

# Impact of Social Obligations on Economic Agency of Women: A Case Study of District Bahawalpur

**Ansar Abbas<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Jahanzeb Akmal<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Shakil Akhtar<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Gender Studies, Department of Political Science, IUB Bahawalpur

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, BZU Multan

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur

corresponding author: <sup>3</sup>shakil.akhtar@iub.edu.pk, <sup>1</sup>ansar.abbas@iub.edu.pk, <sup>2</sup>mjakmal@bzu.edu.pk

## ABSTRACT

Gender power relations occur in the backdrop of socio-political and economic environment of any society. Hence the economic potential of individual women is always influenced by environment in which gender power relations are woven and practiced. Social obligations are those tasks which are predominantly associated with women and economic agency is the ability to utilize their incomes according to the purposes they value for themselves and families. The determinants of economic agency are paid employment, participation in decision making direct or shared and opportunities and bargaining power to continue job. This research argue that social obligations as considered women's responsibility has the potential to circumscribe the economic agency of women. It tries to uncover what is the nature of social obligations for working women in Bahawalpur? How and to what extent social obligations hinder women's economic agency. It is also endeavored to explore that what effects employment does have on the decision making of women and how they bargain to achieve economic agency through its determinants. Data for this research was collected from 51 working women, i.e. doctors, lawyers, teachers, bankers, policewomen and customer services professional using fixed response questionnaire through convenient sampling method. Data is analyzed with the help of SPSS, further crosstabs are made to understand the various relations of economic agency and social obligations, through descriptive statistics. This research finds out that on various occasions social obligations become a source of inspiration for women to achieve economic agency, while for some women at various occasions they appear to limit their economic agency. Social obligations create the situations for women where they become in fix to resolve the riddles of work family obligations and fell victim to poor time management. Preoccupation of domestic work and job stress lead women to health deterioration. This research concludes that the effects of social obligations are contextual and play through the intersects of family size, family background and nature of profession in Bahawalpur, and can be deeper if studied at national level. This research recommends that social obligations as an important feature of care economy must be raised as a policy matter and political agenda in Pakistan.

## Keywords

Gender and Development, Care Work, Economic Agency, Household work, Bahawalpur, Pakistan

## Introduction

Gender roles are manifestation of the dictates of patriarchal societies, and almost everywhere expressions of gender roles occur within the separate spheres of domestic and public (Rotman, 2006; Miller & Borgida, 2016). This very segregation of gender roles follows through the expectations from women to remain at home and men to work outside home. Women are associated with domestic sphere, which is organized around one or more women and their children. Ellemers (2018), for example highlighted that parenthood additionally makes us see men and women in an unexpected way implicitly guiding our judgment through the lens of gender stereotypes. 'When women become parents, we tend to assume that caring for their children will be their first priority and should make them less committed and ambitious at work'.

Building the relationships of gender around the families, work and children, reflect all the arrangements in the wake of marriage, where women are expected to take up the roles of nurturing and caring; that take place within the unit of family. Thus, the socialization patterns learnt by women are woven around their ascribed social roles which perceive women to be the default parents. Being default parent women at home are expected to be available for children and domestic chores. As stated by Cynthia Nelson (1974) that 'the association of women with private domain (and a

lack of power) and men with a public domain (and the center of politics) was too simple' to understand the cultural marker of gendered spheres of activity where women take the responsibility of child care. In the words of Louise Lamphere (2009), such bearing of responsibility is due to the fact, "women born into one patrilineal family and marry to another; hence provide important structural links between the social groups and act as moderators". Similarly, women carry the group values to another which are referred as their tasks.

Women spend their days juggle between work and home responsibilities, interference of work to home and home to work leave women with margins to carry out tough routines. Leaving the children in the day care or with grandparents on the one hand while on the other meeting the demands of work take women to the situations of either obligations as secondary choices or compromise the work/job responsibilities. Care of the sick and child with cooking are the routine tasks of women. Making laundry, cleanliness of the household and being available to the events and gatherings within the kinship ties are work women keep pending for weekends.

Brummelhuis and Greenhaus (2019) based on their studies conducted in Netherlands stated that "While stereotypes with respect to male and female conduct are turning out to be increasingly obsolete, research reveals that men and women are regularly still exposed to different expectations since early on. Women are often expected to be communal,

which is typically reflected in caring for and nurturing others. There is more pressure on them to be “kin keepers” who manage relationships within the family and the community.” They further asserted that ‘women even with high status, well-paying jobs are often still primary care giver at home which may lead them to feel more responsible for the home domain than their partners.’

Increased women’s economic participation or reduced gaps in men and women’s labor force participation results the economic growth of not only the family but also fiscal growth of the country (OECD, 2012). Research findings of various countries indicate that, income spending patterns change and benefit children when household income had a share controlled by women (World Bank, 2012, p. 5). Women face the wage gap globally and are paid on average 63 percent of wages men earn from paid work (Neate, 2018). Factors behind these include the fact of women being involved as wage workers and unpaid family workers on the one hand, whereas on the other women get lower time options to spend for paid activity and are bound to return home for the upkeep of domestic chores or social obligations (World Bank, 2012, p. 79). Similarly, due to the responsibilities and engagement in the informal economy women are less likely to move toward formal economy and are deemed as economic dependents. Those engaged in the formal economy are at the forefront of facing the challenges of work family pressures and are unorganized sector of employment or not represented in the forums of labour rights (ILO, 2014).

Held responsible for disproportionate care work, women dedicate additional one to three hours to housework daily than men. They also spend two to ten times amount of time during the day as an aide to care for children, elderly and sick; dedicate one to four hours or less a day for market activity which are again more a domestic in nature (World Bank, 2012, p. 80). Women in Pakistan, on average spend seven hours in kitchen round the clock according to (World Development Report, 2012). This spending of time is only the calculation of time which is specifically spent on kitchen work. Women’s social obligations in this research are those engagements of women implied as their only duties such as all the care work to look after family. On the other hand, men are more likely to enjoy more optional positions when it comes to the domestic work or sharing the burden of women.

Gender roles in Pakistan are in the phase of transition, yet families and the socio-economic conditions of the women are restrained in the complex interplay of patriarchy and capitalism. With the rapid pace of urbanization and modernization, Pakistani women belonging to all classes have entered formal and informal occupations. Exposure to educational opportunities is higher than decades ago in the urban and rural settings. Increase in educational level has opened choices for women for personal economic growth amid the pressures and constraints of gender roles and norms. Women’s employment outside the household has generally positive effect on marriage (Reddy et al. 2010) and makes women to aspire for their personal economic growth.

Cultural values in South Asian societies both set and restrict the roles of women in society as well as within family and marriage. Having poor socio-economic status in male-

dominated societies women frequently face social barriers and lack of independence (Sinha, 2016 & Fazal et al., 2019). Avais, Wassan & Shah (2014) highlighted in their study about problems of working women Sukkur that female participation in social life is often reduced to family affairs such as taking care of children and husbands, preparing meals and other household affairs. These domestic affairs restrict for them the mental and physical space which they need to play an agential role beyond the home in social development (Khalid, 1990). Factors that impact women’s decisions about their employment are cultural and religious norms, social class of the family and availability and access to job opportunities (Weiss, 1998). From the perspective of Pakistan the employment of women does not count their qualifications, abilities and skills at large, but other factors, which have the direct bearing on their participation in the labor force are social class, caste, religious beliefs and cultural norms (Gazdar, 2003; Khan, 2007).

Gender has been a significant factor with respect to the formal sector of employment in Pakistan where females comprise only 22.53% workers (Government of Pakistan, 2018). Women comprise of 49.18 percent of Pakistan’s population (Labour Force Survey, 2018). In Punjab province, the population of women consists of 27.73 percent, containing 17.63 percent in rural areas and 10.10 percent in urban areas (LFS, 2018). Women comprise of 49.18 percent of Pakistan’s population (Labour Force Survey, 2018). In Punjab province, the population of women consists of 27.73 percent, containing 17.63 in rural areas and 10.10 in urban areas (LFS, 2018). The Survey on Women’s Economic and Social Wellbeing (WESW) in Punjab conducted by the Commission on Status of Women revealed that in Punjab the Participation of women in Labor force is 36.3 Percent comprising 43.4 percent and 24.9 percent in respectively the rural and urban areas of Punjab (Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, 2018).

Economic participation never guarantees economic agency of women, even it correlates various factors like role in household decision making, educational attainment and choices of employment. For employment its nature, salary and other perks and privileges are important. However, what more affect women’s entry to paid employment are the contextual factors, like gender norms, social mobility, segregation of public and private and reproductive role of women. The bargain between work, education and social norms is not always a success deal materially and socially. Thus, work is realized an economic need for the poor or those who are least affected by social norms i.e. upper middle class and the educated elite women (Zaidi & Farooq et.al., 2016).

This research is an inquiry into the lives of women in Bahawalpur district of South Punjab Pakistan, to probe, whether the domestic responsibilities or social obligations affect women’s decision to work or join professions. What constraints they face due to the domestic responsibilities, and how they spend their incomes. How and to what extent they feel economic independence. Whether women adopt specific strategies or moderate solutions to carry out the status of professional women or opt the only options of leaving the job for family care. The assumed link by this research into variables of social obligations and economic agency; is further probed to understand the patterns of work

–family balance by women. The interacting trends of family needs and women’s participation into various occupations can lead to conflicts and stress for women workers (ILO, 2004). Family structures and economic needs of the families are the factors responsible for women’s labour force participation. Women in families with either working partners or single working person, participate in the decision making. Where women contribute to the family income, they are likely to influence the decision making or mitigate the total control of the husband. Due to their economic capacity, women and girls develop the bargaining power and maneuver into crucial inter and intra household situations.

### **Economic Agency, Social Obligations and Intra Household Bargaining**

The notion of agency is originated from Amartya Sen’s (1985) capabilities approach, which defines ‘agency freedom’ as the freedom to achieve whatever the person, as a responsible agent, decides he or she should achieve.” (Klugman et al., 2014) define agency as one’s ability to make decisions about life and act to achieve the desired outcomes without any fear of violence and vengeance (by family member or intimate partner). (Donald et al., 2017) describe agency as equivalent to freedom and empowerment, freedom of movement and control over spending. According to Naila Kabeer (2008), ‘agency is closely bound up with human capability’ she also noted that ‘A woman who chooses to take up paid work or marry someone of her own choice is exercising a strategic form of agency in contexts where women have been denied the ability to make such choices.’ So, agency is “the ability of people individually and collectively to adapt to, to influence, resist or change the dominant structures” (Everett & Charlton, 2014) in society and institutions. Seguino (2007), based upon the primary data from Latin American countries, acknowledged that women share their respective part of labor force whether employed or unemployed, paid and unpaid. Their research results indicated that economic activity has positive impacts upon the economic well-being and agency. In most cases of their research, economic agency confers enhanced bargaining power to negotiate with male members over issues of family. Another factor highlighted by their research was that because of direct income generation, the effect and correlation between economic agency and work was positive in significant number of cases.

In terms of economic wellbeing and capability, this research presume agency as the ability of women to earn and utilize their income for the purposes they value or have reason to value, which may relate to the good and wellbeing of themselves and families. Furthermore, economic agency may be the effective tool to control economic resources, and an effective power an individual realizes or recognize within the household. Economic agency may help individual to influence and exert the power in the matters related to his or her concern or apprise to be valued for his or her relative domestic or social conditions. Social obligations are interchangeably applied to the concept of Care. Those obligations or responsibilities women are expected to perform to care and look after members of household or in

the community services are considered their fundamental obligations. This study uses the terms ‘household work,’ ‘housework,’ and ‘unpaid labour’ interchangeably to Social Obligations.

Intra -household bargaining denotes the consultations and arbitrations that happen among the members of household, to reach decisions concerning the household, more specifically between men and women. This occur around the issues of whether to invest income or save, whether to remain at home or work. When women or men take decisions about their economic lives, this refers a process of exercising an agency or desire fulfilment (UN Habitat, 2010). The guiding principle on which intra household bargaining model rests on is: ‘within household one’s contribution to resource allocation and distribution to decisions is contingent to one’s alternatives or choices to remain in household and one’s capacity or privilege to strive and influence household decisions, like opinion or agency, including decisions about own life choices- the strategic choices’ (Katz, 1997).

### **Conceptual Interlink between Social Obligations and Economic Agency**

Household work, housework and unpaid labor, spares limited time or squeezes the options for women to enter paid work. Since the socialization of gender follows the strict patriarchal patterns and women and men are encouraged to work within the separate spheres of public and domestic. The domestic sphere is associated with women given their feminine upbringing and are considered more suitable for nurturing and activities that demand care. Many anthropologists have rejected the connection between women’s role in reproduction and their domestic orientation. Women are structurally defined in almost all societies in account of their domestic role (Rosaldo, 1974). On the other, men may have separate spaces from women’s activities (Lamphere,1993), and exercise their roles as breadwinner owing to the masculine socialization and seek their role outside domestic world. The interlink between social obligations and economic agency is necessary to theorize, given the participation of women in the formal and informal employment in Pakistan. With increase in education and skills, women are more active in the economic activities outside home, they are also doing jobs outside the professions which were traditionally associated with them. Others who are entrepreneurs, contribute to the family, those who are working in the home as skilled laborers, those who are farm workers have the social obligations.

The assumption here is how women perceive the effect of social obligations upon their jobs, work, entrepreneurial activities and their economic wellbeing. In this sense, the social obligations may have connotations to explore, which make women likely to adopt certain strategies to boost their economic agency, and bargaining power. In the absence of work or employment or due to unpaid employment they may lose bargaining power or forced to invest more time in the social obligations. What alternatives women choose to work outside the home, and how they manage the social obligations if they perceive their work equally important. In



the case of nuclear families where the couple is in the economic activity, what role men render in the wake of women's social obligations? In this regard, the interlink between social obligations and economic agency requires field evidence to established, along with other causes that both marginalize the right to work and the factors which may arrest women economically other than their social obligations and care work. The willing ness of women to work, and the economic need of the family is another factor which may affect the linkage of social obligations and economic agency of women.

## Research Questions and Research Methodology

Care and its associated dynamic factors are gaining precedence among the policy actors, activists and researchers of gender and development today than three decades ago (Razavi, 2007). The present research orientation toward the care or social obligations at home, undoubtedly is not without precedent. Setting up welfare arrangements, for example, family wage, annuities for widows and single mothers, maternity leave and job security for women reflect the acknowledgement of individual freedom from the obligations, hence enabling mothers and women to do paid work to perform care services in friendly environment (Knijn & Kremer, 1997). This research examines following questions:

1. How do social obligations hinder women's economic agency?
2. What are the bargaining strategies/mechanisms used by women to achieve their economic agency?
3. What are the effects of women's employment on their families? How do women get to the exclusive or shared roles of decision making within a family?
4. How do and to what extent women's choices of employment in Bahawalpur make their social obligations as optional?
5. How do social obligations of women reduce their economic worth yet help them to foster their kinship ties to increase their role in the decision making?

The data collected for this research was both qualitative and quantitative. As quantitative data was concerned the, only information regarding the demographic details and income level as well years of experience and number children. Data was collected with help of questionnaires, designed through the fixed response questions. Working women of district Bahawalpur was the population of this study. Convenient sample method was applied to collect data. Data was collected from 51 working women. To achieve the variety of information and experiences the data was collected from working women who belong to six professions through simple random sampling technique. 16 women were taken from the teaching profession at university and college level, 14 doctors, five lawyers, seven bankers, 6 policewomen and 3 customer services professionals. It was planning to collect the data from even number of respondents of all six categories of professions, but the response rate was unexpectedly low because other than teachers and doctors approaching women from the rest of the professions was difficult due to their routines, yet those who conveniently were available date was collected from them.

## Data Analysis

Respondents were selected through simple random sample method with further random allotment of sample size in the six categories of professions i.e. university teachers of Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Govt Sadiq College Women University (GSCWU), doctors from Bahawal Victoria Hospital (BVH) and Civil Hospital Bahawalpur, women lawyers of district courts, Bankers from HBL and Allied Bank, Policewomen from district police office and tehsil headquarters of Yazman and Ahmedpur East and women working as customer services employees making up the sample of 51 women.

Data was divided into 5 sections 1) Demographic information, 2) Monthly income and spending by women, 3) Household responsibilities, 4) family support and response and 5) consist of Impact of family responsibilities on Economic Agency. Data in every section is tabulated with graphical presentation to understand the co-relations of questions. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is used for data entry and analysis. Data analysis does not involve the complex statistics, crosstabulation is used to find out the co-relations and frequencies to decipher the factors supporting or undermining the economic agency of women in the backdrop of social obligations, with the qualitative interpretation to the data followed by the discussion in the final section.

### Profile of the Respondents

		Marital status				Total
		Single	Married	Widowed	Engaged	
Profession of person	Teaching	3 16.7%	11 37.9%	1 3.3%	1 100.0%	16 31.4%
	Doctor	5 27.8%	9 31.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	14 27.5%
	Lawyer	0 .0%	4 13.8%	1 33.3%	0 .0%	5 9.8%
	Banker	5 27.8%	2 6.9%	0 .0%	0 .0%	7 13.7%
	Police	3 16.7%	3 10.3%	0 .0%	0 .0%	6 11.8%
	customer services	2 11.1%	0 .0%	1 33.3%	0 .0%	3 5.9%
Total		18 100.0%	29 100.0%	3 100.0%	1 100.0%	51 100.0%

The demographic information suggest that 51 women were interviewed, from the 6 different professions, who were living in variety of family settings, that provided them range of options for exercise of their agency and had the social obligations to perform, due to the size of family and number of children both adult and dependent. As given in the table 29 women were married except of two all had the young children who were in the need of care, and three widows were also in charge of family care.

### Monthly Income Spending

Personal income per month	how income spend				Total
	I don't have to spend my income as my family takes care of me	I spend my earnings on my personal needs only such as buying clothes, shoes, handbags etc.	I have to spend my income on my children	I have to spend my income on my family excluding my children	
20000-30000	3	3	3	3	12
30000-45000	0	4	2	1	7
45000-60000	0	1	0	0	1
60000-75000	0	2	1	0	3
80000-95000	0	1	2	0	3
95000-120000	0	4	2	1	7
Didn't mention	2	9	3	1	15
	40.0%	37.5%	23.1%	16.7%	31.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>48</b>
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Economic agency or economic empowerment is proportionate to the economic contribution to the family and on the other the realization of the contributor about their role, in the case of earning for the household, a majority of

women said that they were earning for the family, despite the fact they were not the sole earner in the family, yet the realization revealed that job or employment provide the confidence to women to act as economic provider of the family, in the society where the breadwinning is assumed the task of men. But those women who were themselves working yet they said that their husbands earn for the family, it never gives that their incomes were futile, or their economic share was not valued. The earnings of the women, data revealed were spent on their personal needs, which made them self-sufficient to indicate their economic agency or control over their earnings. Other than spending on the personal needs women said that they spend on the needs of the children and family, these findings were in line with the findings of World Bank's report, Gender Equality and Development (2012), that income spending pattern change and benefit the children, when women had the share controlled by the women. Women from all income categories spend on the range of needs of the children and household, they were frequently spending on the relative family and children needs, like on kitchen, children education, health, and on utility bills, and this trend was also evident in the findings of Niaz Muhammad et.al. (2010), their research found 61% respondents contribute to family income on the scale of Strengthening Family Finance, and women in Bahawalpur impart their significant part through their earnings.

### Profession and time spent on household activities on daily basis

		time for household activities daily						Total
		I don't have to work at home	I work less than an hour	2-3 hours	3-5 hours	5-7 hours	more than 8 hours	
profession of person	teaching	0	2	6	6	1	1	16
		.0%	28.6%	31.6%	40.0%	25.0%	33.3%	31.4%
	doctor	1	2	6	2	2	1	14
		33.3%	28.6%	31.6%	13.3%	50.0%	33.3%	27.5%
	lawyer	0	0	3	1	1	0	5
		.0%	.0%	15.8%	6.7%	25.0%	.0%	9.8%
	banker	0	2	2	2	0	1	7
		.0%	28.6%	10.5%	13.3%	.0%	33.3%	13.7%
	police	1	1	1	3	0	0	6
		33.3%	14.3%	5.3%	20.0%	.0%	.0%	11.8%
	customer services	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
		33.3%	.0%	5.3%	6.7%	.0%	.0%	5.9%
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>51</b>
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Time for household activities among the women of all professions of was spent on 3-4 hours, as majority of women said that they work for 2-3 hours at home in unpaid labor

and the second majority of women said to work for 3-5 hours at home, this finding was closer to estimation of World Development Report, (2012) that Women in

Pakistan, on average spend seven hours in kitchen round the clock.

**Weekend activities of women from selected professions**

		weekend activities at home/locality							Total
		I stay at home and take rest	I do some social work in the locality	I visit my Relatives	I finish the pending tasks of household such as washing clothes, cleaning curtains, cleaning windows	Checking the progress of children in their studies	going out for shopping	Others	
<b>profession of person</b>	teaching	4 23.5%	1 33.3%	1 16.7%	8 47.1%	1 20.0%	1 50.0%	0 .0%	16 31.4%
	doctor	5 29.4%	0 .0%	1 16.7%	3 17.6%	4 80.0%	1 50.0%	0 .0%	14 27.5%
	lawyer	3 17.6%	0 .0%	1 16.7%	1 5.9%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	5 9.8%
	banker	2 11.8%	0 .0%	1 16.7%	3 17.6%	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 100.0%	7 13.7%
	police	2 11.8%	1 33.3%	2 33.3%	1 5.9%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	6 11.8%
	customer services	1 5.9%	1 33.3%	0 .0%	1 5.9%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 5.9%
	Total	17 100.0%	3 100.0%	6 100.0%	17 100.0%	5 100.0%	2 100.0%	1 100.0%	51 100.0%

The weekends undoubtedly, devour time of women in many domestic and allied chores, certainly the great deal of time slayed on the pending tasks, looking after the children and their progress in studies, and visiting the relatives, to further shopping for home. Time in hours calculation, reveal that almost half women noted to spend 2-4 hours in domestic work, and these are the women who were having available the help of servant, and another nearly one third women of the sample said to work 5-7 hours during weekend.

### Domestic Chores and number of hours at weekend

		domestic activities performed in weekend in number of hours					Total
		less than 1 hour	2-4 hours	5-7 hours	8-9 hours	more than 10 hours	
profession of person	teaching	1 33.3%	6 25.0%	4 26.7%	4 80.0%	1 25.0%	16 31.4%
	doctor	2 66.7%	5 20.8%	5 33.3%	0 .0%	2 50.0%	14 27.5%
	lawyer	0 .0%	4 16.7%	1 6.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	5 9.8%
	banker	0 .0%	3 12.5%	3 20.0%	0 .0%	1 25.0%	7 13.7%
	police	0 .0%	4 16.7%	1 6.7%	1 20.0%	0 .0%	6 11.8%
	customer services	0 .0%	2 8.3%	1 6.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 5.9%
	Total	3 100.0%	24 100.0%	15 100.0%	5 100.0%	4 100.0%	51 100.0%

### Profession of person and feeling about male domestic work

		feeling about male domestic work						Total
		Domestic work primarily is the responsibility of women, so I don't like male members doing domestic work	Running the household is the common responsibility and therefore men and women both should be doing the domestic work	Men should know how to do the daily domestic work so that in case of emergency they are able to run the household	Men cannot do the domestic work, they will just ruin things	Male members of the family should not do the domestic work because it will bring a bad name and shame for female members of the family	Others	
profession of person	teaching	2 15.4%	7 31.8%	6 54.5%	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 100.0%	16 31.4%
	doctor	2 15.4%	9 40.9%	2 18.2%	1 33.3%	0 .0%	0 .0%	14 27.5%
	lawyer	1 7.7%	3 13.6%	1 9.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	5 9.8%
	banker	3 23.1%	0 .0%	1 9.1%	2 66.7%	1 100.0%	0 .0%	7 13.7%
	police	4 30.8%	2 9.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	6 11.8%
	customer services	1 7.7%	1 4.5%	1 9.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 5.9%
	Total	13 100.0%	22 100.0%	11 100.0%	3 100.0%	1 100.0%	1 100.0%	51 100.0%

Despite their status of professional women the responses regarding the male share in the domestic work were quite mixed with slight differences of opinion, 22 women gave the opinion in the favor of shared domestic work, this shows that contribution to the household income through employment provide women strength to demand male share

in the domestic management other than the self-assumed role of breadwinning in the changing environment of labour markets. Parallel to shared domestic management, there were women who had the contrary opinion, in line with the patriarchal norm of domestic-public divide, they themselves were employed but still viewed against the male domestic

work and did not like the male doing domestic work, and related it with women's primary responsibility. Yet some other women highlighted another perspective that male must know how to do household work and manage the tasks in the time of emergency. A few who said that male ruin the things and could not do the domestic work, maybe they were

quite uncertain about male capacity of work or skills of domestic work, and were single but another single woman reveled that male domestic work bring the shame for women of the family, the statement was partly sweeping and partly contextual to society of the locale of research.

#### Impact of Social Obligations on Economic Agency

		Family responsibility effect on job/ employment					Total
		They don't affect my employment	They positively affect my employment as I get used to working under pressure, doing multitasking, and completing different tasks in minimum time with more efficiency and proficiency	They negatively affect my employment	I cannot spare enough time for my official work after normal working hours	I always feel tired, overstretched, and preoccupied due to my family responsibilities	
Profession of person	teaching	6 28.6%	6 31.6%	1 100.0%	3 100.0%	0 .0%	16 31.4%
	doctor	6 28.6%	4 21.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	4 57.1%	14 27.5%
	lawyer	2 9.5%	1 5.3%	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 28.6%	5 9.8%
	banker	3 14.3%	4 21.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	7 13.7%
	police	3 14.3%	2 10.5%	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 14.3%	6 11.8%
	customer services	1 4.8%	2 10.5%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 5.9%
	Total	21 100.0%	19 100.0%	1 100.0%	3 100.0%	7 100.0%	51 100.0%

The effect of family responsibilities on the job or employment was unfounded, for example, 21 women mentioned that social obligations never affect their employment, while for another chunk of 19 women from the sample highlighted that, social obligations played positive role in their lives, because of acquainted routines they helped them to work under pressure and increased their efficiency. Hence in this case social obligations were although challenging, but women develop their strength to

face the toughness of situations. The negative effect of social obligations or family responsibilities was observed in the case of one woman, yet few other complained time management issue to take up domestic tasks after normal office work. Seven women faced the issues of tiredness and preoccupation due to family work. Overall social obligations had the varying degree of impact, with respect to the income level and household help available to respondents.



**Profession of person and how do they realize to husband/family about importance of their economic self-reliance**

		How do you realize to husband/family about importance of your economic self-reliance					Total
		I don't care what my husband and family think of me, my economic independence comes first for me	I keep spending on family needs to make them realize the importance of my economic role	My husband/family is already aware of the importance of economic empowerment of women	It's not unusual in my family for women to go out to work	Others	
Profession of person	teaching	1 25.0%	7 38.9%	7 31.8%	0 .0%	1 50.0%	16 32.7%
	doctor	1 25.0%	6 33.3%	6 27.3%	0 .0%	1 50.0%	14 28.6%
	lawyer	0 .0%	1 5.6%	4 18.2%	0 .0%	0 .0%	5 10.2%
	banker	0 .0%	1 5.6%	3 13.6%	2 66.7%	0 .0%	6 12.2%
	police	2 50.0%	1 5.6%	2 9.1%	1 33.3%	0 .0%	6 12.2%
	customer services	0 .0%	2 11.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 4.1%
	Total	4 100.0%	18 100.0%	22 100.0%	3 100.0%	2 100.0%	49 100.0%

These findings were like the argument of (Reddy et al. 2010), that Women's employment outside the household has generally positive effect on marriage and makes women to aspire for their personal economic growth. Because they were contributing to the household, and in most of responses their economic role enabled them to accept the challenges

and keep the balance between work and family. Here empowerment approach works, because empowerment provides chance to everyone to flourish his or her potential and inventiveness and creates situations where women's tasks of caring and nurturance embody human relationship, rather of burdens of women only.

**Profession of person and who takes property related decisions**

		Who takes property related decisions					Total
		myself	my husband	All members of family	we take decisions jointly	Others	
Profession of person	teaching	1 25.0%	5 35.7%	2 18.2%	4 36.4%	4 36.4%	16 31.4%
	doctor	0 .0%	5 35.7%	3 27.3%	3 27.3%	3 27.3%	14 27.5%
	lawyer	0 .0%	3 21.4%	0 .0%	2 18.2%	0 .0%	5 9.8%
	banker	2 50.0%	0 .0%	2 18.2%	1 9.1%	2 18.2%	7 13.7%
	police	0 .0%	1 7.1%	3 27.3%	1 9.1%	1 9.1%	6 11.8%
	customer services	1 25.0%	0 .0%	1 9.1%	0 .0%	1 9.1%	3 5.9%
	Total	4 100.0%	14 100.0%	11 100.0%	11 100.0%	11 100.0%	51 100.0%

Decision making is an important indicator of empowerment, results of the data highlighted that a few women were taking the property related decisions themselves, and all of them were the heads of the family because they were widows, yet the patterns of decision making, and women's role was identical to the situations where women had the say but not the final say in decisions. Fourteen women said that their husbands take decisions regarding property matters, but

**Either economic self-reliance helped them to increase their decision making**

	either economic self-reliance helped you increase your decision making				Total
	Yes	No	Up to Some extent	Don't Know	
<b>profession of person teaching</b>	8 26.7%	1 33.3%	4 30.8%	1 100.0%	14 29.8%
doctor	12 40.0%	0 .0%	1 7.7%	0 .0%	13 27.7%
lawyer	3 10.0%	0 .0%	2 15.4%	0 .0%	5 10.6%
banker	2 6.7%	1 33.3%	3 23.1%	0 .0%	6 12.8%
police	4 13.3%	0 .0%	2 15.4%	0 .0%	6 12.8%
customer services	1 3.3%	1 33.3%	1 7.7%	0 .0%	3 6.4%
<b>Total</b>	30 100.0%	3 100.0%	13 100.0%	1 100.0%	47 100.0%

Economic self-reliance provides women opportunities to decide what they value in their lives, and which equip them with personal strength. A majority of women responded positively that economic self-reliance helped them increasing decision making power, while on the other hand those who reported that to some extent they felt the change

eleven women narrated that all family members decide, another eleven women said that they jointly decide and finally some eleven women of the respondents reported that other members of the family. Here 'voice' an indicator of intra household-bargaining model applies which refers to opinion or consultation regarding matters of family, and hence women give voice to their understanding of the matter in decision making regarding property related decisions.

in their decision-making ability were second majority, only a small portion had negative response about this question, which were three in number. In such case the rationale is associated with empowerment approach, which tries to distinguish power of women, less regarding their mastery over others and more regarding their self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and internal strength.

**Work hours a day and household responsibilities as hindrance to employment/economic empowerment**

		household responsibilities as hindrance to employment/economic empowerment				Total
		Responsibilities at home do not hinder my economic empowerment	Economic efficiency is disturbed due to stress of unpaid domestic activities	It becomes difficult to manage time at home and office	Preoccupation with activities at home, affects focus on my official working	
<b>work hours a day</b>	4 hours or less	2 8.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 4.0%
	5-6 hours	4 17.4%	4 40.0%	2 15.4%	2 50.0%	12 24.0%
	7-8 hours	10 43.5%	2 20.0%	5 38.5%	1 25.0%	18 36.0%
	9-10 hours	4 17.4%	4 40.0%	4 30.8%	0 .0%	12 24.0%
	11-12 hours	2 8.7%	0 .0%	2 15.4%	0 .0%	4 8.0%
	more than 12 hours	1 4.3%	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 25.0%	2 4.0%
	<b>Total</b>	23 100.0%	10 100.0%	13 100.0%	4 100.0%	50 100.0%

Another aspect to investigate was the hindering role of domestic responsibilities to employment or economic empowerment, of which opinions were shifting among

respondents, for 23 women economic empowerment was not influenced by domestic obligations negatively, 10 women said that they were stressed due to burdens of unpaid domestic work, 13 women noted that they had the issues of

time management and only four were showed the concern that household activities were preoccupations. Because majority of women reported the impeding effects of household responsibilities these results were identical to the findings of Campbell et al. (1994), which describe that women with children or social obligations were lower in their professional commitments, relative to single women, contrary to societal expectations women with younger

children outperformed than women with older children. But trends and in the women's professional commitments can vary due to the relative helping household or life partner and in case of joint family working women can experience lower burdens of household commitments.

#### Profession of person and bargain to continue professional work to relive from domestic work

		bargain to continue professional work to relive from domestic work						Total
		I always have enough time and energy to discharge my domestic and professional duties	I earn enough to afford a maid/servant for my domestic activities	Some family member is always there to help me	My husband is very cooperative, and he shares the domestic responsibilities	There can be no compromise on domestic activities and I have to complete them first	Others	
profession of person	teaching	5 38.5%	2 20.0%	4 36.4%	3 27.3%	2 66.7%	0 .0%	16 32.7%
	doctor	0 .0%	6 60.0%	2 18.2%	6 54.5%	0 .0%	0 .0%	14 28.6%
	lawyer	4 30.8%	0 .0%	1 9.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	5 10.2%
	banker	1 7.7%	0 .0%	2 18.2%	1 9.1%	1 33.3%	1 100.0%	6 12.2%
	police	2 15.4%	1 10.0%	1 9.1%	1 9.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	5 10.2%
	customer services	1 7.7%	1 10.0%	1 9.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 6.1%
	Total	13 100.0%	10 100.0%	11 100.0%	11 100.0%	3 100.0%	1 100.0%	49 100.0%

Continuing job or profession is a matter of choice as well as the nature of job and family set up, which affect women's position. Women whom the question was asked that how they bargain to continue their job or profession, some were of the view that had ample time and energy to discharge domestic and professional duties, some other mentioned that they were earning enough to hire a servant. These responses were showing that their profession enabled them to bargain and convince the family to continue job, either through providing alternative for domestic activities or showing fortitude and kept balance between work and family. Some were relying on the help of family member, whereas others

were specifically noted that their spouse was cooperative and helped in domestic chores. A few who said that there could not be any compromise on domestic activities, and they had to complete them first, were showing concern for the family. All the women with various responses uncovered, that domestic work had the necessary understanding in the patriarchal society with the nurturing role of women. The results favor the point laid by Seguino (2007), in most cases of her research, economic agency confers enhanced bargaining power to negotiate with male members over issues of family.

#### How do you manage clash between professional and domestic work?

Profession of person		How do you manage clash if any				Total
		I seriously think about leaving my job to give proper time to my family	I compromise on my domestic work but cannot afford to forgo my professional responsibilities	I have to compromise on my professional work and cannot afford to ignore my family	These clashes are temporary and therefore I do not need to be concerned too much	
	teaching	0 .0%	2 28.6%	2 28.6%	3 42.9%	7 100.0%
	doctor	1 16.7%	0 .0%	2 33.3%	3 50.0%	6 100.0%
	lawyer	1 20.0%	2 40.0%	0 .0%	2 40.0%	5 100.0%
	banker	2 40.0%	1 20.0%	1 20.0%	1 20.0%	5 100.0%
	police	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 100.0%	0 .0%	2 100.0%
	customer services	1 50.0%	0 .0%	1 50.0%	0 .0%	2 100.0%
	Total	5 18.5%	5 18.5%	8 29.6%	9 33.3%	27 100.0%

Almost half of the women from the sample size said that they were not facing clash between employment and their

social obligations, but on the other seven women clearly described to face the clash, and another 14 women were

facing clash up to some extent. It is necessary to note that whether employment was helping those who were facing clash to manage it? Five women replied that they were seriously pondering to leave job for the sake of family, but for another five women professional responsibilities were prerequisite and used to compromise domestic work. Apart from these two parallel streams of thinking to manage the clash, another group of eight respondents, reported to compromise official work because family was important for them. Nine women were positive about the transitory nature of clashes and believed to give them a time to ease. The opinions regarding decisions to manage clashes again had the influences of family help and family structure, it was quite possible from the women to leave the job who were having less domestic help or were living in nuclear family, also it was easy for women to dedicate to profession than care work because availability of help at household in the form of servant or supportive family setup. Such a picture of relations emerged here vividly invite a similar finding of (The World Bank, 2013) to support the point by emphasizing that social norms play role in restricting or increasing the agency of certain social groups, including young unmarried working women and married working women. For instance, by helping or hindering women's capacity to seize a benefit of any existing opportunities.

### Conclusion

It will not be superfluous to say that the opinions which were mixed and divergent, reveal the power women gained through employment at the one side and on the other the pressures women sustain due to the changing needs of the family in the globalized world, were being constructed in the wake of women experiences of job, household, social obligations and opportunities to income generation and empowerment. Social obligations of women are the cultural facts, which had the impact upon women, regardless of their economic status, working or non-working status. Social obligations had the assortments which make women navigate the ambits of work and family, but play role across the family backgrounds, and sensitization on the part of male members of the families.

It is universally accepted that care work is associated with women due to their role in reproduction and feminine nature, but research has developed the various notions, like shared parenting and shared domestic work along with the opinions of women for men to know the skills of household management, and some strict patriarchal notions also were found by the research that social obligations purely rest upon women only. Some identical responses, for example, husbands help women in upkeeping the domestic chores, but the findings at the country level were contrary to the findings of the research regarding household help.

The impact of social obligations on the economic agency was partly found and partly found no interlink, this was because of the various observations of women about their own personal situations between their economic success and struggle to settle with the expectations of the family. These obligations, however, never forced women interviewed for this research to take hard decisions yet were preoccupations. In this vein the empowerment of women was not found on behalf of the views of the women, since in one or other way

they were missing the certain aspects of empowerment. Regardless of the incomes, some women were not enjoying the fruits of their employment, it should not be assessed that if social obligations are not being performed then women are empowered, rather it must be noted that if they easily make choice between one of them then they fulfill the aspect of empowerment that mastery over lives. Time management issue, health problem and struggling with overall responsibilities were the problem which were associated with social obligations by the women.

Decision making is an important aspect of empowerment and economic agency. Women were not taking the decisions exclusively, and few were taking property related decisions themselves, those who were heading their families were of course taking the decisions. But those who were not the heads of the household, were although part of the property related decisions but almost all decisions were either the joint or with the consultation of the family members or were the domain of men. Women were taking decisions with respect to spending their incomes to fulfill the needs of the family. Since decision making with respect to spending gives empowerment and help achieve the agency, so women were in this respect empowered.

### References

- [1] Brummelhuis, L. T., & Greenhaus, J. H. (2019, March 21). Research: When Juggling Work and Family, Women Offer More Emotional Support Than Men. Retrieved July 19, 2020, from <https://hbr.org/2019/03/research-when-juggling-work-and-family-women-offer-more-emotional-support-than-men>
- [2] Campbell, D. J., Campbell, K. M., & Kennard, D. (1994). The effects of family responsibilities on the work commitment and job performance of non-professional women. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 67(4), 283–296. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1994.tb00568>.
- [3] Donald, A., Koolwal, G., Annan, J., Falb, K., & Goldstein, M. (2017). Measuring Women's Agency - World Bank. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from <https://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/333481500385677886/pdf/WPS8148.pdf>
- [4] Ellemers, N. (2018). Gender Stereotypes. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 69(1), 275–298. doi:10.1146/annurev-psych-122216-011719

- [5] Everett, J. M., & Charlton, S. E. (2014). Women navigating globalization: Feminist approaches to development (p. 7). Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- [6] Fazal, S., Naz, S., Khan, M. I., & Pedder, D. (2019, June 06). Barriers and enablers of women's academic careers in Pakistan. Retrieved July 19, 2020, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/12259276.2019.1607467>
- [7] Gazdar, H. (2003, June). Gendering Space: Patriarchy and Socioeconomic Stagnation. Retrieved July 19, 2020, from [https://pakvoter.org/related\\_publications/gendering-space-patriarchy-socioeconomic-stagnation/](https://pakvoter.org/related_publications/gendering-space-patriarchy-socioeconomic-stagnation/)
- [8] Government of Pakistan. (2018). Labour Force Survey 2017-18 (Annual Report). Retrieved July 15, 2020, from <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/labour-force-survey-2017-18-annual-report>
- [9] ILO, I. (2014, January 21). Global Employment Trends 2014: The risk of a jobless recovery. Retrieved July 19, 2020, from <http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2014/lang--en/index.htm>. p. 45
- [10] ILO. (2004, June 11). Work and family responsibilities: What are the problems. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from [https://www.ilo.org/moscow/information-resources/publications/WCMS\\_312648/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/moscow/information-resources/publications/WCMS_312648/lang--en/index.htm)
- [11] Kabeer, N. (2008, January 01). Pathways Working Paper 3. Paid Work, Women's Empowerment and Gender Justice: Critical Pathways of Social Change. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from <https://www.gov.uk/dfid-research-outputs/pathways-working-paper-3-paid-work-women-s-empowerment-and-gender-justice-critical-pathways-of-social-change> pp 20-24
- [12] Katz, E. (1997, January 01). The Intra-Household Economics of Voice and Exit. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from <https://ideas.repec.org/a/taf/femeco/v3y1997i3p25-46.html>
- [13] Khan, A. (2007, March 15). WOMEN AND PAID WORK IN PAKISTAN Pathways of Women's ... Retrieved July 12, 2020, from [http://www.researchcollective.org/Documents/Women\\_Paid\\_Work.pdf](http://www.researchcollective.org/Documents/Women_Paid_Work.pdf)
- [14] Klugman, J., Hanmer, L., Twigg, S., Hasan, T., McCleary-Sills, J., & Santamaria, J. (2014). Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/publication/voice-and-agency-empowering-women-and-girls-for-shared-prosperity>
- [15] Lamphere, L. (2009). The Domestic Sphere of Women and the Public World of Men: The Strengths and Limitations of an Anthropological Dichotomy. In C. F. Sargent & C. B. Brettell (Authors), Gender in cross-cultural perspective (5th ed., pp. 90-99). Upper Saddle River, NJ, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- [16] Miller, A. L., & Borgida, E. (2016). The Separate Spheres Model of Gendered Inequality. Plos One, 11(1), 2. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0147315
- [17] Neate, R. (2018, December 18). Global pay gap will take 202 years to close, says World Economic Forum. Retrieved July 19, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/18/global-gender-pay-gap-will-take-202-years-to-close-says-world-economic-forum>
- [18] Nelson, C. (1974). Public and private politics: Women in the Middle Eastern world1. American Ethnologist, 1(3), 551-563. doi:10.1525/ae.1974.1.3.02a00100
- [19] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, O. (2012). GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: FINAL



- REPORT TO THE MCM (p. 17, Rep.). Paris: OECD.
- [20] Problems and Prospects of Women Entrepreneurship in ... (2016). Retrieved July 19, 2020, from <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jbm/papers/Vol18-issue5/Version-2/I1805028995.pdf>
- [21] Punjab Commission on the Status of Women. (2018). Key Findings Report Women's Economic and Social Wellbeing Survey in Punjab 2017-18. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from [https://pcsw.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/Generating\\_Data.pdf](https://pcsw.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/Generating_Data.pdf)
- [22] Razavi, S. (2007). The Political and Social Economy of Care in a Development Context Conceptual Issues, Research Questions and Policy Options. Retrieved July 26, 2020, from [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpAuxPages\)/2DBE6A93350A7783C12573240036D5A0/\\$file/Razavi-paper.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/2DBE6A93350A7783C12573240036D5A0/$file/Razavi-paper.pdf)
- [23] Reddy, N. K., Vranda, M. N., Ahmed, A., Nirmala, B. P., & Siddaramu, B. (2010). Work-Life Balance among Married Women Employees. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 32(2), 112-118. doi:10.4103/0253-7176.78508
- [24] Rosaldo, M. Z. (1974). Women, Culture and Society: A theoretical overview. In L. Lamphere & M. Z. Rosaldo (Authors), *Woman, culture, and society* (pp. 17-43). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- [25] Rotman, D. L. (2006). Separate Spheres? *Current Anthropology*, 47(4), 666-674. doi:10.1086/506286
- [26] Sen, A. K. (1985). *Journal of Philosophy*, Inc. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from <https://philosophy.rutgers.edu/joomlatools-files/docman-files/11AmartyaSen.pdf>
- [27] Sinha, P. (2016). Problems and Prospects of Women Entrepreneurship in ... Retrieved July 14, 2020, from <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jbm/papers/Vol18-issue5/Version-2/I1805028995.pdf>
- [28] Seguino, S. (2007). The great equalizer?: Globalization effects on gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean - Munich Personal RePEc Archive. <https://Mpra.Ub.Uni-Muenchen.de/Id/Eprint/6509>. <https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/6509/>
- [29] UN-Habitat. (2010). Gender and Economic Development - Global Urban Economic Dialogue Series. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from [https://issuu.com/unhabitat/docs/gender\\_and\\_economic\\_development](https://issuu.com/unhabitat/docs/gender_and_economic_development)
- [30] World Bank. (2012, January 01). *World Development Report 2012*. Retrieved July 19, 2020, from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4391> p.5
- [31] Zaidi, Y., & Farooq, S. et. al. (2016). *Women's Economic Participation and Empowerment in Pakistan - Status Report 2016* (pp. 53-54, Rep.). Islamabad: UN Women Pakistan.