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"Why am I not allowed even to be born?" Measuring Social Development Using Gendered Indicators and Empowerment Evaluation

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Abstract:

Status of women in a society is very much embedded in the theories of economics, psychology, and sociology. Current research explores how social beliefs impact women and their lives in society. In an effort to quantify this impact a social development index is developed using secondary data on indicators like sex ratio, literacy ratio, average household size, population to area ratio and population growth rate as proxies of right to live, right to education, average responsibility share, right of mobility and right to birth control respectively. Furthermore, the current study explored the relationship of social development level per district to the perception of women in that district about their level of empowerment. Using correlation analysis, this social development index is then studied in relation to the women empowerment index built using participatory perception primary data. This study highlights those dimensions of empowerment most valued by the women and their complex relationship to the social ideology of women. Wealth of insight has emerged for future policymaking about empowering women.

Keywords: Women empowerment, social development, gender inequality
JEL Classification Codes: J16, O50, Z13

I. Introduction

For any society to be developed and empowered, all sections of its population should be free from any type of discrimination. Be it based on religion, sex, race, income, ethnicity etc. any one of these biases that excludes a particular section of the population from development opportunities is damaging for the whole society (Freedman et al. 2016). The number of people deprived of development opportunities is directly proportional to this bias. Out of all the biases, as mentioned earlier, gender bias or discrimination based on sex is the biggest as it affects almost 50% of the population. In countries like India, China and Pakistan, where sex-ratio is biased towards males (Ritchie and Roser, 2019), this discrimination shows the most sinister effect of the bias where

females are being deprived of being born. Empowerment of any group of people is a socially embedded phenomenon (Huis*et al.*, 2017) which cannot be achieved via compartmentalized secular policies especially without the role of the concerned population group. How society perceives a social group regulates their level of enablement, therefore, social theories play a vigorous role in the course of empowerment for any segment of the society. The current paper focuses on studying the social position of the female sex in Pakistan by determining a social development index. This index is developed using various indicators as proxies for rights given to females in different spheres of life. Furthermore, this study compares the level of this social development to perceptions of women about their level of empowerment in 36 districts of Punjab which has the largest and most diverse population in Pakistan.While gathering data from various districts of Punjab, efforts were made to include all social, religious, ethnic, and racial sections of the populations to make the sample as representative as possible. Data was used from 2017-18 for both constructs. This was ensured to reduce time-lag bias. Analysis depicted a significant relationship between the level of empowerment perception and the social development level of the districts.

II. What is social progress/ development?

Back in the pre-historic days' man survived based on activities that required strenuous physical effort. Food and other necessities being hard to get, the survival of the clan depended upon the strength and number of individual members. Those who were physically stronger enjoyed privileged treatment within the clan. These were the times of ignorance when 'might is right' was the common day philosophy of interpersonal relations. Male members enjoyed supremacy over females.

Societies that developed based on divine guidance and religious principles were radically different in this regard. They perceived life as a gift from God and believed in intrinsic values that could not be gauged via any worldly standards. All religions, especially the monotheist religions including, Judaism, Christianity and Islam stressed similar values of morality, humanity and equality among humans. Historical developments in the West led to marginalization and compartmentalization of religion(Zaman, 2009). Religion was associated with wars, conflict and violence and considered a hindrance to the progress of humanity. They discarded religion as the basic life philosophy and thus shifted towards alternative ways of understanding life. 'Science' and 'logical positivism' became the new gods of the time. Tawney (1926) transcribes that secularism was the most significant intellectual change to take place in modern times. He points out that till sixteenth-century writers discussing economic issues of the world stressed upon Christian values, by the middle of the seventeenth-century focus had shifted towards profit-loss analysis and appeals to religious values became extinct. That "the love of money is the root of all evil", a Biblical idea, was then gradually replaced with its antithesis "lack of money is the root of all evil", in the words of Bernard Shaw. Greed, self-interest and competition went from being malevolent and socially criticized to coveted and honorable values. The barbaric principle of 'might is right' a stronghold.Only this time instead of physical power, the materialistic gains would weigh more. Humanity lost its intrinsic worth and now everyone was 'labor' or a factor of production. Their importance was now being judged on the basis of marginal productivity. German economist, T.H. Von Thunen in 1826. This idea apparently docile converted humans from respectable beings to saleable commodities to be priced. This led females to adopt homemaking as their prime occupation, an activity that received only

secondary importance as compared to males who were more productive financially.Coup de grace to the female identity came with the Malthusian argument. When Malthus warned people with the scarcity of food due to overpopulation, competition for survival started. The contribution of females to GDP was the only menial due to the factors mentioned earlier i.e. taking up a role as a homemaker. Sen (1992, 2003) in his article about 'missing women' highlights that even the right to live was snatched from women.Earlier females were killed due to 'provision biases' in favor of sons. With the advancement of technology, a female fetus is aborted even before birth. Countries like China and India set bad examples with distorted sex-ratio in favor of females (Heskethet *al.*2011). Other countries like Pakistan soon followed (Mussawar*et al.*, 2012). Behind these heinous crimes against females, there are these silent killer economic theories based on capitalistic thought (Feldman, 1982; Landa, 2015).

Being aware of one's own feeling, understanding other peoples feeling, handling one's emotions, establishing relationships and making responsible decisions regarding social relationshipsare important for true development (Cohen, 2006; Zins*et al.*, 2004).

Theories that help understand social development include (Bandura 1977, 1986; Erikson, 1950). Erikson(1950) highlighted stages of the conflict in the life of a human. These stages occurredduring different phases of life of a human and if mishandled at the time of development strong lifetime social deformities will result. These resultant social deformities not only impact that individual but also the whole society. Studies also show that delayed social development in children leads to anti-social and disruptive behaviors when they grow up(Greer-Chase *et al.*2002). However, the good news is that social training can help restructure the individuals and society as a whole. Therefore a targeted effort is required.

'*Conscientization'* theory by Freire (1973)describes how an individual develops sense of belonging to a community and then collective efforts for betterment at social level start. This identifies that collective action and motivation to act socially is possible (Freire, 1970 & 1973; Schulz and Israel,1990). These collective actions lead to overall social empowerment and social change.

III. What empowerment should really be?

Empowerment is a socially embedded construct which is subjective in nature (Mason 1997; Checkoway, Schulz and Zimmerman, 1994). Due to subjective nature of construct there is no globally agreed upon definition of this construct, however, it is considered as an evolution of processof personal and self-efficacy and collective betterment(Sen,1993,1999; Kabeer 2001).

Women empowerment is on lower ebb in Pakistan(133rd out of 160 countries in the world) (UN, 2018). Despite sumptuous spiritual rules (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2012) and frequent legislation (NPA/MoWD, 1998)Pakistan fails to translate these acts and policies into action (Women empowerment, 2011-12). This failure is partially due to incorrect borrowed definitions of empowerment which does not represent our social reality. Oxaal and Baden, 1997, strongly suggest the need to measure empowerment in terms of change in a society. Therefore capturing localized dimensions of women empowerment in Pakistan and quantification was a much needed step. That is why the current study has used a locally developed women empowerment index by Salahuddin & Ahmed, 2017,

2019). Following the definition of women empowerment emerged via qualitative analysis, *"Ability to contribute to self and the society in the sense of expansion of choice within religious and social limits, maintaining familial, communal and social harmony, while utilizing personal abilities to maximum potential."*(Salahuddin & Alia, 2017).

IV. Methodology

This is an exploratory study studying the relationship between social development (measured via index built using secondary data variables, like sex ratio, rural-urban population density, literacy ratio, and average household size, from Punjab Bureau of Statistics) and women empowerment (measured via index built using primary data variables given in Table 2) (see Hosmer and Lemeshow, 2000, for precedence for studies combining primary and secondary data). Therefore, the current study has utilized analysis women empowerment index developed by Salahuddin and Ahmed, 2017 on the basis of Alkire Foster methodology (2007) on dimensions including, personal qualities, family moral support, family financial support, community moral support, affective spirituality, cognitive and behavioral spirituality, social etiquettes, general knowledge, mental and physical health, morals and ethics (Salahuddin and Ahmed, 2017) and social development index.Both variables understudy, Women Empowerment Perception Index, WEPI (dependent variable) and Social Development Index SDI (Independent variable), are categorical and ordinal. Here the independent variable SDI is based on secondary data and the dependent variable WEPI is primary data based. This is due to the very purpose of this study,where the researcher wanted to see if the macro indicators present the same picture which emerges from microanalysis or not? Secondly, the researcher wanted to explore the dimensions responsible for the variation. Furthermore, due to the ordinal nature of variables,a correlation was measured by the Spearman's correlation coefficient. Symmetry and direction of the relationship between these ordinal variables was also checked. Finally,the ordinal logistic regression model was run to determine the strength and direction of the population parameter estimates with the intention of estimation determination.

Table 1: Empowerment Specturum

Not Empowered	Partially Empowered	Empowered
(Less than 25% of Score)	(25% to < 50% of Score)	(> 50% of Score)
46.4%	30.50%	23.10%

Source: Salahuddin & Ahmed, 2017

V. Results and Discussion

Using Alkire Foster methodology (2007) procedure consisted as follows

- Selection of unit of analysis
- Selection of dimensions based on (Salahuddin and Ahmed, 2017).
- Selection of indicators per dimensions (Salahuddin and Ahmed, 2017).
- Application of first cutoff lines
- Summation of empowerment scores
- New variable coding defining the spectrum range
- Calculation of average empowerment share 'A' per spectrum band
- Calculation of head count per spectrum band

This is the overall empowerment spectrum for the whole province of Punjab. Similarly using same steps of Alkire Foster Methodology, a social development index was built using sex ratio, population growth rate,Literacy Ratio, rural-urban population ratio and average household size. For building, social development index initial cutoffs were set as shown in Table 2.

When the same steps were repeated to construct Social development index SDI resulted as:

$$SDI = A * H = \mathbf{0.242 * 0.391 = 0.094622}$$

This meant that 24.2 % of the one or more rights under discussion were enjoyed by 39.1 % of the total sample population enjoyed. Overall 9.46 out of 100 will be the level of social development with respect to gender discrimination. This is an alarming situation. Table 2 shows the dimensions, their respective cutoffs and rights into which these proxy dimensions were translated.

Table 2: Dimensions and initial cutoffs

Dimension	Initial cutoffs	Right under discussion
Sex-Ratio	≤100 for 100 m/f (SD) > 100 for 100 m/f (not SD)	Right to live for females (Amarthya Sen, 1992)
Literacy ratio	≥ males (SD) < males (not SD)	Right to Education (National Education policy framework, the government of Pakistan, 2018)
Average H.H size	≤ 4 (SD) > 4 (not SD)	Average responsibility share (Family planning document2020, 2012, Government of Pakistan)
Population to arearatio	≤ 0.5 (SD) > 0.5 (not SD)	The Right to mobility (Chen, 2015)
Population growth rate	≤ 1% (SD) >1% (not SD)	Right to Birth Control (Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951)

A. Correlation, Association and Symmetry Check

Women empowerment and social development cross-tabulation show that out of 835 not empowered females, 834 were also socially not developed ones, whereas partially empowered females belonged more in socially developed districts as compared to not socially developed districts. 386 out of 415 highly empowered females belonged to socially developed districts. There were 29 reported cases of females who considered them to be highly empowered but their districts were not socially developed as per selected criteria. Women empowerment *SD cross-tabulation is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Women Empowerment Index * SD Cross Tabulation

Count		SD		Total
		not socially developed	socially developed	
Women Empowerment Index	0	834	1	835
	1	232	317	549
	2	29	386	415
Total		1095	704	1799

Spearman correlationwas done tocheck correlation. 78.8 % explanatory powers were seen. Symmetric measures depicted 78 % explanatory power between empowerment and SD. Tests of direction and symmetry showed a highly significant bidirectional relationship between WEI and SDI. A district wise picture for both empowerment and social development constructs is shown in Figure 1 and figure 2 respectively.

Table 4: Empowerment * Sd - Correlations

Correlations			Women Empowerment Index	SD
Kendall's tau_b	Women empowerment index	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.747**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	1799	1799
	SD	Correlation Coefficient	0.747**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	1799	1799
Spearman's rho	Women empowerment index	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.788**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	1799	1799
	SD	Correlation Coefficient	0.788**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	1799	1799
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	d.f	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1119.157[a]	2	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	1434.703	2	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1099.292	1	0.000
N of Valid Cases	1799		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 162.40.			

Table 6: Empowerment * SD Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error[a]	Approximate T[b]	Approximate Significance
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.782	.010	53.172	.000[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.788	.010	54.312	.000[c]
N of Valid Cases		1799			
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.					
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.					
c. Based on normal approximation.					

Table 7: Empowerment - SD Directional Measures

			Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error[a]	Approximate T[b]	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Somers' d	Symmetric	0.739	0.010	64.664	0.000
		Women empowerment index Dependent	0.864	0.010	64.664	0.000
		SD Dependent	0.645	0.010	64.664	0.000
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.						
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.						

Figure 1: Region Wise Women Empowerment Index

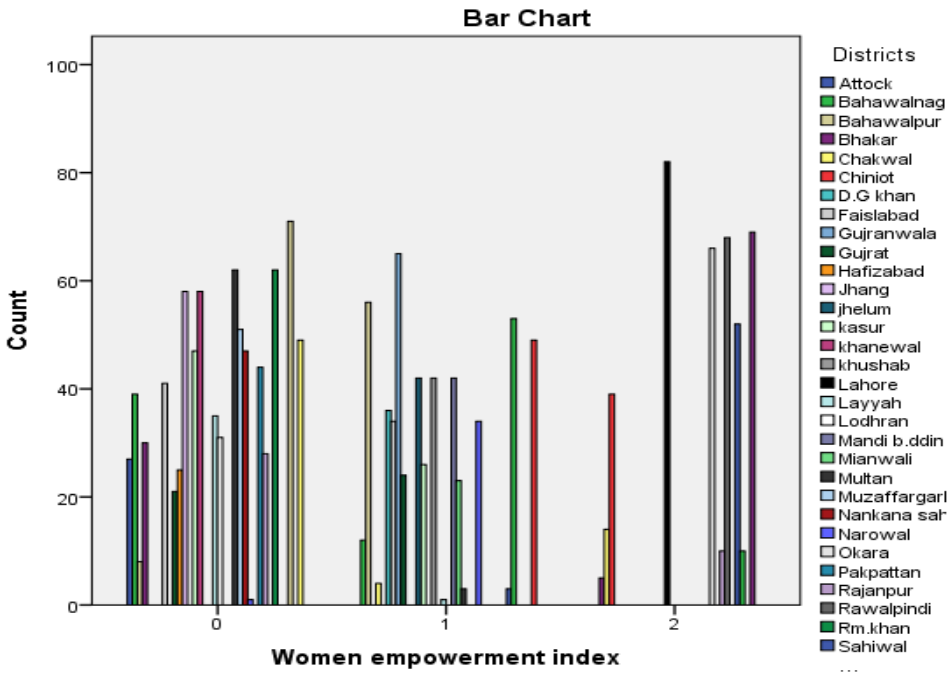
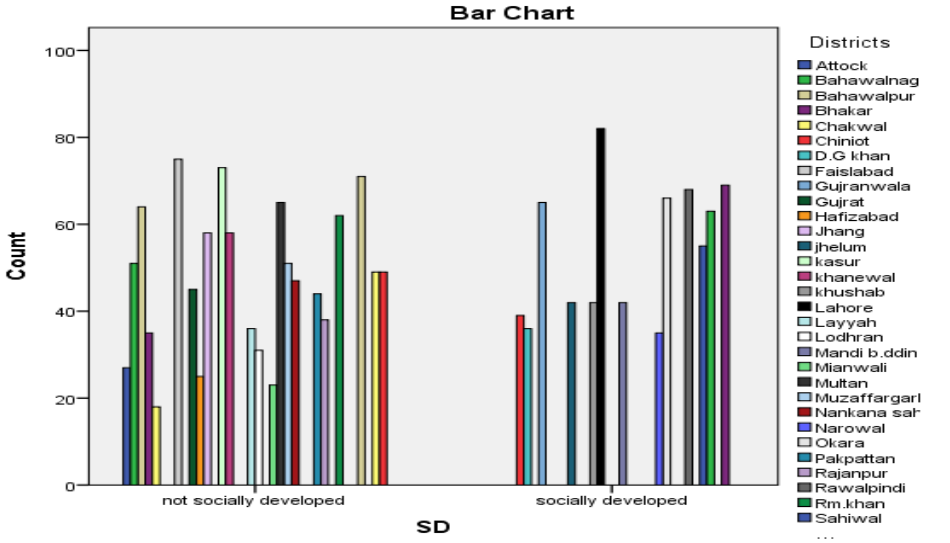


Figure 2: Region Wise Social Development Status



B. Ordinal Logistic Regression

Predictor Variable 'Women Empowerment' and Response variable 'SD' both being ordinal lead to application of ordinal logistic regression. Processing summaries show that for a sample of 1799 values 46.4% females considered themselves to be not empowered, 30.5% felt to be partially empowered while 23.1% felt to be highly empowered (Table 8).

Table 8: Case Processing Summary - Women empowerment

		N	Marginal Percentage
Women empowerment index	0	835	46.4%
	1	549	30.5%
	2	415	23.1%
Valid		1799	100.0%
Missing		0	
Total		1799	

Table 9: Case Processing Summary - Social Development

		N	Marginal Percentage
SD	not socially developed	1095	60.9%
	socially developed	704	39.1%
Valid		1799	100.0%
Missing		0	
Total		1799	

Whereas, 60.9% belonged to socially not developed districts and 39.1% belonged to socially developed districts as per developed criteria (Table 9).

Table 10: Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	1455.924			
Final	72.111	1383.813	1	0.000
Link function: Logit.				

Model fitreinforced the significance of relationship between empowerment and SD with Chi-Square value of 1455.924 at p-value = 0.000.

Table 11: Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Pearson	46.346	1	0.000
Deviance	50.890	1	0.000
Link function: Logit.			

Goodness of fit depicted a positive relationship between Empowerment and SD. Chi-Square value of 46.346 at P = 0.000 also supports the significant relationship.That means at least one regression coefficient of the predictor is not equal to zero.

Table 12: Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	0.537
Nagelkerke	0.610
McFadden	0.364
Link function: Logit.	

Table 13: Parameter Estimates

							95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Womenempowermentindex = 0]	1.140	.070	261.920	1	.000	1.002	1.279
	[Womenempowermentindex = 1]	4.536	.194	546.805	1	.000	4.156	4.916
Location	SD	4.774	.201	563.739	1	.000	4.380	5.168
Link function: Logit								

The general equation for the model can be represented as

$$Ln(SD) = 4.774 + 1.140\ WE(1) + 4.536\ WE(2)$$

VI. Conclusion

Main purpose of the paper was to see if there was any correlation between the perception of women in a district about their level of empowerment and their social development concerning macro indicators of that district. The analysis showed a high correlation and a highly significant relationship between these two constructs. The current study strongly supports the claim made by Feldman(1982) and Landa(2015) that economic theories built belief systems by which a society is run. Here it is evident that in the districts where women felt empowered their personal, spiritual, ethical and collectivedimensions are strong(Salahuddin and Ahmed, 2017). Furthermore, it emerges for the analysis that women empowerment is a socially embedded concept (Huis et al., 2017) and therefore cannot be achieved by secular policies created by only targeting women. Inclusion of the whole society especially academia and researchers who propagate different schools of thought, play a very important role. This is because the theories they promulgate get translated into social beliefs and actions (Rosser, 1993). Capitalist economic theories that breed competition, selfishness and greedshould be rejected in favor of moral and ethical theories that are based on the principles of cooperation, compassion and trust (Zaman, 2009). Understanding the intrinsic worth of human life requires us to see beyond the materialistic calculations of marginal productivity. In addition to that, if we want to empower the women, we will have to first focus on socially developing our youth especially concerning gender. This understanding cannot develop following capitalistic beliefs. Capitalism has inbuilt human revaluation. Humanitarian and moral social beliefs should be a part of the curriculum at the school level along with social development campaigns via media. In short, a paradigm shift back from materialism to humanism is needed for socially developing a nation and empowering humans including women.

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