



## Woman in Development and Politics

### Analyzing the Barriers to Women's Economic Participation in Yazd Province (A Qualitative Study)

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2. Ph.D. Holder, Department of Rural Development Management, Faculty of Agriculture, Yasouj University, Yasouj, Iran. E-mail: [zeinabsharifi@gmail.com](mailto:zeinabsharifi@gmail.com)
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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article type:</b> Research Article</p> <p><b>Article history:</b> Received: 3 August 2023 Received in revised form: 2 October 2023 Accepted: 22 October 2023 Published online: 20 March 2024</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Female Unemployment Rate, Paradigm Model, Qualitative Research, Yazd Province.</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b> Nowadays, based on most development theorists' view point, the human factor has an effective role in directing the flow of development. Therefore, considering this factor is an important goal in economic and social policy makings. In terms of the human factor, women's role as half of the society's population is of paramount importance to be taken into account. Furthermore, economic development is unattainable without the participation of women in the workforce. One of the ways to increase the gross national income is by expanding women's economic activities in the society. Socially, women's employment has also a clear role in promoting their identity. Nevertheless, women encounter challenges and obstacles in their pursuit of economic participation. These barriers are partly structural and attitudinal. Women are facing glass ceiling which means that there are dominant gender stereotypes in terms of attitude towards them. The Statistical Center of Iran reports that female economic participation rate is 13.3% in Iran. In contrast, women comprise nearly 50% of the economically active population in a number of developed nations. In other words, the female economic participation rate in a developing country such as Iran is significantly lower than this rate in developed countries. In addition, the most recent statistics indicate that the female unemployment rate in the province of Yazd (31.6%) is significantly higher than this rate in the whole country (16.0%). In this regard, Yazd province has the second highest female unemployment rate. To put it in other words, a large population of women in Yazd province are seeking as well as interested in employment. Nonetheless, they are not engaged in economic activity. Due to the significance of women's economic participation in development, on the one hand, and the high female unemployment rate in Yazd province, on the other hand, the barriers to women's economic participation in this province needed be scrutinized through a deep and qualitative research. Hence, the objective of this study was to examine the obstacles that impede the economic involvement of women in the province of Yazd.</p> <p><b>Methodology</b> In this investigation, qualitative research methods were implemented. The investigation focused on a specific demographic comprising Yazd province students and graduates, human resources managers, business elites and entrepreneurs, employers, specialists, and human resources experts, in addition to senior and executive managers. Sampling was conducted purposefully and continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Accordingly, 45 interviews were conducted. Instruments for data collection included interviews, observations, data recordings, and audio and video recordings. The interviewee was queried regarding the obstacles that impede the economic participation of women in the province of Yazd. To ensure the accuracy and dependability of the data, the researcher collected information through a variety of means, including document reviews, interviews, video and photo recordings, and audio recordings. Data collection and analysis were done simultaneously. After conducting the interviews, the recorded interviews were heard several times by the researcher, notes were taken and the main concepts were extracted. Three forms of coding were utilized in the data analysis process including open coding, axial coding and selective coding. In open coding, the exact sentences of the interviewee were applied, and the data were broken into their smallest units. In axial coding, the extracted concepts were connected in a network. In the selective coding, the previously coded sentences were combined again in order to comprehend the relationship between them which was illustrated in a figure.</p> <p><b>Results</b> The results of analyzing 45 interviews showed that in the first step, 19 main concepts were</p>

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extracted in open coding including “ignoring the women’s abilities,” “limiting women’s economic participation,” “limiting women to housework and childbearing duties,” “the existence of wrong culture regarding the women’s employment,” “the existence of negative attitude towards women’s employment,” “traditional and reductionist attitude towards women,” “the existence of a traditional view of women’s employment,” “gender attitudes in employment,” “successful global experience of women's economic activity,” “women’s employment only for the purpose of exploiting,” “lack of equal gender opportunities for employment,” “ignoring women’s rights in economic fields,” “the low level of women’s employment in managerial and administrative fields,” “the low level of women’s economic participation,” “women’s conditional employment,” “modernity in child rearing,” “attitudinal changes caused by being in society,” “conflict between social and family roles,” “failure to develop self-confidence and independence in women.” During the second phase, axial coding was performed on a set of nineteen concepts (open coding). From this set, three subcategories were identified including “the attitude towards the role of women in the business environment,” “the exploitation of women’s labor force”, “the individual, family, and cultural effects of women’s employment.” The discourse concluded with a depiction of the paradigm model, which comprised causal conditions, contextual conditions, consequences, intervening conditions, and strategies.

#### **Conclusion**

Based on the presented paradigm model of the barriers to women's economic participation in the province of Yazd, the causal conditions included “the low level of women’s employment in managerial and administrative fields,” “ignoring women’s rights in economic fields,” “gender attitudes in employment,” “limiting women to housework and childbearing duties,” “ignoring the women’s abilities”. These causes have had consequences such as “the existence of negative attitude towards women’s employment,” “the low level of women’s economic participation,” “modernity in child rearing,” “conflict between social and family roles”. The contextual conditions which played a role in the emergence of these consequences included “the existence of wrong culture regarding the women’s employment,” “traditional and reductionist attitude towards women,” “lack of equal gender opportunities for employment.” Finally, strategies were “attitudinal changes caused by being in society,” “developing self-confidence and independence in women.” It was suggested, based on the findings, that mass media should be utilized to promote and foster a favorable perception of women’s economic enrollment and employment. Additionally, it is recommended that lawmakers amend laws to eradicate gender discrimination in compensation and benefits to the greatest extent feasible. Furthermore, since individual, family and cultural barriers have been among the barriers to women's economic participation, it is suggested that women's empowerment programs be held in order to increase self-confidence and independence in their various gatherings such as cultural centers, mosques, etc.

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