

## Identify and Explaining the Social and Economic Factors Affecting Rural Women Empowerment (Case Study: Rostam County)

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### Extended Abstract

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The significance of rural women's proportion in human work force is not only in indoor affairs, but also in productive outdoor activities. Regarding the fact that women are both involved in indoor and outdoor activities, it is worthy to exactly determine their proportion in economic and social activities. On the other hand, since rural women of different parts of Iran are involved in different activities, , their economic and social activities are subject to some elements such as economic situation of the family, rural women's social status, their ability condition, and the rate of men's cultural knowledge toward the significance of women as well as the geographical elements. Actually, their persistent attendance and participation along with men is the condition for persistent development process. But, undoubtedly, women's attendance and participation is conditioned by their abilities. If we could introduce women to society, assign those key roles and awake usefulness feeling in them, then it would be possible to endorse the significance of development in women, especially rural women, and to plan for them. In this way they will perceive that their real role and status is beyond some old beliefs, and relying on their abilities, they will step in the way of individual and social development. Therefore, by evaluating women's social persistence, it will be possible to move toward clarifying rural women's present social condition and finding their real status.

#### 2. METHODOLOGY

The present research is a practical and survey research, and the required information was collected through the survey method using the questionnaire. Firstly, In order to determine the validity of the content, 30 people of the statistical

population were asked to fill in the questionnaire, and then the coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha was calculated as almost 79%. The statistical population consisted of all the rural families of Rostam town. According to the statistics of the year 2011, Rostam town is made of 10327 families, of which 8765 families inhabited the rural areas who were chosen as the statistical population for the sampling. In order to determine the sample size, we applied the Cochran's Formula which due to the temporal, economic limitations and especially the wideness of the statistical population, the number was reduced to 335 questionnaires, and following some required investigations with attention to the sector's condition and congruence rate among the villages, finally 8 villages were chosen as our sample. For analyzing the data we used factor analysis, Chi-squared correlation and also step wise Regression models.

#### 3. DISCUSSION

In order to identify and prioritize the factors affecting the obstacles of social and economic empowerment, we used step wise Regression method in which the most powerful variables enter the equation individually, and this process continues till the error of significance test is 5%. In fact a stepwise Regression model is used when the researcher has several independent variables and wants to show their effects on dependent variable. In other words, which independent variable can predict the dependent variable in the best manner? How much is the proportion of every variable? And wholly, to what extent they can predict variables? Herein, to eliminate the effects of ineffective or less effective variables as well as investigating the

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relation between variables of rural women's obstacles on their empowerment, we used the findings of stepwise Regression. In relation to the factors affecting the obstacles of social and economic empowerment, we did the Regression Equation to five steps. In the first step, the variable of the lack of career opportunity in the second step, low education level in the third step, the familial bigotry in the fourth step, lack of legal supports and in the fifth step, lack of communicative web entered the equation and then the five mentioned variables explained totally about 55 percent of the changes in dependent variable. It can be stated about the proportion of each independent variable in explaining the dependent variable that with regard to Beta amount, the variable of the lack of job opportunities has the greatest role in comparison with other variables to explain the dependent variable of the obstacles of economic and social empowerment since for one unit of change in the standard deviation of this variable, 403 units of change has occurred in the standard deviation of the dependent variable. As well, the variable of low education level (179), familiar bigotry (175), lack of legal supports (134), lack of appropriate communicative web (123), respectively, have the most effects on the obstacles of social and economic empowerment of rural women in Rostam town. The equation of the linear Regression is as below:

$$Y = .556 + .298x_1 + .148x_2 + .182x_3 + .139x_4 + .110x_5$$

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to examine the social and economic factors affecting the rural women's empowerment and also to identify the factors blocking or paving the way for the empowerment of the women, which by utilizing the findings of the survey research and statistical methods, the factors affecting the empowerment has been identified and then some suggestions have been presented in this regard.

Factors affecting the social and economic empowerment of the women showed that

participation in the collective gainful activities is the first priority, and membership in production cooperative societies, participation in credit funds, participation in public utility activities and independence in saving are the next priorities. Altogether, we found three factors and the first one, cooperation in economic activities, with the percentage of over 29/77 of Variance has been identified as the most effective factor.

Second factor is individual factors with 16/77 percent of the total variance, and also the third one is social factors with 9/32 percent of the total variance. These three factors altogether constitute 55/87 percent of the variance of factors affecting rural women's economic and social empowerment. In order to identify and prioritize the factors affecting the obstacles of social and economic empowerment we applied stepwise Regression. In the first step, the variable of the lack of career opportunities in the second step, low education level, in the third step, familiar bigotry, in the fourth step, lack of legal supports, and in the fifth step, lack of appropriate communicative web entered the equation and five mentioned variables, altogether, comprised 55 percent of dependent variable's changes (women's lack of social and economic empowerment). The priority of the obstructive factors showed that in the first step, the variable of the lack of career opportunities has the most proportion in the dependent variable, in relation to other variables.

On the whole, the findings of the research indicated that, with attention to the average level of women's ability in Rostam town which is about 55 percent, it is required to take into account all these mentioned factors for the future planning. As the solutions, we must Pave the way for rural women to raise their motivations, make their skills blossomed and finally, paying more attention to them as the laborer stratum of the society.

**Key word:** Enabling, rural women, rural economic, Rostam County.

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