

## WOMEN'S SOCIAL NETWORKING AS A SOURCE OF THEIR SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT IN SLUM AREA OF MULTAN

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### ABSTRACT

Social Networking is a source of social capital among women in which they are connecting themselves with social institutions and their structural settings. Through social ties, women explore new social and economic resources to empower themselves. They also have formal and informal opportunities to get social benefits from these resources. The current study is aimed to explore social factors associated with social networking and social empowerment of women in slum area of Multan District, South Punjab region of Pakistan. The study carried qualitative research approach in which 20 (women) respondents selected through purposive sampling. These twenty case studies of respondents selected who earned less than and equal to one dollar per day (Daily wage labor community). They interviewed by using interview guide as a research tool. Thematic Discourse analysis used to analyze impact of social factors on women's social networking and their social empowerment. Social factors including education Attainment, social networking in labor class, interlink between upper and lower class, support of caste system, social support for physical disable people of community, role of socio-political networking on labor class, right of decision power in family, financial support from peer group, economic distribution for family development plan, formal and informal economic source of social networking play a important role impacting social status and living standard of women's labor community of slum area. Formal and informal social measures should be taken to enhance their social and economic status for their better survival in a society.

**Key Words:** Social Networking, Social Empowerment, Social Factors, Formal and Informal opportunities, Social benefits, Slum Area.

### INTRODUCTION

Social networking and social empowerment are quite two different concept but they have a strong connectivity in entrepreneurship among women. Experienced women entrepreneurs are more skilled and empowered rather than unskilled and non-experienced women. Experience women have strong level of connectivity and bridging the social network as a social capital (Neumeyer, 2019). In a social networking as a source of women's social capital, marital status current age, social capital, male dominancy, wage gap and education are glass ceiling

factors for recognizing their skilled as well as domestic potential. Women's social as well as economic status affected by these glass ceiling factors rather than their more engagement in economic commitments (Yasin, 2023).

#### 1. Literature Review

Zaman (1999) revealed; "Empowerment index is based on eight indicators, namely mobility, economic security, ability to make small purchases, ability to make large purchases, participation in

major decisions, participation in public protest and political campaigning, relative freedom from family domination and political and legal awareness. Woman contributing to her household's income is a significant contributing factor toward her empowerment (Akbar, 2022).

Woman spends her whole time as a housewife and rearing children without economic activity that is why male exploits her because all economy of the family is at the shoulders of male (Rashid, 2023). Women can change the whole situation with the help of her associations especially other women surrounding her. Sources of social capital i.e. family, friends, relatives, community, ethnic ties, affiliation with groups, institutions, civil and public sectors can help in women empowerment economically, socially, physically and politically (Qureshi, 2023). Social Capital is the combination of bridging (Coleman, 1988) and bonding (Jin, 2013) of interaction with various people (Putnam, 2001). Bridging Social Capital (BRS) and Bounding Social Capital (BOS) are two main pillar of connectivity among people. BRS is a strong tie among relationship like Peer group (Family members and friends) (Ellison et al., 2007) while BOS is developed social terms among weakly connected people with diverse back (Adler, 2002).

## **2. Conceptualization and theoretical framework:**

Social Networking is a concept and combination of two words, first is pertaining to the life, welfare and relations of human being in a community. "Social": (Simply means do by the people, do with the people and directed towards the people) and the second is "Capital" (meaning wealth, sources etc). Broadly speaking the meaning of social capital can be stated as "the sum of resources that emerge from interaction between different social groups or individuals". The origins of the concept of social capital are often traced back to the sociologists Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and Janies Coleman (1988). As Stavert stated: Social capital is a shared commitment to social values as expressed in the quality and quantity of social relationships (2000:7). And/or "Power Within" (e.g. to have agency in seeking higher level of access and control) and "Power With" (sharing power with man) (Bisnath and Eison: 1999, 18). Oxaal and Baden (1997) defined woman's empowerment as "A process where-by woman, individually or collectively, becomes aware of how

power relations operate in their lives and gain the self-confidence and strength to challenge gender inequalities". Antorobus (1989) states that empowerment is a process that enables a powerless woman to develop autonomy, self-control, confidence and with a group of women and men. a sense of collective influence over oppressive social conditions (Bisnath and Elson 1996: 02).

## **3. Significance of the study**

The division of labor between man and woman is clear-cut in the family; the nature of division may vary society to society. In Pakistan, patriarchal family structural settings exist and a woman is considered as a second fiddle. She lives her whole life tuning herself to familial and society priorities fixed for her. Therefore, a male dominance social pattern affects their lives as well as choices. Their Social networking is one of the elements connected with their lives and choices.

## **4. Research Objectives**

The current research carried following research objectives.

- i. To find out the role of social networking in women's social empowerment
- ii. To explore social factors associated with social networking and social empowerment.

## **5. Research Methodology**

The present study used a qualitative research approach in which women selected on the base of their income level (less than and equal to one dollar per day). The sample size of 20 respondents targeted through purposive sampling. The slum area of 'Dewan Keh Bhagh' selected in Multan District (Urban Area). The interviewed conducted by using interview guide as a tool. Thematic discourse analysis used to analyze the collected data. The present study was conducted in the urban areas of Multan city. The subject of that study consisted of those married women of Dewan KA Bagh near Nawabpur Road Multan whose monthly income was less than 2500 Rupees. 20 females were selected by the purposive sampling technique. Data was collected by interview guide method. This research was qualitative that is why 20 case studies were included in that research. On account of small number of cases sophisticated statistical analysis was not used. However, demographical socioeconomic

characteristics were presented by tabular form in the appendix.

6. Analysis

6.1 Demographic Characteristics

Family is a major institution of society where people fulfill their basic needs. Family is a source that enables individuals to live and participate in the mainstream of society(Nawaz, 2009). By this research, it was found all respondents who lived in society were the product of family. All sorts of help

which are needed from society are first acquired from the family. After family, neighborhood is the source that enable the individual achieve the desired goal. In marriage, death and another social occasions it is the neighbors who are first to appear and participate. After family, neighbors, friends, relatives and all other relationships that exist in society, can be a substitute of family or can provide the services that are tendered by family for the empowerment and improvement of the condition of woman.

Table No. 01  
 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable No.	Title of Variable	Categories	Responses of Respondents	Percentage
V1	Current Marital Status	Married	11	55%
		Widow	05	25%
		Divorced	01	5%
		Separated	01	5%
		Others	02	10%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>
		V2	Current Occupations	Working at homes
Seamstress	03			15%
Embroidery work	02			10%
Cobbler's wife	02			10%
Shop-keeper	01			5%
Lady health worker	01			5%
Beautician	01			5%
Making Water Balls (Gol Gupas)	02			10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>			<b>100%</b>
V3	Monthly Income	0-5000	1	5%
		5001-1000	08	40%
		10001-15000	05	25%
		15001-2000	04	20%
		More than 20000	02	10%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>
V4	Professional Status	Employed	11	55%
		Unemployed	01	5%
		Died	05	25%
		Separated	01	5%
		Drug Addicted	01	5%
		Ill (Sick)	01	5%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

V5	Family Type/ Family System		
	Nuclear	12	60%
	Joint	07	35%
	Alone	01	5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>
V6	Distribution of Respondents husbands According to their Status		
	Status	No	
	Employed	11	55%
	Unemployed	01	5%
	Died	05	25%
	Separated	01	5%
	Drug addicted	01	5%
	Suffering with chronic disease	01	5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>
V7	Distribution of respondent's children according to their sex		
	Sex	No	
	Male	47	52%
	Female	44	48%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Interpretation of table 01**

- **V.1** indicated that all the females were married but because of some bitter circumstances (09) females had changed their status.
- **V.2** showed that (10) out of (20) respondents had started new business with the financial help of others; (04) with the help of their co-workers, (02) got jobs with the help of neighbors; (02) with the help of their brothers, and (01) started business with the financial help of her neighbors (03) respondents got different jobs by utilizing service or their relations rather on the basis of their own effort.
- **V.3** revealed that (17) out of (20) respondents were earning under 2500 rupees per month, including the income of their husbands. (02) out of (20) Respondents had above 2600 monthly income but I was increased from 2500 to above because of social capital and economic activity of women.
- **V.4** indicated that only (11) out of (20) Respondent's Husband were employed and (04) out of (11) Respondents husbands had got jobs with help of in- laws, neighbors and community
- **V.5** showed that (20) respondents had a total of children of which (47) were males and (44) were females. (27) Out of (47) sons of the Respondents were sometimes employed or sometimes had learned skills from different shops with help of in laws,

parents, friend, and neighbors. (08) Out of (20) Respondents had married their children with the help of their relations, friends, Neighbors, colleagues and in- laws.

**V.6** revealed that majority of the respondents (12) belonged to nuclear family (07) Respondents belonged to joint family and only one lived alone. The women of nuclear family need more help by Social capital than joint family women.

- **V.7** concluded that number of the male children are 47 while 47 are female children. Male children are considered as a source of income in this community while female children are for household and as source of 'nourishing/serving families. But in few communities, more women are considered as a source of more production (fertile women produce more children, women for farming and gardening) for a family.

**6.2 Thematic Analysis of Social factors impacting on women's social networking in Labor Community**

Current research have evaluated through thematic analysis of qualitative approach in nature and concluded by following themes;

**Theme No. 01**

**Daily Based Communication**

Daily based communication is one of the fundamental social factors in which they share their social-economic circumstances and they try to give chances for creating a network among non-government transitions as well as local strong social economic communities. The main purpose of such kind communication is to overcome their social issues. In the case studies, the researcher concluded that daily based strong communication is the main pillar of social connectivity among women. The nature of communication play a vital role in knowing their social as well as economic circumstances. Social circle of women can build a social chain to help each other socially and economically. It also create a bond of lower class with upper class.

**Theme No. 02**

**Impact of Education regarding knowledge and skill in Labor Community**

Education is another factor which create an effective social bond among women. Educated women are aware with possible social circumstances and have an awareness about how to tackle a social problem and by whom it can be resolved. In mostly interview, women admitted that lack of education and lack of awareness are major hurdles in social and economic failure of survival. They also concluded that women have to get basic education to know about their social rights in which they can brought up their children in very proper manner for social survival.

**Theme No. 03**

**Social networking among women of Labor Community**

Women is considered as a second gender in a society but freedom in social mobility can be considered themselves as an index of social bonding to understand what the actual conditions of family survival in any community. From interviews, women of the community showed their power of social networking as they become the source of providing financial support on their own behalf in the community. They also provide social protection to those disable families in which only two blind sisters are living in a small house. They have not any source of income and male as a symbol of social protection. Community members feed them, protect them and give them social support to visit them on daily bases.

**Figure No. 01**

Social Networking as a Social Capital of Women and its Peer Groups by

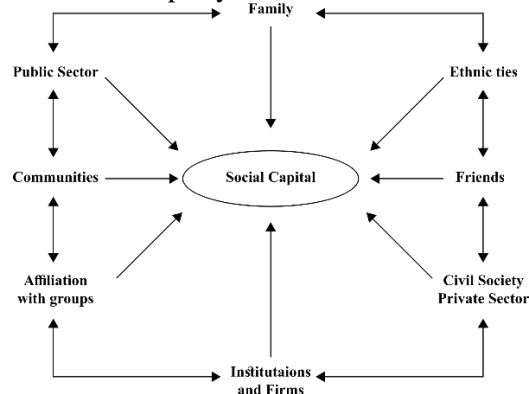


Figure No 01 depicted that social capital as source of social networking included family members, family friends, communities, community based affiliated social groups (religious, kinship, clan based groups etc), and ethnic ties. Civil as well as private sector and public sectors are also incorporated to empower the women in their entrepreneurship.

**Theme No.04**

**Coordination among upper and lower class women**

From interviews, the researcher evaluated that there is a linkage between upper and lower class by different resource. One of the resource is a person who is working on a clerical level in an education department from this community. He was a person who is able to make a bond between upper class of gazette officer of education department to discuss and resolve community based problems. Another source was a women who is working as a maid in political leader of this community area. She discuss her community based problems with him and try to resolve women’s problem like political support in resolving family based problems (family issues, financial issues and unemployment). Political networking activate grass root level of political indexes to involve women betterment regarding their socio-political and economic status.

**Theme No. 08**

**Religious teaching and awareness**

A concept of ‘Do Good and Have Good’ as a perceived to survive in a community. It is a fundamental source of social support of empower women in community. In the form of donation (Sadqa/Kherat), people of near around the



community also support and give food, home maintained donation, children school fee, clothes and even paying rents and providing monthly based food items on religious belief system based.

**Theme No. 10 feminine hood**

Women are great supporter of the women. People explained how women help each other. Sometimes, male of the household even didn't know how and who help them from the community. Feminine hood is a major concept to be promoted in such communities to empower women socially. Women help each other in house hold works, children look after, care for senior citizen and support other women for health facilities.

**Theme No. 11**

**Ancestral Asserts**

Few of respondents utilized their ancestors saving in the form of shelter and continuity of small business from their home. Being Muslim women, they have right to access ancestral asserts from not only their paternal clan but also from their husband clan too. In this way, they support their own families. They also shared hand in supporting other families by contributing a small amount for their survival.

**Figure No. 02**

Personality and Its Type (To understand the role of Socio-Political Networking)

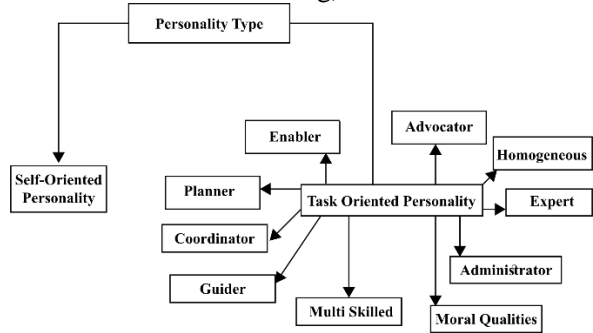


Figure No 02 showed two types of an individual personality. First type of personality is self-oriented in nature while in second type of personality, an individual has set goal to be orient which may targeted one of the social oriented status.

**7. Conclusion**

The main objective of the present study was to investigate the impact of social capital on the women's empowerment in urban area of Multan. A sample of (20) was selected by the purposive

sampling technique. Because of qualitative research, case study method was used. In the light of the results, it was concluded that the absence of interaction with resource oriented people and political representation, lack of association between the residents of the community, absence of interaction with neighbor communities and absence of membership in institutions (Economic, Political and Education) were the major factors which adversely affect the respondents level of social exclusion and contribute negatively in disempowerment of women.

Findings showed that respondent s acquired nature of resources from their relations only enabled them to live in society as poor and unfortunate persons. Just imagine, if these sources (relations) arc not forth coming, then what will be the future of these poor women? And if that happens then it can be stated that no better option for the subsistence of the poor women would be available as they already lack economic capital, human capital and last but not the least social institutions that led them to live in worst condition. Sources of social capital in which family ethnic ties, friends, neighbors communities, institutions, Finns ( Public o Private sectors) affected women by providing them ancestral stratum, fulfillment of basis needs, physical mobility, sharing decision making, education and employment, empowered them socially culturally, organizationally, mentally, politically and economically. On account of these sources and factors, women became strong and confident. The empirical study is concluded by figure (03) in which relationship sources of social capital and factors, which effected on the empowerment, are given described briefly.

**8. SUGGESTIONS**

Keeping in view my Topic and being a researcher of this study, Government, should approach both rural and urban areas to promote home industry'. In this way we could get better result by using the skill of half of our population. Women should also be encouraged by financial institutions by giving them soft loans. In big cities separate chambers of commerce should be developed for the women where they should be encouraged to promote cottage industries especially the third-world's women.

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