



The Role of Women's Employment in the Economy and Family Rights (Qualitative Study with Rural Women in Iran)

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Abstract

Keywords:

Women, Employment, Economy and family rights, Qualitative Study

Women is one of the most important factor in maintaining economic prosperity and the stability of society. Women's employment is an important part of any country's economy. Women have a valuable place in Islam. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the role of women's employment in the economy and family rights. This research has been done in the form of content analysis and qualitative study of grounded theory in an exploratory way. The role of women in the home economy was done in the form of 3 stages of open coding, axial coding and selective coding. According to the research results, the most important roles of women in the economy and family rights in rural society include economic productivity, processing and packaging, economic efficiency and production. Therefore, paying attention to the important role of women in economic development and ultimately sustainable development will pave the way for the flourishing of the capabilities of this important sector in society.

1. Introduction

One of the most important criteria for measuring the degree of development of a country is the degree of importance and prestige that women have in that country. The world is now more focused on women, because today, in order to achieve social development, accelerate the process of economic development and achieve social justice, women must be seen as an active and constructive force, who certainly have a great impact on the process of development and increase. The role of women in development depends directly on the goal of social and economic development and is therefore a fundamental factor in the evolution of all human societies. This article seeks to provide a brief economic analysis of development, how the relationship between the position of women and development and the impact of their participation as half of the active force in society in economic activities, to achieve development and social justice (Mohammadi, 2006). Given that half of the world's population is women and two-thirds of the working hours are done by women, only one-tenth of the world's income and only one-hundredth of the world's property are allocated to women. Therefore, there is more or less inequality for women in all societies, which in recent years, has received more attention in some international organizations and has been included in the micro-economic and social planning of various international organizations (Vafaei and Tarkarani, 2015).

1.1 Basic aspects of women's participation in society will be considered:

1.1.1 Paying attention to the limitations and barriers to women's participation in economic activities.

Some of the issues and problems of women's employment are development barriers that are related to the structure of countries and some of them are non-developmental and non-structural barriers. Development barriers include social, cultural and economic barriers and non-developmental barriers also refer to women's personality and physiological characteristics (Mohammadi, 2006):

A) Cultural barriers

Although the economic factor is the most important factor in women's employment, but studies have shown that common cultural values and beliefs in a society have a direct impact on women's employment. In the case of Iran, the accepted culture of the society has created the belief that if the husband is against the wife's work, even if she wants to continue working, the wife should quit her job. One of the most important cultural barriers to women's employment in Iran is the following:

1. Social misconceptions that women do not participate in activities
 2. Lack of awareness of Iranian women about their citizenship rights
 3. Lack of awareness of women in various social and economic fields available for activity
 4. Higher illiteracy rates of women than men
 5. Low percentage of specialists and holders of scientific degrees among women compared to men
- B) Social barriers

Various studies consider the education of women to be the most important way to achieve cultural development. In this regard, the institution of the family is considered the most important factor in education, training and socialization of women. Inadequate education for women compared to men, hinders the opportunity for women to grow and develop their existential personality, and creates difficult conditions for their employment, which means that women do not have the same job opportunities or equal conditions as men. On equal terms, employers and managers will prefer men to women because of their ambiguities about women and their negative perceptions and prejudices about women's work.

C) Economic barriers

Regarding the economic barriers to women's participation, we point out four important factors:

1. Unpaid housework: Housekeeping, which is the main occupation of women in our society, involves various economic activities, such as subsistence through agriculture in the villages and the production of goods and services, which are unpaid. And no economic assessment is made of this activity of women as mothers and wives in reducing family expenses and its effectiveness in the non-monetary economy. Regarding the non-receipt of wages for housework by housewives, it should be added that housework generates income, but this income is hidden and it is not money that is given directly to her, it is money that is due to her efforts. It stays in the family pocket to be spent for the welfare of all, because if the housewife does not do housework for any reason, that family will have to pay someone from the family income to hire someone to do the work.

2. Wage level differences: Income differences differ in part from employment disputes, although women may work fewer hours than men and work part-time. Another factor that affects the income gap between men and women is wage discrimination. The number of female workers is thought to have increased during periods of recession and structural adjustment, and to the extent that men lost their jobs largely (Mohammadi, 2006), women were forced to work in the informal sector to support their families, and this is what UNICEF calls an invisible adjustment. Women's job restrictions and the influx of women into jobs are increasing the supply of women in demand, and managers and employers are hiring women who want lower wages, leading to a wage gap between women and men (Mohammadi, 2006).

3. Types of occupations: The presence of women in some occupations, which are mostly called feminine, such as teaching, nursing and office work, which is a continuation of the traditional role of unpaid women's work in the home, is more concentrated, which is of low quality. They also have lower wages, so the presence of women in such jobs, which puts them in the same job as in traditional family culture, not only does not provide a viable option for women to participate, but also removes them from the realm of economic activity.

In general, employment problems and barriers for women are related to all countries, both industrial and developing, with the difference that there are strengths and weaknesses in them. Some factors have more influence and others have less influence. Non-developmental barriers such as the physiological status of women and their personality system, which is also influenced by the cultural system and values of society, are among the most important barriers in most countries, and developmental barriers related to the structure of developing countries. The specific conditions of each country determine the need for more attention to the removal of obstacles.

4. Economic constraints due to women's social and cultural constraints: That is, the constraints mentioned in sections A and B can also affect women's economic activities.

1.1.2. Pay attention to facilities and capabilities

Among these abilities and facilities available to women are:

- A) Existence of rich talent in Iranian women
- B) The desire and interest of Iranian women to participate in social activities
- C) Providing appropriate individual conditions for women such as courage in commenting and making decisions
- D) The existence of a favorable opinion of the officials regarding the expansion of women's participation

E) The possibility of women achieving important national responsibilities

In general, participation and planning to gradually remove obstacles and limitations by accurately recognizing women's issues at the regional and national dimensions can have a significant impact on the growth and development of women's participation. Women make up about half of the population and play a significant role in society despite their poor social, economic and cultural status. In addition to being responsible for managing the home and raising children, they also participate in the family's economic activities. Unfortunately, despite the great efforts of women in society, the role of this group in productive and economic activities is often overlooked (Mirlofti et al., 2013). If the role of women in the production system is viewed from a sociological point of view, women's economic participation can be considered as one of the fundamental factors in maintaining society. Around the world, rural women have the task of preparing food, assisting in planting, holding and harvesting, raising livestock, and producing and marketing it. Women work in this circle in different ways, but their activity in this system is invisible (Nawab Akbar, 1997: 186). Women have long been responsible for parenting, marriage, and family affairs. They have not spared any activity to continue social life and meet the needs of society. Also, in all historical stages, half of the economic activities have been organized as a result of their efforts. Nevertheless, economic activities have never increased their power and prestige, and their work has not had a special social value. Housekeeping and doing housework without receiving the minimum wage is defined as one of their natural duties (Mohammadi, 1995). In Iran, the share of women as agricultural labor force is estimated at 40%, which varies in different sectors. In the field of handicrafts, they have played a significant role. Also, their role in labor reproduction remains strong. In Iran, the major share of agriculture is accounted for by the average peasant units. In these units, women often work as unpaid family agricultural workers and therefore the real value of women's participation in economic production is ignored (Nawab Akbar, 1997). Women are one of the most important factors in maintaining economic prosperity and the stability of rural society. However, since the cultural values of the village have considered all women's activities as a natural thing and part of their duties, therefore, despite the hard work that can be seen in all their activities, they have always been a major part of the material benefits of these efforts. The values and behavioral patterns that shape rural women's attitudes toward the status quo have led to the neglect of women in agricultural production, which has had many negative consequences for them. The dynamic presence of rural women in the exploitation unit is an effective factor in ensuring the economic livelihood of the family, but since their activities are considered part of their natural duties and have no economic value. Therefore, in the face of all this effort, they do not receive a salary, and on this basis, they are economically completely dependent on men. As a result, men have always been recognized as the sole breadwinner of the family, and the livelihood of the family depends on their activities (Vafaei and Tarkarani, 2015).

1.2. Islam's view on women's employment

In the humanizing teachings of Islam and the Holy Quran, we can reach three important principles about women's employment (Mohammadi, 2006):

Principle 1: In Islam, the man is responsible for the economic security of the family; This means that Islam recognizes the principle of economic independence for women; This means that women are the owners of their own work and production, and they have no responsibility for the economy and family rights, and they can even demand wages and salaries from their husbands for the work and services they do at home, which are also obligatory for the man to pay. Men and women each have the right to do something with their physical condition and mental qualities, and they want a job that suits their circumstances, which they have the right to work and own on their own (Yousefi, 2010).

Principle 2: Prohibited occupations for women in Islam; With all the freedom that Islam has given them, women are excluded from employment in three cases, and this is because in these cases, they are not given a task. These occupations are: 1. Judgment, 2. Jihad, 3. Fatwa.

1. Judging is a religious task and not a social work, in this case, women are not allowed to do this, the most important reason may be women's affection and compassion, which causes compassion for the accused and prevents him from fulfilling the ruling. Of course, women have the right to testify in court, and even some of our jurists have different opinions about qadha.

2. In the case of jihad, women do not have the duty of primary jihad, that is, if jihad is intended to spread Islam and Islamic geography (which must be done with the presence and command of the Imam), only men will have the right to participate, and this duty has been removed from women. But in another type of jihad, which is defensive jihad and is carried out to defend Islam and confront the aggression of infidels and enemies of Islam, it is obligatory on all members of society, including women, to defend their Islamic homeland.

3. A fatwa (a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority) is also one of the things that women are not obliged to do. And it demands special religious authority with its own conditions, and only male jurists have the right to special religious authority.

The difference between Islam and the West in this regard is that the West views women as a propaganda and political tool in the workplace and in society to gain more benefits. But Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran, while preserving the human dignity of women, want to entrust them with tasks that are appropriate to their internal and external conditions and spirits, which is called a logical division and not a value discrimination.

Principle 3: Conditions for Assigning Work to Women in Islam; In Islam, four basic points about the employment conditions of women are mentioned, which are (Rezaei, 2007):

1. The interest of society: In assigning jobs to women, one should be careful about the consequences that will have on society. Does it have a positive and beneficial effect and help the society move towards progress, or will it have a negative and destructive effect and cause moral stagnation in the society?

2. The interest of the family: Since the sanctity and stability of the family in the Islamic society is very valuable and important and should be protected, the employment of women and mothers outside the home should be in line with the realization of this principle and not cause hesitation. The family, if that happens, the woman's employment will face problems.

3. Individual conditions and issues: In assigning a job to a woman, one should also pay attention to her personal interests, whether a woman is able to do this job or not? Either she grows up with this job or she lags behind. And is this job compatible with her abilities and capabilities or not?

4. Considering priorities in assigning work to men and women: In assigning work to individuals, attention should be paid to work efficiency and facilities and abilities of individuals. Whether a woman is more appropriate or a man, depends on the job conditions. In some jobs such as teaching in education or nursing in the health sector, women are more suitable than men, and in some other jobs such as porter, mechanic, blacksmith, construction work, and so on, men are more suitable than Women.

In general, if these four points are taken into account, women's employment in society will not only create a problem but will increase the benefit of society. At the end of this discussion, we will mention two principles of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic. Article 20 of the Constitution: "All members of the nation, men and women, are equally protected by law and enjoy all human, political, economic, social and cultural rights in accordance with Islamic principles." Article 28 of the Constitution: "Everyone has the right to choose a job that he wants and that is not against Islam and the public interest and the rights of others. "The government is obliged to provide employment opportunities and equal conditions for obtaining jobs by observing the society's need for different jobs" (Shahedi and Farjodi, 2010). Sustainable development is the process by which the people of a country respond to their needs and raise their standard of living. In order to achieve sustainable development, it is necessary to make changes in the lifestyle of people in society. These changes are not possible without the active, informed and committed participation of women. If in a society the trend of consumerism prevails in the long run, in the caravan of moving towards the peaks of development, the society will lag behind the others. In this regard, one of the most important considerations to be considered is the role of the family, especially women, in the rotation of society's economy; So that the skill of planning in the family, which is the most important pillar of economic productivity, depends to an acceptable degree on women in the family. Women's participation in spending family income, changing and modifying consumption behaviors, women's control over family consumption, exercising maternal affection to create economic discipline and teaching children economic correct behavior such as division of labor and responsibility are among the factors that are manifestations of economy and family rights productivity. In other words, women in the family with the help of these variables can improve the productivity of the economy and family rights in the first stage and accelerate the process of economic development in the second stage. The results indicate that women increase the productivity of the family economy through two channels: improving the consumption pattern of the family and smart upbringing, which is itself a driving factor in the economic growth of society (Donyaye Eghtesad, 2017).

2. Materials and Methods

In this research, the qualitative paradigm has been used exploratory. The grounded theory data model was used for in-depth analysis of data from the research community and its analysis. In terms of the possibility of using the findings, the present study is a decision-making study. Based on the division of types of research based on purpose, it is considered as a type of applied research. In the classification of research according to the way of data collection, it is considered a descriptive research because it describes the conditions and phenomena under study. The sample of this study includes a number of rural women who were selected through the snowball method. To achieve the objectives of the research in the qualitative section, the semi-structured interview method and the technique of brainstorming and observation in data collection have been used. To evaluate the validity of qualitative findings, the triangulation method was used as a research team and various methods of data collection and member control techniques were used. In order to implement the data theory of the foundation, three types of open, axial and selective coding were used. The

role of women in the home economy was done in the form of 3 stages of open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Open Coding: It is done by understanding the concept of an event and choosing a name (label) for it and through the technique of continuous comparison. In fact, it is an analytical process through which concepts are identified. Axial Coding: The researcher selects one of the categories as the axis class and explores it as the axis phenomenon in the center of the process and determines the relationship of the other classes with it. Selective Coding: Selective coding (based on the results of the previous two coding steps) is the main stage of theorizing. In this way, it systematically relates the central class to other classes and presents those relations within the framework of a narrative and modifies the classes that need further improvement and development. At this stage, the researcher, according to his understanding of the text of the phenomenon under study, either presents the framework of the paradigm model in a narrative way or breaks down the paradigm model and graphically presents the final theory.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result Coding done in grounded theory

In order to evaluate the role of women's employment in the economy and family rights qualitatively, they were examined without any assumption using the Grounded theory. Then, based on the analysis conducted by the researcher, all the expressions of the respondents with at least 5 repeat were identified and categorized in the form of the role of rural women. The role of rural women in the economy and family rights was expressed in 5 sub-categories in the form of 12 brief descriptions with 56 repetitions with different expressions. The coding is done as follows:

Open coding: It is done by understanding the concept of an event and choosing a name (label) for it and through the technique of continuous comparison. In fact, it is an analytical process through which concepts are identified (Radan, 2020). In this type of coding, people were first asked to express their opinions and ideas freely. A code was then assigned to the ideas.

Axial coding: The researcher selects one of the classes as a central class and explores it as a central phenomenon in the center of the process and determines the relationship of other classes with it (Saadollahi et al., 2020). In this type of coding, first the overviews were examined and the items that were around an axis were placed in a category.

Selective coding: Selective coding (based on the results of the previous two coding steps) is the main stage of theorizing. In this way, it systematically relates the central class to other classes and presents those relations within the framework of a narrative and modifies the classes that need further improvement and development. At this stage, according to his understanding of the text of the phenomenon under study, the researcher either presents the framework of the paradigm model in a narrative way or disrupts the paradigm model and shows the final theory in a graphic way (Radan, 2020). In this coding, the sub-categories identified were prioritized based on the expressed frequency.

Brief descriptions expressed by women in open coding

In order to identify the role of rural women in the economy and family rights, the respondents were asked to express their views freely. This action continued until there were no new statements. In other words, a theoretical saturation was achieved. Based on the results, 12 brief descriptions were obtained. The results are presented in Table 1.

Sub-categories in axial coding:

The researcher selects one of the classes as a central class and explores it as a central phenomenon in the center of the process and determines the relationship of other classes with it. In this type of coding, first the overviews were examined and the items that were around an axis were placed in a category. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Brief descriptions about role of rural women in the economy and family rights based on open coding

No	Brief descriptions	Contribution to the economy and family rights	Symbol
1	Women help increase family productivity by saving.	10%	BD1
2	Women help with family productivity by reducing costs.	10%	BD2
3	Women support men in regulating spending.	15%	BD3
4	Women help the economy and family rights by packaging products.	12%	BD4
5	Women contribute to the economy and family rights by processing products.	18%	BD5
6	Women help the economy and family rights by sorting products.	7%	BD6
7	Women contribute to the economy and family rights by raising livestock at home.	15%	BD7
8	Women help the economy and family rights by raising poultry at home.	15%	BD8
9	Women help the household economy by producing livestock products.	15%	BD9
10	Women help the economy and family rights by planting.	15%	BD10
11	Women help the economy and family rights by helping to harvest crops.	16%	BD11
12	Women help the economy and family rights by weed control of crops.	12%	BD12

Table 2. Sub-categories in axial coding about role of rural women in the economy and family rights based on open coding

No	Brief descriptions	Sub-categories
1	Women help increase family productivity by saving.	Economic productivity
2	Women help with family productivity by reducing costs.	
3	Women support men in regulating spending.	
4	Women help the economy and family rights by packaging products.	Processing and packaging
5	Women contribute to the economy and family rights by processing products.	
6	Women help the economy and family rights by sorting products.	Economic Efficiency
7	Women contribute to the economy and family rights by raising livestock at home.	
8	Women help the economy and family rights by raising poultry at home.	
9	Women help the household economy by producing livestock products.	Production
10	Women help the economy and family rights by planting.	
11	Women help the economy and family rights by helping to harvest crops.	
12	Women help the economy and family rights by weed control of crops.	

Prioritized sub-categories by selective coding

At this stage, according to his understanding of the text of the phenomenon under study, the researcher either presents the framework of the paradigm model in a narrative way or disrupts the paradigm model and shows the final theory in a graphic way. In this coding, the sub-categories identified were prioritized based on the expressed frequency. The results are presented in Figure 1.

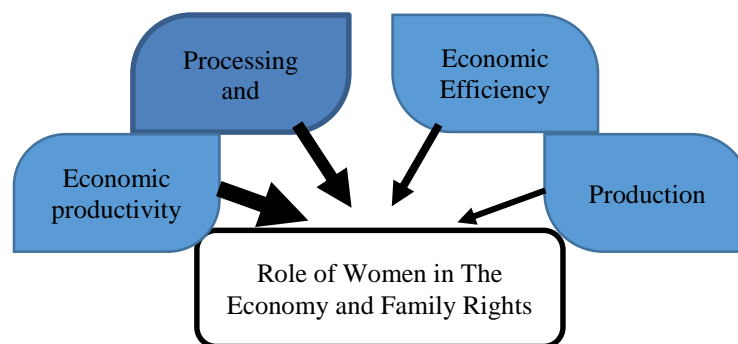


Figure 1. Role of Women in The Economy and Family Rights

3.2 Discussion

According to the research results, the most important roles of women in the economy and family rights in rural society include economic productivity, processing and packaging, economic efficiency and production. Various studies have been conducted on the role of women's economic productivity. The results of Mirvahedi (2014), Donyaye Eghtesad (2017) are in line with our research and support the result. Results from Hosseinzadeh et al., (2016) show that variables such as women's participation in household income, modifying consumption behaviors, women's control over family consumption, maternal affection to create economic discipline and training children about the right economic behavior has a positive relationship with dependent variable of economic productivity. Based on the results obtained from Hosseinzadeh et al., (2016), women's participation in the cost of a family's income and modification of consumption behaviors are the most important factors of economic productivity. Also, various studies have been conducted on the role of women on the processing and packaging. The activity of rural women in agriculture and their role in development is undeniable, and not paying attention to them in planning will leave irreparable damage. Based on the research findings, it was observed that the effective factors on women's employment in date packing workshops were explained and showed that women's employment has increased family income, increased women's social participation, increased women's involvement in family decisions (Monfared et al., 2012). In addition, various studies have been conducted on the role of women on the production process. Women around the world play a key role in food production. Today, development planners are increasingly aware of the economic and social importance of women's work, and this can be an effective aid to food production, both for home consumption and for the sale of products. Paying more attention and support to women in agricultural activities can increase their production efficiency and power, as well as their standard of living and that of their families (Barghi et al., 2014).

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Planners in many countries agree that the role of women and their needs should be taken into account in development programs. Based on a study on the role of women's employment in the economy and family rights, it was concluded that women play an important role in increasing productivity and efficiency and processing and packaging of products and production stages. Studies and observations on the participation of rural women in agricultural activities indicate that women farmers with indigenous experience and knowledge in the field of food production, play a very important role in agriculture. The majority of the world's subsistence farmers are women who produce 50 to 60 percent of the world's food. In today's world, due to the structure of agricultural exploitation systems and the prevalence of family exploitation, in which the majority of the labor force is women, women play an important role in the production of agricultural products. The transformation of the existing system in favor of a sustainable system that puts large-scale economic, biological and social change on the agenda is possible only with the participation of all members of society; Hence, half of the country's population are women, that is half of the endless capabilities, cannot be ignored. Utilizing the abilities and talents of women in order to make the most of the human resources of societies requires an accurate and scientific knowledge of their activities. Since in developing societies, half of the population lives in rural areas and half of the rural population are women, one way to access these human resources is to study the economic activities of women in various fields. Women, especially in rural areas, play a major role in the production of various agricultural and livestock products, so that without the participation and assistance of women as labor forces on farms to cannot be achieved to agricultural development. Therefore, achieving sustainable development is not possible without the participation of women in all areas, including family, economic and social areas.

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