

The relationship between Women's Empowerment and HDI in Islamic countries

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Abstract

The experience of the developed countries in development process shows that the women's participation is a crucial element of the economic development components. "Women's empowerment approach" is one of the most important theories among the theories proposed in recent years both theoretically and empirically. According to this approach, women's share of parliamentary seats is one of the most important indicators for measuring Women's Empowerment. This study examines the effect of the women's share of parliamentary seats on human development index (HDI) in the selected members of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries by using the panel data method during the period 1999-2008. The results indicate a significant positive effect of women's share of parliamentary seats on HDI in these countries.

Keywords: Women's Empowerment, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries, panel data, HDI.

JEL classification: O10, O15

1. Introduction

Nowadays, development is the most crucial subject which its concept is being verified as a result of increasing progress in human sciences. In last decades, there were deep changes in development definition and meaning. Before 1970, economic development had been evaluated in terms of per capita income by considering this presumption that by increase in the per capita income the people's economic situation would be improved by such index. So in development definition economic growth was considered as a basic element. The main deficient of this approach is ignoring the concept of justice in people opportunities for a good life. Mere attention to the income in terms of personal and social ignores different elements result in different people opportunities. Also it assumes that income led to welfare.

Inadequacy of per capita index and economic growth in determination of welfare causes some attentions to social elements in development analysis by economists such as Human Development Index (HDI). HDI introduced by Amartya Sen the winner of Nobel Prize in year 1998 and pakistani economist Mahbubul Haq and is using by UNDP in human development reports.

The concept of human development is a general view point to the better life which emphasizes on attention to the talent aside of materials and services consumption. Since year 1990 United Nations organization is publishing the report of human development which is focused on broader aspects of development. HDI not only gives the index for measurement of welfare but also it measures the economic effects on life quality. This index classifies the country in terms of people life quality but not merely in terms of traditional figures of per capita income. Human development index is constructed from three elements:

- 1-life time and healthy (this is measured by the life expectancy)
- 2-education (this is measured by enrollment in primary and high education)

3-having a standard level for life (this is measured by purchasing power parity)

Gender empowerment measure that is emphasized on women empowerment is another index for human development. This index is calculated since 1996 as well as human development index by United Nations organization.

Empowerment is a process in which women become aware of their needs and also their internal desires. This character enables them to reach their desire. The aim of this paper is exploring the effect of women capability on human development in selected Islamic countries. One of the important characteristic of women capability is the percent of chair which is occupied in parliament by women. So in this study presumption is that an increase in occupied seat by women in parliament indicates an increase in human development.

This paper is organized as below: in section 2 theoretical frameworks of the research and also literature review is considered. Then, in section 3 research method will be introduced. In final section conclusion is presented.

2. Literature review

Human society includes men and women. Women are about 50% of human society population. If human role is accepted as the base of human development, logically, we should accept woman's role as a half of human population in development. Nowadays, ignorance of sexual inequality is an important development discussion. Women role is important and women role is crucial in development process. The experience of developed countries and also some developing countries in Islamic world show that the development in Islamic country cannot be done without broad corporation of women in development process or at least without women it is not possible to facilitate the development process. The start point of considering the subject of women and development is respect to the equality of woman and man in United Nations principle in 1945. Indication of women role in development in 1950 and 1960 decades affected human role problem in last 25 years. Women, by attendance in programming and decision making level, show that they have important role in development programs. In year 1975, it was held a conference in Mexico City which named "equity, development and peace". In this conference 1975-1985 decade was called woman decade. (Okeke, 1995)

Most current definitions of empowerment in the development literature draw upon

Amartya Sen's articulation of "Development as Freedom" (1999) where development is about expanding people's choices. For example Bennett (2002) defines empowerment as "the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them. Sen (1993) defines empowerment as "altering relations of power...which constrain women's options and autonomy and adversely affect health and well-being."

Moser (1989) names five approaches for women and development relationship. He mentions that they should be considered as a special and undependable approach. Actually most of these approaches appear simultaneously. These approaches are as follows: 1-welfare approach 2- justice approach 3- anti poverty approach 4- effectiveness approach 5- empowerment approach. Now these approaches will be explained briefly.

1- Welfare approach: this approach is rooted from 1950 decade that first attempts for international development were started. The main aim for this approach was supporting housekeeper women. This approach was based upon this presumption that women are inactive in development process. In this pattern women role is determined as a wife and a mother as the most important social role for women.

2- Justice approach: this approach got started in middle of the 1970s. In here emphasize was on the distinguishing women economic role. Its aim is allocating equal opportunity for women in whole affairs of the life. Based upon this approach, development will fail without considering the women non-home activities.

3- Anti poverty approach: this approach indicates this fact that inequality between women and men has a relationship with poverty. It means that cultural, social, economic and political inequality between men and women causes poverty in women group.

4- Effectiveness approach: in this approach, emphasize on women role is replaced with emphasize on development, by rely on this assumption that an increase in women corporation causes an increase in equality.

5- Empowerment approach: this approach is based upon people organization experiment, which is accompanied with women feminist trends to access their developed world. Based upon this approach, empowerment means an increase in women capability to increase their confidence, in order to considering problem, development and verification.

Although there is different views in development and women discussion in theoretical framework, but it is appear that in empowerment theory what is considered is that an increase in women strength and attempts not to recognize power as a value. It considers women power in order to increase their internal power, and somehow this theory wants to verify women effectively which transfers women to an independence and capable player. Women empowerment follows being useful for major of society and also being useful to use human source potentials in development.

From several definitions for empowerment, in its related literature, it is referred to several meaning for this concept such as choice right, having control and access to resources, independent feeling and confidence. For example Keller and Mbwewe (1991), define women empowerment as a process through it women become capable for self organization and they can increase the confidence, also they can defend their right for undependable choice and resource control. Ugbomeh (2001) is one of the people who support women to access to resource and control their life. He believes to this idea versus independence emotion and confidence for women empowerment. According to Cook (1997), empowerment has to do with power which operates at various levels – within a person, between people and between groups. Correspondingly, it is possible to speak about empowering an individual in the absolute sense in which the person becomes more able to direct his or her own life and succeed in whatever such a person attempts. Secondly, it is possible to speak in terms of empowering a person relative to other specific people; and finally, it is possible to empower a group relative to other groups. Essentially therefore, women empowerment is a political process whose ultimate goal is not just to change hierarchical gender relations but also to change all hierarchical relations in the society.

As discussed, empowerment theories appear based upon the feminists publications and third world countries challenges. These theories want to empower women not in meaning of one being better than others, but it means increase in their power to be undependable. All mentioned approaches in above try to remove inequality in society, provision of woman elementary needs, division of affairs in family between men and women, the possibility to use the abilities and removing the ruler inequality between men and women.

Feminists believe that women should have the same rights as men in education and politics. Women should go to the legislation parliament; they should attend in political affaire and so on. (Valeria 1999)

In year 1996 gender empowerment index emphasizes on women empowerment in addition to human development index which is considered by UNDP. This index is calculated by considering characteristics such as the Percentage of seats occupied by women in national parliament, the percent of women manger, the rate of the wage of women to men. In year 2010 gender empowerment index was removed from human development reports and is replaced with gender inequality. In this index there is also the Percentage of seats occupied by women in national parliament as a measure.

In Islamic countries women role and the Percentage of seats occupied by women in national parliament is hardly investigated. So, the essence of exploring women empowerment and the effectiveness of this index on Islamic country development is crucial.

Pishgam Fard (2010) in a paper entitled " A Study of Future Status of Seats in Parliament held by Iranian Women in Comparison with Middle East Countries in 2025" indicates one of the development elements of countries is gender development and also one of the gender development indexes is the Percentage of seats occupied by women in national parliament. This research explores gender indexes in Middle East countries and determination of their role in any county.

Signal (2003) in a paper entitled "Woman, Gender and Development: The Evolution of Theories and Practice" indicates to women, gender and cooperation as crucial subjects in development. He believes that nowadays in developing societies women are considered as the development core. This research explores problem and challenges in developing countries in this regards.

Jayaweera (2010) in a paper entitled "Women, Education and Empowerment in Asia" studies education. In this study, she explains that education is a social index for women and it is an element for their empowerment. This research indicates relationship between education and different ways for women empowerment in Asian countries. The results show that there is not any positive direct relationship between education and economic, social and political empowerment.

Duflo (2011) in a paper entitled "Women's Empowerment and economic development" indicates that women empowerment and economic development have a direct relationship. Results show that there is a weak internal relationship between these two elements. In other words development can't decrease inequality between men and women empowerment and complementary politics should be done in order to make women empowerment in the societies.

3. Research method

In this paper we use a model for exploring the relationship between the Percentage of seats occupied by women in national parliament as an index for women empowerment and human development in selected Islamic countries.

All the date which are used in this research are collected from World Bank and UNDP publication and reports over the time period 1999- 2008. We choose countries in this research according to their harmony in history, culture, society and religion. The sample includes Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, and Uzbekistan. The model for applying in this study is as follows;

$$\text{HDI} = f(\text{Pshw}, \text{Mi}, \text{Sep}) \quad (1)$$

Where;

HDI is Human Development Index

Pshw is Percentage of seats occupied by women in national parliament

Mi is Mortality rate of children under seven years

Sep is Percent gross enrollment in primary school level

To estimate model coefficients, panel data approach is applied. According to results which are presented in the appendix table (table 2) we need to apply fixed effect method to estimate the model.

By applying pooled Least Squares method, the results are as shown in table (1).

Table (1): Model Coefficients Estimate

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.437863	0.023107	18.94966	0.0000
MI	-0.001279	0.000184	-6.944404	0.0000
PSHW	0.001441	0.000274	5.255976	0.0000
SEP	0.001638	0.000179	9.155229	0.0000
Cross-section fixed (dummy variables)				
R-squared	0.996107	Mean dependent var	0.527116	
Adjusted R-squared	0.995606	S.D. dependent var	0.178062	
S.E. of regression	0.011803	Akaike info criterion	-5.929219	
Sum squared resid	0.019503	Schwarz criterion	-5.562494	
Log likelihood	490.3729	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-5.780296	
F-statistic	1990.029	Durbin-Watson stat	0.568450	
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: research calculation

As results in table (1) show, all coefficients have expected sign and their variable have an expected effect on depended variable in the model. Mortality rate of children effect on human development is negative and significant. Percentage of seats occupied by women in national parliament and Percent gross enrollment in primary school level is positive and significant. Also R-squared is 0.99% and it shows high model estimation goodness. So, women empowerment which appears in Percentage of seats occupied by women in national parliament has a positive and significant relationship with human development.

4. Conclusion

The most of theories in human development emphasizes on women empowerment. Percentage of seats occupied by women in national parliament is one of the indexes for measuring of women empowerment. So in this study, we use regression model to explore the effect of this variable on human development. Also, as human development index is affected by important variables such as education and health elements, we use the Percent gross enrollment in primary school level and Mortality rate of children as control variables. Estimated model indicates that the seats occupied by women in national parliament have a positive and significant effect of human development index in Islamic countries.

The point is in spite of positive and significant effect of seats occupied by women in national parliament on human development, this index is low in Islamic countries in comparison with development countries.

So, to increase HDI in Islamic countries increase in Percentage of seats occupied by women in national parliament is recommended.

In addition there are some other ways to increase other women empowerment indexes in these countries such as: Affirmative action, political parties' workshop for helping women to educate as candidates, increase in women cooperation to rebuild relationship and move toward refinement in political activity.

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Appendix

Table (1): Model Coefficients Estimate

Dependent Variable: HDI?

Method: Pooled Least Squares

Date: 02/04/12 Time: 19:52

Sample: 1999 2008

Included observations: 10

Cross-sections included: 16

Total pool (unbalanced) observations: 159

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.437863	0.023107	18.94966	0.0000
MI?	-0.001279	0.000184	-6.944404	0.0000
PSHW?	0.001441	0.000274	5.255976	0.0000
SEP?	0.001638	0.000179	9.155229	0.0000
Fixed Effects (Cross)				
_BFA--C	-0.093982			
_CMR--C	-0.030995			
_TCD--C	-0.097315			
_IRN--C	0.134639			
_KAZ--C	0.136456			
_KWT--C	0.238124			
_KGZ--C	0.052846			
_MLI--C	-0.158496			
_NER--C	-0.140026			
_SEN--C	-0.105867			
_TJK--C	0.034137			
_TGO--C	-0.104455			
_TUN--C	0.076621			
_TUR--C	0.148928			
_UGA--C	-0.153772			
_UZB--C	0.052710			
Effects Specification				
Cross-section fixed (dummy variables)				
R-squared	0.996107	Mean dependent var	0.527116	
Adjusted R-squared	0.995606	S.D. dependent var	0.178062	
S.E. of regression	0.011803	Akaike info criterion	-5.929219	
Sum squared resid	0.019503	Schwarz criterion	-5.562494	
Log likelihood	490.3729	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-5.780296	
F-statistic	1990.029	Durbin-Watson stat	0.568450	
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Table (2): Hausman specification test

Correlated Random Effects - Hausman Test

Pool: W3

Test cross-section random effects

Test Summary	Chi-Sq. Statistic	Chi-Sq. d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section random	59.443601	3	0.0000

Cross-section random effects test comparisons:

Variable	Fixed	Random	Var(Diff.)	Prob.
MI?	-0.001279	-0.001781	0.000000	0.0000
PSHW?	0.001441	0.000945	0.000000	0.0000
SEP?	0.001638	0.001677	0.000000	0.3903

Cross-section random effects test equation:

Dependent Variable: HDI?

Method: Panel Least Squares

Date: 02/04/12 Time: 20:11

Sample: 1999 2008

Included observations: 10

Cross-sections included: 16

Total pool (unbalanced) observations: 159

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.437863	0.023107	18.94966	0.0000
MI	-0.001279	0.000184	-6.944404	0.0000
PSHW	0.001441	0.000274	5.255976	0.0000
SEP	0.001638	0.000179	9.155229	0.0000

Effects Specification

Cross-section fixed (dummy variables)

R-squared	0.996107	Mean dependent var	0.527116
Adjusted R-squared	0.995606	S.D. dependent var	0.178062
S.E. of regression	0.011803	Akaike info criterion	-5.929219
Sum squared resid	0.019503	Schwarz criterion	-5.562494
Log likelihood	490.3729	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-5.780296
F-statistic	1990.029	Durbin-Watson stat	0.568450
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000		