

# Methodological aspect of Women empowerment and Socio-economic Development

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to analyze methodological aspect of women empowerment and socio economic development. Methodology is a methods of a research or a framework for a research also the philosophical discussion of related structural assumptions which is based on views and beliefs. Women empowerment is the strategies of women to increase their control of resources and generate decision making capacity. Socio-economic development is the processes of social and economic development that is measured with GDP, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment indicators. The finding shows that quantitative and qualitative approach are considered as the most significant research methods in methodology. Quantitative research is the main methodology of natural sciences research which is used for numerical measurements. Qualitative research is assigned of social sciences research and concerned with the human behavior and experience, it is focused more at an in-depth understanding of the meaning of the studied phenomena and offered less prominence to numerical measurements.*

**Keyword:** Development, empowerment, methodology, socio-economic & women.

## Introduction

Methodology is the study of research methods. The term “methodology” refer to the methods themselves or to the philosophical discussion of associated background assumptions. It is a conceptual or theoretical structure of a research. The methodological paradigm can be quantitative or qualitative. Women empowerment is a conformist development concern now a day which is focused on effectual growth. Simply, women empowerment means “giving power and authority to the women”. Empowerment of women are defined as the self-strength, gaining control, self-power, self-reliance, and right of choice and life of dignity (UNDP, 1995).

Socio-economic development is a process of quantitative, qualitative and structural changes within social or economic practice. This changes influenced material conditions, economic structure and entrepreneurship, access to public goods and services, relations within social system, environment condition, and life satisfaction (Litwinski, 2017). It is associated with growing meaning of humanitarianism also philosophical and sociological ideas concern equality of possibilities, popularity of taking care of environment and realizing of the role of social capital that are significant factors too (Fritz, 2004). This study is based on secondary

sources of data and aim to analyze the methodological aspect of women empowerment and socio-economic development besides, this study brings to discuss various approaches of women empowerment and the debts on social science research in general and studies on women empowerment in particular.

### Concept of this Study

The Concept of Research Methodology is defined as a highly intellectual human activity which is used in the investigation of social phenomena, nature, and matter deals with the manner in which data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted for a scientific research project. Methodology refers to the systematic and theoretical analysis of a research methods, that is compounded the techniques and tools for conducting a scientific research study. In the scientific research methods, the researcher aware of what is the logic and characteristic of science? To conduct a pure scientific research process, the researcher needs to go through some definite steps such as choosing a research design, formulating a research problem, research hypothesis, collecting data, data analysis, description, and research report writing. Predominantly, the researcher works on the research methodology during the entire research process. There are two types of research approaches in scientific research, the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach that regarded as research methods.

Empowerment seems to have been used in the 1980s by third world feminists to address the issue of gender differences that exist in the control and distribution of resources (Datta & Kornberg, 2002). According to Rowland (1987), to understand the process of empowerment, there is a need to be aware that power can take in many different forms. He explained power as four ways (1) Power over means "Controlling power" that is related to weakens processes of victimization or manipulation. (2) Power to is assessed with "Generative or productive power" which is incorporated or manifested as a forms of resistance or manipulation that is created new possibilities and actions without domination. (3) Power with is a sense of the whole, being greater than the sum of the individuals especially when a group tackle problem together. (4) Power from within are the spiritual strength and uniqueness that inhabited in each one of us and made a true human and it is based on self-acceptance and self-respect, which extended in turn to respect for and acceptance of others as equals.

Empowerment is about changing the balance of power in a given society, which is defined as a control over resources and ideology (Batliwala, 1993). According to the Kabeer (1994), empowerment of a women must build on 'the power within' which is a necessary complement to improve their ability to control resources, to determine agendas and make decisions. John Friedman's (1992) explained empowerment as a social power, which can be translated into political power, and which consequently expedites and strengthens the process of psychological, social and political empowerment. According to Dandekar, (1986) empowerment is a multifaceted process which involved four parallel aspects- (a) economic base (b) political sphere (c) family structure and (d) psychological or ideological sense. Likewise, there are six domains sense of women empowerment are (1) self and vision of a future (2) mobility and visibility, (3) ability to earn a living (4) decision-making power within the household, (5) ability to interact effectively in the public sphere (6) participation

in non- family group (Hashemi,1993).

The process and the result of the process whereby the powerless or less powerful members of a society gained greater access and control over material and intellectual resources, challenges the ideologies of discrimination and subordination which justify the unequal distribution is considered as empowerment (Vinod,2004). Empowerment can manifest itself in acts of individual resistance as well as in group mobilization (Gupta, 2002). A process of personal and social change, connected and mutually strengthen psychological, political, social and economic domains through which women individually and collectively gained power, meaningful choices and control over their lives is empowerment (O'Neil, 2014). The process of positive change which improved women's position and power within a patriarchal structure, and identified different causal pathways of change, material, cognitive, perceptual and relational are considered as empowerment (Cornwall &Edwards, 2016).

The significance of socio-economic development is expressed by Stemplowski(1987), According to him "the concept of development functions both as (a)a product of an optimistic vision and an articulation of social interests and (b) a tool of analysis. The concept of socio-economic development based on two issues first one is "the scope of the concept of this type of development and its reference" and second one is "the nature of socio-economic development". In the scope of the concept of socio-economic development and its reference "the change of socio-economic development takes place in the social sphere, mostly of an economic nature". Economic aspects that cannot be isolated from the social aspects hence, a more appropriate term for the change and the development is 'thechange and socio-economic development' that is combined these two aspects.

### **Objective of the study**

The general objective of this study is to analyze the methodological aspect of women empowerment and socio-economic development.

The specific objectives are

1. To analyze various approaches of women empowerment and development.
2. To analyze the methodological debate on social science research in general and studies on women empowerment in particular.

### **Research Methods**

As per the fulfilment of the purpose, to get depth knowledge methodologically I have gone through on secondary sources of relevant literatures. The present study is based on qualitative methods of social science research where used data and facts are completely secondary in nature.For assessing this study descriptive and exploratory research design has been followed.

### **Approaches to Women Empowerment**

There are three approaches to women's empowerment coined by Batliwala (1994) first is the integrated development approach, second is the economic development approach, and third is the consciousness approach. The integrated development approach which is focused on

women's survival and livelihood needs, the economic development approach aimed to strengthen women's economic position, the consciousness approach is organized women into collectives that addressed the sources of oppression. Another two approaches are "the market approach" which is aimed to assist individual women entrepreneurs to increase their incomes and "the empowerment approach" which is aimed to increase the incomes and the bargaining power to poor producers through group activities Mayoux (1995). All approaches to development involving a focus on women that had been integrated into gender and development (GAD) approach after the end of the twenty centuries. Kate Young (2004) argued that this carried little similarity to the original formulation of GAD and that the term gender is often used as a mere synonym for women. Some important approaches of women development have discussed below-

### **Women in Development (WID) Approach**

It is known that WID is the rise of women's movement in Western Europe and North America. The 1975 UN International year for Women and International Women's Decade (1976) led to the establishment of women ministries in many countries and the institutionalization of women in Development (WID) policies in governments, donor agencies and NGOs. The aim of the WID was to integrate women into economic development by focusing on income generation projects for the women.

### **Gender and Development (GAD) Approach**

Gender and Development (GAD), the feminist approaches of predominantly white women from the north which aimed at gender equality and was rejected by many women in the South who argued that the development model itself lacked the perspective of developing countries, mentioned by UN Women's World Conference in Mexico City (1975). This approach originated in academic criticism starting in the mid-1970s in the UK based on the concept of gender relations GAD approach that analyzed how development reshapes the power relations. Their view was overcoming poverty and the effects of colonialism as more important than equality.

### **Welfare Approach**

Developed policies were directed at women only in the context of their roles as wives and mothers, with a focus on mother and child health and on reducing fertility prior to the early 1970s. It was estimated that the benefits of macroeconomic strategies for growth would automatically trickle down to the poor, and the poor women would benefit by the economic position of their husband improve. This approach considered women as the workforce and they are marked for development also considered women are beneficiaries but not active participants in development.

### **Gender Equality Approach**

Gender mainstreaming came into widespread use with the adoption of the Platform for Action at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on women which was held in Beijing (Derbyshire, 2001). The 189 governments represented in Beijing unanimously affirmed that

the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality are the matters of fundamental human rights and therefore it is a prerequisite for social justice.

**Efficiency Approach:** This approach considered women as a major resource in development not as a beneficiaries of intervention. According to this approach development is more efficient if it included the participation of women. It also keeps hold women into the mainstream of development and assumed that if women participate they will automatically have benefited.

**Equity Approach:** Equity approach indicated women's equal rights and promoted women's status, power and control so that they can be effectively equal with men.

**Empowerment Approach:** Feminists perused to empower themselves through greater self-reliance where women seek to influence their own change and the right to determine their own choices in life. This approach indicated that women require appropriate resources to achieve self-sufficiency.

### **Methodological aspects on Women empowerment and Socio-economic Development**

The term "methodology" has various meaning, in general it refers to a method, to the field of inquiry studying methods, or to philosophical discussions of background assumptions that involved in these processes (Howell,2012).According to Howell (2012)it includedvarious theoretical adherence about the deliberatesoutcomes of the investigation.Methodology is a framework for research which is based on views, beliefs, and values and guided researchers to make research work.It can help to make the research process efficient and reliable by guiding researchers on which method to employ at each step. The descriptions and evaluations of methods often depended on philosophical background assumptions which are about issues like how the studied phenomena are to be conceptualized, what is the constitutes evidence for or against, and what is the general goal of research. In methodological aspect quantitative and qualitative approach are most significant research approach .Quantitative research is considered as the main methodology of the natural sciences which is used for precise numerical measurements. Qualitative research which is attributed of the social sciences and offered less prominence to exact numerical measurements and often concerned with human behavior and experience. Qualitative research aims more at an in-depth understanding of the meaning of the studied phenomena and less at universal and predictive laws.

The sample size in qualitative research is usually smaller than quantitative research.Recently mixed-methods research approach is being applied by many social science researchers which is combined both methodologies. There are three sets of variables that can be used to measure the concept of 'women empowerment' (1) conventional socio-economic measures (2) agency variables and (3) proximate or intermediate variables. Empowerment is a general process enabling individuals through participation with others to achieve their primary personal goals that emphasized individual motivations, collective action and allows the process to be examined across a variety of community groups, organizations, and settings. Both ethnographic and quantitative research methodologies are used to identify four key

empowerment (a) empowering organizational characteristics (b) motivating and challenging positive group belief systems (c) meaningful opportunity role an impressive array of economic and social supports (d) organizationally and interpersonally talented leaders. The mainstream culture, combining ethnographic with quantitative methodology is important to facilitate collaborative, culturally valid, multilevel, and ecologically sensitive research.

Speer and Hughey (1995) discussed that how the concept of social power and an ecological perspective can have illuminated the reciprocal and dialectical nature of empowerment across individual, organizational, and community levels of analysis. They applied Zimmerman's conceptualization and Kelly's ecological principles for planning community interventions to the field of grassroots community organizing. He argued that qualitative studies of psychological empowerment are based on collaborative methods and communal narratives analysis are based on at multiple levels which is used to advance our understanding of the processes by which social and personal change occurred, he also argued that narratives as a valuable resource, might link those processes which is more effectively with the practice in community psychology. According to Bina Pradhan (2003), women's empowerment is conceived as two aspects (1) the socio-economic aspect and (2) the aspect of agency. Socio-economic aspect and institutional perspective assumed that women exhibit deterministic patterns of behavior in that individual reproductive behavior is shaped by social and cultural norms and practices which improved socio-economic variables such as education, income and labor force participation which is the result in a decline in fertility and improve health. In the absence of better measures of autonomy, socio-economic variables are still used as an indicators of autonomy empowerment, under this concept the power base is vested in the ownership and control of material resources or wealth.

The quantitative socio-economic measures of empowerment are useful indicators as a first approximation, but they are not sensitive enough to capture the nuances of gender power relations and the ways in which they governed behavior. The agency aspect observed that how or in what ways women hold decisions, even women's reproductive behavior under conditions of structural subordination, as well as delineating analytical and measurable categories that go beyond the conventional measures of women's empowerment. The other aspect that should be considered is the process of how empowerment influenced reproductive behavior. A comprehensive and integrated framework is needed to analysis how women's power and autonomy is transformed into behavioral action that affected women's health condition resulting from their reproductive role.

#### **Discuss the methodological debate in social science research in general and studies on women empowerment in particular**

The Philosophy of Social Science has become the battleground of contemporary debates in social science research. The central question about the core of the debate is objective capacity of a range of social science research. Scientific objectivity is a characteristic of scientific claims, methods and results which expressed that the claims, methods and results of science should not be influenced by particular perspectives, value commitments, and community bias or personal interests. It is often considered to be an ideal for scientific



inquiry, for valuing scientific knowledge, and as the basis of the authority of science in society. Social sciences must have adopted the scientific method. Scientific objectivity implied the existence and adoption of scientific method which produced objective knowledge. It is said that scientific method which has developed now as involves observation as data gathering, generalization like formulating laws, verification as a finding or searching for new facts, explanation as subsuming new facts. The philosophical debt of social science research is concerned an ability of social sciences to produce objective knowledge.

To create feminist approaches to research, feminist scholars have to redefined the nature of knowledge or epistemology also to reconsider the process of conducting research methodology. In many respects, feminist approaches to research are most clearly identifiable by the processes used to construct knowledge. Although the term “feminist methods” runs throughout feminist literature it is something of a misnomer insofar which suggested that there is a set of specific techniques that are uniquely feminist (Riger, 1992). Feminist methods are familiar methods of data collection, for the instant interviewing, focus groups, ethnography that are adapted to be consistent with feminist ideology. Reinharz (1992) noted that feminist methods do appeared as a new and unique methods, as an example it is assumed that the method of inquiry that is considered as consciousness raising, group diaries, multiple person stream-of-consciousness narratives, associative writing but because of their new application to the academic fields it traditionally has relied on experimental and survey designs. These new methods typically brought women together and collected data within those groups which is known as “feminist approaches to research” or “feminist methodologies” as opposed to feminist methods.

Comprehensive goal of feminist research is to capture women’s lived experiences in a respectful manner that entitled women’s voices as sources of knowledge, specifically the process of research is as much importance as the outcome. According to Campbell & Wasco (2000), four defining features of feminist research process and illustration that has been taken from feminist psychology and sociology they are (a) expanding methodologies to include both quantitative and qualitative techniques (b) connecting participants for group level data collection (c) minimizing the hierarchical relationship between the researcher and participants to facilitate trust and disclosure (d) recognizing and reflecting upon the emotionality of women’s lives. He expanded methodologies to understand women’s lives, feminist researchers recognized that a variety of methodological techniques are necessary.

Some feminist writers argued that quantitative methods attempted to translate women’s experiences into predetermined categories which can result in distorting or silencing women’s voices; qualitative methods were favored because they were seen as correcting biases in quantitative methods and data were organized and evaluated subjectively in terms of themes, categories, and new concepts, not statistically significance (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). It has been seen as more useful in capturing women’s stories and legitimating those experiences as sources of knowledge (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991). Nevertheless, qualitative methods are lacking with their problems. Cannon, Higginbotham, & Leung

(1991) noted that it is primarily white, middle class individuals who typically volunteer for these in-depth, self-reflective studies. Qualitative research is quite persuadable to racial and social class biases.

By the 1990s the debate on qualitative vs. quantitative methods has been moderated by many scholars where they concluded that neither methodology can guarantee bias-free research, nor is more feminist than the other, they both are necessary for understanding social phenomena (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). As a result, contemporary feminist scholars accepted both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. An example of integrating qualitative and quantitative methods is used of concept mapping (Campbell and Salem's, 1999). Concept mapping is a useful tool for feminist scholars, not only because it integrated qualitative and quantitative methods, but also because it embodied other defining features of feminist research.

### Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the methodological aspect of women empowerment and socio-economic development. Methodology refers to the systematic and theoretical analysis of a research method which is combined the techniques and tools for conducting a scientific research study. In methodological aspect both quantitative and qualitative approach are considered as the most significant research methods. Quantitative research is the main methodology of the natural sciences research which is used for numerical measurements, it is important to facilitate collaborative, valid, multilevel, and ecologically sensitive research. Qualitative research is assigned of the social sciences research which is focused more at an in-depth understanding of the meaning of the studied phenomena and less to numerical measurements, at universal and predictive laws. Qualitative studies of psychological empowerment based on collaborative methods and communal narratives analysis at multiple levels. Conventional socio-economic measures, agency variables and proximate or intermediate variables is used to measure the concept of women empowerment. Socio-economic aspect and the aspect of agency is designated as having women's empowerment. Concept mapping is a useful tool for feminist scholars, because it integrated both qualitative and quantitative methods and also embodied other defining features of feminist research. This article will help to increase the knowledge and idea of future researcher for further research.

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