenced by social and cultural patterns. If they are sympathetic and non-discriminatory, every community including women actively partakes in shared activities, to protect their collective interests.

The society of Punjab is *patriarchal* in nature. Here, both of genders are bifurcated into two separate spheres. Home is legitimate domain of women while men belong to outside world. This divergence practice ultimately narrows the women's exposure and skills, and restricts her access to resources and opportunities. (Bari, 2000). It is reported that in Southern region of the Punjab, low level of human development, poverty, illiteracy and patriarchal structure of society played a key role in increasing high level of violence against women (Tanwir, et.al. 2019). Women are expected to behave submissively in every relation. A wife is anticipated to openly acknowledge her husband's authority. (Hakim & Aziz, 1999). A man gets complete control over her existence, body, emotions, thoughts even her life (Bhattacharya, 2014). Even, by *misinterpreting Islamic principles*, women were making subject to torture and violence. Sanchita Bhattacharya describes, that commands of Quran, related to gender justice were diluted as they were conceive as challenge to a patriarchal culture that cannot afford to grant equal authority to both genders. So, it can stated that, issue of women empowerment and gender inequality here, is more cultural rather religious. (2014 ). Traditional and un-civilized patterns followed by majority of people, on the name of Islam, in many parts of the country, crucially affects women's lives. The tradition of "forced marriages or Marriage with Quran" both are against the true essence of Islam (Akhtar & Metraux, 2013). Unfortunately, in Pakistan this act is constantly in practice in backward rural areas, particularly where feudalistic trends are implemented (Muzaffar, et. al. 2018).

### **Limited Awareness of Legal Rights**

Women in Punjab are less concerned and aware of their rights. According to the assessment of Haq, et. al. women have to compromise on a variety of matters while agreeing to a relationship with men. It restricts their access to opportunities, education, and mobility (2019). To deal with these discriminatory trends, awareness of legal rights is compulsory. It is recorded that the majority of women in Punjab are unaware of their legal rights and initiatives taken by the government (Batoool et.al. 2020). As far as women's right to inheritance is concerned, it is observed that most women surrender it in the favor of their male family members. According to the study conducted by Rubab & Usman, A, most women give up this right with free

will or out of love for their brothers, and sometimes they are forced to do so. A very small number of women claimed this right based on their own will (2018). Women are needed to develop vigilance and the ability to claim and protect their rights. (Batool, et.al. 2020) The state needs to utilize communication tools to promote awareness among women.

### **Lack of Legal Support from the State**

The role of women cannot be ignored in the development of a state. The issue of powerlessness and low status of women cannot be blamed on society merely; State and government members are equally responsible for this matter. Equal respect, justice, and equality for women have not been promoted because male legislators have strongly opposed any women-specific legislation that has been brought to parliament. (Akhtar & Metraux, 2013). The provincial government claims that it has taken various initiatives to counter gender disparity. The notable measures are Punjab Women Empowerment Package 2012, PWEI 2014, PWEI 2016, and Punjab Women Development Policy, 2018. There are also various laws initiated by the Legislative Assembly for the protection of women in Punjab (PCSW, 2017) including The Punjab Fair Representation of Women Bill (2014), The Punjab Reproductive, Maternal, Neo-natal & Child Health Authority Bill (2014), The Punjab Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Bill (2015), The Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Bill (2015). (Bills, PAP, 2013-2018). The current social and human situation of women in the province is recorded by many organizations and studies conclude that there is still much to be done.

Government should launch local chambers, incorporated with local government, to deliver awareness to women about their rights and available facilities. Governmental and non-governmental organizations are required to work cooperatively. Educational institutions can also spread awareness by organizing seminars and conferences on women-related issues and problems. These initiatives, along with many others, can bring out women from the deplorable situation (Batool, et.al. 2016).

### **Lack of Women's Participation and Representation in Politics**

The inclusion of women in the political sphere depends on the nature of the political system and its rules. Political cultures that allow men's monopoly over defining political rules both in legislative assemblies and political parties ultimately restrict women's inclusion. Bari stated that male-dominated political parties support male perspectives on national issues and overlook women's perspectives. The same gender-discriminatory trends also restrict women's access to the position of power (2005). Akhtar & Metraux describe that the number of women on the electoral rolls is fewer than men, and in many cases computerized national identity cards of women are kept by male heads of family, particularly belong to landed aristocracies (2013). In the 2018 elections, the total number of registered women voters was 26,779,033, while women voting turnout was 14,108,943 which makes the percentage 52.6 (ECP, 2018). In the elections of 2013, the total political participants, nominated by political parties were 6819; only 3.5% was woman, while 96.5% were the man. The highest ratio of women nominees was recorded in Punjab where it was 4.6% (Bano & Meyer, 2013). After the general elections of 2018, the Election Commission of Pakistan issued

a list that contained district-wise data for male and female registered voters. The data exposed the huge gender gap among voters which was 12.54m. Out of the twenty districts with an extensive gender gap, seventeen were in Punjab (DAWN, 7th June 2020). The same is the case for women's political participation. The following table illustrates a complete detail of women's representation in the provincial assembly of Punjab from 1947 to 2022.

**Table 1**  
**Representation of Women in the Provincial Assembly of Punjab: 1947-2022**

Legislative Assembly	Total Members	Women Members	%
First Legislative Assembly (August 15, 1947 to January 25, 1949)	103	3	2.9%
Second Legislative Assembly (May 7, 1951 to October 14, 1955)	174	6	3.4%
Third Legislative Assembly	Interim Assembly	-----	-----
Fourth Legislative Assembly (May 19, 1956 to October 7, 1958)	300	7	2.3%
Fifth Legislative Assembly (June 9, 1962 to June 8, 1965)	155	4	2.5%
Sixth Legislative Assembly (June 9, 1965 to March 25, 1969)	155	6	3.8%
Seventh Legislative Assembly (2 <sup>nd</sup> May, 1972-13 <sup>th</sup> Jan, 1977)	186	6	6.97%
Eighth Legislative Assembly (April 1977 to July 1977)	240	12	5%
Ninth Legislative Assembly (12 March 1985 to 30 May 1988)	260	16	6.1%
Tenth Legislative Assembly (30 <sup>th</sup> November 1988 to 6 <sup>th</sup> August 1990)	260	15	5.7%
Eleventh Legislative Assembly (November, 5 <sup>th</sup> 1990 to June, 28 <sup>th</sup> 1993)	248	4	1.61%
Twelfth Legislative Assembly (October 1993 and dissolved in November 1996)	248	2	0.80%
Thirteen Legislative Assembly (February 1997 to October 1999)	248	1	0.40%
Fourteenth Legislative Assembly (November 2002 to November 2007)	371	73	19.67%
Fifteenth Legislative Assembly (2008-2013)	350 (+21 vacant)	71	20.2%
Sixteenth Legislative Assembly (2013-2018)	369 (+2 vacant)	75	20.4%
Seventeenth Legislative Assembly (2018-continued)	371	75	20.2%

Source <https://www.pap.gov.pk/>.

The above table illustrate that the representation of women in the legislative assembly of Punjab remained very limited, compared to their proportion in the

population. Hashmi & Rashid indicate that under-representation of women in the legislative assemblies unable them to initiate any women-specific legislation. So their efforts remain futile to address the gender-specific concerns (2019). Women's participation in political affairs paves the way toward participation in political decision-making. They can never assert their rights without participating in the political decision-making process.

## **Conclusion**

Empowerment entails change and collective change requires change at the individual level. Individual empowerment gradually leads toward community empowerment. Women are needed to get familiar with their worth. Agents of socialization should play a significant role in empowering women at the individual level. Women should be given access to all resources and opportunities on an equal basis and their effectual inclusion in the process of political decision-making must be ensured. This is the most powerful way through which they can not only protect their community's rights but also obstruct any initiative that could lead to their exploitation. The goal of women's empowerment can be accomplished by following the mentioned course.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations would be helpful to achieve the mentioned task.

- Re-distribution of power at domestic, social and political structures, and gradual cultural transformation can lead toward greater empowerment of women. Specific socio-cultural patterns that hinder women's development should be decayed. Education, religion, technology, means of communication, and awareness programs for broadening views can be helpful tools to achieve the mentioned task.
- The inclusion of women in domestic decision-making and control over financial assets will lead to women's financial independence. It leads to the development of self-confidence and decreases dependency. Economic empowerment of women can be ensured by granting their share in the family's assets. The government needs to adopt strict legislative measures to ensure women's share in inheritance.
- Electronic and social media can be used as effective tools to change the specific mindset and strengthening women's viewpoints. The traditional approach regarding division and definition of gender roles and responsibilities at all levels can be altered through the help of these instruments. Most rated programs and dramas can better help in broadening the views and re-defining the traditional gender roles and responsibilities. Awareness program regarding women's legal and constitutional rights should be broadcasted at regular level. This platform should also offer opportunity to sort out problems of women who are helpless and oppressed, and have no knowledge of technicalities of legal matters.
- Men should play the role of supporters for women, not as competitors or barriers. Together they can bring change at every level. There is a need to

organize such platforms where both genders can work together to sort out gender-related issues and apprehensions through negotiations and deliberations. The same practice should be adopted in the legislative Assembly which will ultimately assure the support of male legislators on women-related legislation.

- Women also need to rethink their role. They need to build up their capacities and work hard to make their place and status. They need to work together to overcome the deficiencies and one would be able to benefit from the other's abilities. The formation of Self Help Groups or platforms at the social, organizational, and political levels would be helpful for women to build consensus among divergent approaches.
- Women legislators needed to effectively partake in the legislative decision-making process. That will gradually empower the whole community and unite them for the sake of their collective interests.
- Political parties should not adopt gender-discriminatory policies, particularly regarding the allocation of party tickets on general seats. Moreover, women should not be given tickets in such constituencies, where their defeat is certain.
- Merely showing and representing women in the political process is not enough to empower them. Their voices should be given as much importance as their vote in the approval of legislation. Most women are appointed on reserved seats, so to make their role effective, their scope of work is needed to define and funds should be allocated too.

## References

- Adams, R. (2003). *Social Work and Empowerment (Third Edition)*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Almeida, I. (2018). Power, Empowerment and Social Participation-the Building of a Conceptual Model. *European Journal of Social Science ,Education and Research*, 5(1), 74-185. doi: 10.2478/ejser-2018-0020
- Amin, H. L. W. (2017). Revisiting Women Empowerment in Modern Era. *International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 9(2), 67-70
- Malhotra,A, Schuler,R & Boender, C. (2002). *Measuring Women's Empowerment as a International Variable*. Gender & Development Group, World Bank
- Arnfred, S. (2001). Questions of Power: Women's Movements, Feminist Theory and Development Aid. In A. Sisask (Ed.), *Discussing Women's Empowerment : Theory and Practice* (Vol. 3). Stockholm: Sida Studies.
- Aziz, A, & Hakim, A. (1999). Socio-cultural, Religious, and Political Aspects of the Status of Women in Pakistan. *The Pakistan Development Review*, 37(4), 727-746.
- Bari, F. (2005). Women's Political Participation: Issues and Challenges *Enhancing Participation of Women in Development through an Enabling Environment for Achieving Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women* (Vol. EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.12). Thailand: United Nations: Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
- Beteille, A. (1999). Empowerment. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34(10/11), 589-597.
- Galie, A & Farnworth,C.R. (2019). Power through: A New Concept in the Empowerment Discourse. *Global Food Security*, 21, 13-17.
- ECP. (2018). *Summary of registered voters (Provinces)*. Islamabad, Pakistan
- Editorial. (2020, June 7). Women Voters, *DAWN*
- Nosheen,F. Ali,T. Ahmad,M. Anwar, H,N & Ahmad,M. (2009). Assessing Gender role in Decision making regarding Socio Economic Activities in Rural Punjab *Pak. J. Agri. Sci*, 46(1), 73-77.
- Fatima, D. (2014). Education, Employment, and Women's Say in Household Decision-Making in Pakistan. *Centre for Research in Economics and Business Lahore School of Economics, CREB Working Paper No. 04-14*, 1-59.
- United Nations Population Fund, (1994). *Issue 7: Women Empowerment (UNFPA, Trans.)*. Cairo: United Nations Organization.
- Group, W. B. (2018). *State of Financial Inclusion of Women in Pakistan*. Washington DC, USA: World Bank Group.

- Batool, H. Rehman, H.U. & Asgher, N. (2020). Key Dimensions and Determinants of women's Empowerment in Pakistan: Empirical Evidence from Southern Punjab *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 57(1).130-150.
- Imran, M. (2015). *Gender Disparity in Education Attainment: Analysis at the Districts and Towns Level of Punjab*. Institute of Public Policy at Netsol
- Minhas, S.F.& Jahanzaib,M. (2019). UN: Women *Implementation Framework for Primary Women Development Policy: Draft Report: United Nations Organizations*
- Kabeer, N. (2005). Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A critical analysis of the third Millennium Development Goal. *Gender and Development*, 13(1). 13-24
- Sathar, Z,A. & Kazi, S. (2000). Women's Autonomy in the Context of Rural Pakistan *The Pakistan Development Review*, 39(2), 89-110.
- Khan, T. M. (2010). *Socio-Cultural Determinants of Women's Empowerment in Punjab, Pakistan*. University of Agriculture <http://prh.hec.gov.pk/jspui/bitstream/123456789/633/1/607S.pdf>
- Tanwir, M. S. Fennell, S. Lak, H, R. & Sufi, S. (2019). Not Accepting Abuse as the Norm: Local Forms of Institutional Reform to Improve Reporting on Domestic Violence in Punjab. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 20(7), 129-153.
- Akhtar, N & Métraux, D. A. (JUNE 2013). Pakistan is a Dangerous and Insecure place for Women. *International Journal on World Peace*, 30(2), 35-70.
- Bano, S & Meyer, M. D. (2013). Gender Election Monitoring Mission Pakistan *General National Assembly Election*. Pakistan: Gender Concerns International.
- Khalid, M. W. Samargandi, N. Shah, A. H. & Almandeel, S. (2019). Socio-Economic Factors and Women's Empowerment: Evidence from Punjab, Pakistan. *International Economic Journal*, 34(1), 144-168.
- Haq, M. I. U. Akram, F. Aashiq, U. & Raza, S. (2019). The Employment paradox to improve Women's Empowerment in Pakistan. *Cogent Social Science* 5(1). 1-17
- Lincoln, N.D. Travers, C. Ackers, P & Wilkinson, A. (2002). The meaning of empowerment: the interdisciplinary etymology of a new management concept. *International Journal of Management Reviews*. 271-290.
- Muzaffar, M., Yaseen, Z., & Ahmad, A. (2018). Child Marriages in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences, *Journal of Indian Studies*, 4 (2), 195-207
- PAGE. (2017). A Snapshot of the Status of Girls Education in Pakistan: Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education.
- Pal, M.S. & Bari, D,F. (2000). Women in Pakistan *Country Briefing Paper*. Programs Department (West) and Office of Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank.

- PAP. (2013-2018). *Assembly Business: Bills*. Pakistan: Government of Pakistan
- PCST. (2016). *Gender Education Women in Science and Technology*. Islamabad, Pakistan: Pakistan Council for Science and Technology.
- PCSW. (2017). *The Punjab Commission on the Status of Women*. Pakistan: GOP
- PCSW. (2018). *Punjab Gender Parity Report*. Pakistan: Punjab Commission on the status of Women. Government of the Punjab.
- Rashid, R. S. H. H. (2019). Role of Women Legislators in Decision-Making Process: An Assessment of Punjab Assembly (2008-2013). *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 3(2), 697-712.
- Reed, J. (2007). Putting Power back into Empowerment. *openDemocracy* <http://www.opendemocracy.net>.
- Rowlands, J. (1995). Empowerment Examined. *Development in Practice* 5(2), 101-107.
- Lone, S.W. Kayani, D.A.K. & Hanif, D.M. (2020). Empowering Women through Educational and Economic Access Programs in Punjab, Pakistan with Reference to SDGs Goal 5 *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 4(2), 232-244.
- Saeed, H. (2019). 5 Ways We can Empower Women Globally. In AtlasCorps (Ed.).
- SHMED. (2018). *Punjab Health Profile*. Pakistan: Government of Pakistan Retrieved
- Sohail, M. (2014). Women Empowerment and Economic Development-An Exploratory Study in Pakistan. *Developing Countries Studies*, 4(9), 163-170.
- Tam O'Neil, Domingo, P. & Valters. C. (2014). Progress on women's empowerment: from technical fixes to political action. In O. D. Institute (Ed.), (Vol. 6): Development Progress.
- Tandon, T. (2016). Women Empowerment: Perspectives and Views. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(3), 6-12
- Mishra, N.K. & Tripathi, T. (2011). Conceptualising Women's Agency , Autonomy and Empowerment. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 46(11), 58-65.
- UNDP. (2015). *Human Development Report United Nations Development Program: United Nations Organization*.
- Usman, I. R. A. (2018). Women's Right of Inheritance: Choices and Challenges in Punjab. *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 8(2), 95-109.
- McWhirter, E. H. (1991). Empowerment in counseling , *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 68, 222-227.
- York, H. & York, A.S. (2000). Empowerment and Community Participation: Does gender make a difference? *Social Work Research*, 24(4), 225-234.