Evaluation effective factors of empowerment of women - headed households covered by Behzisti organization

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ABSTRACT

This research studies effective factors on women-headed households in Astara as a completely heterogeneous group that, their bargaining ability and also their situation is different due to the different economical, social and cultural conditions. Theoretical framework of this research is based on the new poverty paradigm that considers factors like gender and then deprivation of sources and support theory that emphasizes the head of household women's deprivation. This research has been done in a survey method and its statistic population, are head of household women in the city that there are 230 subjects and 140 subjects were determined according to Morgan table and were selected simply and in random. Data gathering tool was researcher’s questionnaire with a >0.70 reliability. The data were analyzed in two descriptive and inferential levels. To study the topic, hypothesis in subject domain of “vocational training, government support, financial status and employment status were analyzed; then to test the hypothesis, survey method was used. Results show that -based on analysis- vocational training at the level of (1.0), government support, employment status, financial status at the level of (0001.0) influence the social- economical status of head of household women who are under support.

KEY WORDS: Empowerment, head of household women, government support, vocational training, financial status, employment status.

INTRODUCTION

Women’s empowerment not only has the economical dimension but also it has political, social and psychic dimensions. So, women’s empowerment needs more comprehensive and profound care; as Scapp(2003) emphasizes, it needs removing barriers and a revolution and change in all of institutions that prevent women from empowerment. And also because the women don’t form any homogenous group, so, they don’t belong to the same group and their underlying characteristics and agency play effective role in their empowerment process. (Shakouri et.al, 1386) education, employment and culture have important role in women’s empowerment.

Empowerment and competency are the most important factors in finding job opportunities and effective partnership in economical and social development and decent work.

Statement of purpose:

Empowerment is defined as a necessary affair to empower low-income people to gain their rights by access and control on natural resources of existing and modified organizations. In other words, empowerment is a motivational factor that will be increased by self-efficiency sense. In Iranian families, men are usually head of household but under some conditions, this responsibility is assigned to the women. According to welfare organization, women who are head of household are widowers, divorced, addicted men’s wife, immigrant men’s wife, and those women who their husbands are in military service, self-warden girls, disabled men’s wife and elder women. (Bakhtiari, 1386)

The number of house-hold women has ascending trend because of increase in divorce, social crime, number of prisoners, addiction and immigration of the head of household rate. Most of sociologists believe that the most
deprived group among women, are head of household women. As sociologist and university professor, Nahid Motti says, most of women who are head of household because of some reasons like immigration, imprisonment or disablement of their husbands, may refuse to introduce themselves as the head of household. In other words, cultural issues and social traditions make them refuse to introduce themselves as the head of household though managing the family. (Hashemi, 1384)

Because of physical, psychic and economical lack of husband in different forms and because of lack of financial support and shortage of social investment to find a suitable solution for the problem, these women, are exposed to serious behavioral, social and moral damage. (Teimouri, 1385)

Policies should be adopted to solve these women’s problems in deserving way. But, what has been overlooked in these years, are these problems that recognizing them and providing proper solutions to them is one of main responsibilities of the government, institutions and social service organizations in any country. Economical, population and social variables are all studied separately by interview about household women who are under welfare organization cover in Gilan province and then their influence on women’s empowerment has been specified by a researcher-made questionnaire.

Necessity of research:
Evaluating head of household women’s social and economical status is worth considering theoretically and practically and results in sociological cognition dimension and also by knowing its effective variables, this class can be used for policy making and investment; and also can empower them by their need to support cover. In this way, considering subsidy reform plan and sensitivity of the society after this plan, and since the amount of money is equal to all people in the society in any class, there is no difference in their social condition and also they stay in their previous condition. Because of importance of family and the role of head of household in meeting family member’s needs in one hand and existing of sexism on the other hand, legal restrictions and inequality in most of social and economical issues for women in most of societies like our society and also studying economical and social condition of head of household women compared to mean, this research is necessary. This necessity is more obvious in this dimension that, the above mentioned characteristics can influence in ability and facilities in meeting family member’s needs. Generally speaking, studying families like this, as vulnerable communities can be regarded as a means to recognize and help to introduce the most vulnerable family style of the society. Hence, the Women headed families are regarded as the poorest families in most of the countries. Records show that studies done in this field are about minor aspect of life conditions for a group of women headed families, and their social, economical and affective dimensions or about studying the role of responsible organization support in vulnerable group and the shortages in this field and also, there is no global vision about social and economical condition of this group. So, detailed and scientific study of this group is needed.

General purpose:
The general purpose is studying the effective factors on head of household women's empowerment under welfare organization cover in Gilan province (Case study: Astara city)

Special purposes:
1- Studying vocational training effect on head of household women's empowerment under welfare organization cover.
2- Studying governmental support effect on head of household women's empowerment under welfare organization cover.
3- Studying employment statue effect on head of household women's empowerment under welfare organization cover.
4- Studying financial statue effect on head of household women's empowerment under welfare organization cover.

Research hypothesis:
1-there is a meaningful relationship between vocational training and head of household women's empowerment under welfare organization cover
2-there is a meaningful relationship between governmental support and head of household women's empowerment under welfare organization cover
3-there is a meaningful relationship between financial statues and head of household women's empowerment under welfare organization cover
4-there is a meaningful relationship between employment statues and head of household women's empowerment under welfare organization cover.
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Head of household women:
Head of household women include widowers, divorced women (those who live alone after divorce or those who live in their parents’ house, but earn themselves), addicted men’s wife, prisoner men’s wife, unemployed men’s wife, immigrant men’s wife, those who their husbands are at the military service, self-ward women, (alone elder women), self-ward girls (who have never married) and disabled and elder men’s wives.

According to above mentioned definitions, head of household women are divided into three groups:
First group: families that the household isn’t present permanently; including widowers, divorced women and unmarried adult girls.
Second group: families that the husband isn’t present temporarily; including the husband’s immigration, imprisonment, soldiering and escaping.
Third group: families that the husband is present but because of some reasons the wife plays management and economical role; including man’s illness, disability, addiction and aging.

Head of household women are those who are head of house without an adult man’s regular presence and support and are responsible for economical, social and educative management of the family and support their family and decide for it.

Women’s empowerment:
To define empowerment, theoretical issues of choice right, controlling and access to the sources, independence sense and more self-confidence have been mentioned. Keller and Mb we (1991) define women’s empowerment as a process that the women will be empowered to organize themselves and increase their self-confidence and advocate their rights to have independent choice and control their resources that helps them not to be regarded as abject. ( Malhatra, 2002). Women’s empowerment means gaining thinking power and free commitment, developing self-esteem sense, belief in creating suitable changes, ability in ourselves, choice right, own life control right, bargaining power, actualizing women’s all potential and equality in society. Generally speaking, women’s empowerment and their control on their lives can be seen in any process and activity. (Gholipour et.al, 1387). Forrest defines empowerment as challenging traditional relations of power between man and women and women’s empowerment and their control on their lives can be seen in any process and activity. (Barbee et.al, 1991, Counter,1997). He considers empowerment as giving power to those who are present in inefficient points of organization. He imagines the
power in a continuum that in its one end, are those without power and in the other end are powerful people. Empowerment is related to confidence, motivation, decision making and especially breaking internal borders between management and women. Empowerment matches to serious organizational forms like network structure.

Capability includes three common elements or issues in definition and concept. The first element is resource that includes variables like education and employment and as Kabir (2002) says, it accelerates empowerment. The second element is agency. Women’s agency means that we shouldn’t consider women as service receivers, but the women themselves should be considered as the main role players change process, especially in codifying important choices of the life and in control on the sources and decisions that have important influence in their life. This element shows the importance of discourse from down to top into a trend from top to down. The third elements are achievements and outcomes that are made because of empowerment influence.

Achievement can include meeting basic needs to complicated achievements like being satisfied, having self-esteem, cooperation in social, political and... life. (Sen, 1379). According to definitions and elements of women’s empowerment, basically, empowerment is considered as a process; it means that it identifies the process of a situation (inequality of gender) to the other situation (equality of gender) (Malhatra, 2002:7). This process begins from individual level (mental sense and concrete power to do works) and includes social (power to cooperate in group activities), political (control on political decisions), economical (control power on economical decisions) and institutional (challenging current unequal institutions and structures) levels. (Shakouri et.al, 1386)

Research method:
Considering the purpose point of view, this research is practical and according to data collecting, it is descriptive and survey. This research is practical because its conclusions are used in welfare and other related organizations. It is descriptive because research variables are studied according to current conditions.

Statistic sampling and population:
The statistic population of present research includes head of household women in Astara. Random class selection was used in this research. It means that statistic population of head of households is classified based on education level, experience and duration of house holding and also groups have been selected simply and randomly. According to the kind of participants, this research was classified and according to selecting the final individuals to answer the research questions, it was simple random. Morgan table was used to calculate the sample size. Morgan table is one of the most used tools to include statistic sample size. Our statistic populations are 230 subjects that according to Morgan table, statistic samples are 140 subjects.

Data collecting tools:
According to research hypothesis and variables, the researcher-made questionnaire has been used. This questionnaire has 2 parts and 27 questions that its first part is about demography of the research topic and includes 7 questions. The second part includes 20 questions based on Likert scale.

Reliability and validity:
To increase validity of this research, the questionnaire was designed after study and necessary consideration and with consultation to supervisor or consultant professors and experts. After designing the questionnaire, 30 subjects were given a pre-test and finally after receiving head of household women and experts’ reform theory, the final questionnaire was designed and given to the head of household women to gather data. Reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach’s alpha method. Coefficient of Cronbach’s alpha was 0.879 for vocational training, 0.713 for government support, 0.770 for employment status and 0.896 for financial status.

Methods of data analyzing:
To calculate the data, they were gathered by questionnaire and after codifying and scoring, were described and analyzed by Spss software. All variables related to head of household women including vocational training, government support, employment status and financial status, were calculated and their histogram tables were drawn. Then the mean and standard deviation of the relation of all of the variables in head of household women’s empowerment were tested by parametric test methods (Pearson’s correlation significant).

Discussion and conclusion of descriptive and inferential statistics:
In conclusion part of research descriptive statistic, interpretations of results of questionnaire analysis and cases like women’s age, education, marital status, number of people under their wardship, duration of welfare cover, number of children and reasons of welfare organization cover, all are interpreted and concluded.
18 women were under the age of 30 years, 47 women were 31-40 years old and 40 head of household women under welfare organization cover were 50 years old and up. 68 subjects in statistic sample of this research were single and 68 subjects were married and 4 subjects were divorced women. 34 head of household women were those who graduated high school and 2 head of household women were bachelors and 2 head of household women had master’s degree. 117 women were less than 2 people’s warden, 16 women were less than 3 people’s warden, 5 women were less than 4 people’s warden and 2 women were less than 5 people’s warden.

The first hypothesis states that: there is a meaningful relationship between “vocational training” and “empowerment” for women who are under welfare organization cover.

Due to this fact that sig (significant) equals 0.000 and is less than 0.05, so, there is meaningful relationship between “vocational training” and “empowerment”. It means that the first research hypothesis is proved.

This hypothesis matches the studies of researchers like Shaditalab, Gerayinejad (1383) who have done researches about head of household women’s poverty.

The second hypothesis states that: there is a meaningful relationship between “government support” and head of household women’s “empowerment” under the welfare organization cover. Due to this fact that sig (significant) equals 0.000 and is less than 0.05, so, : there is a meaningful relationship between “government support” and “empowerment” of head of household women under welfare cover. So, the second hypothesis is proved.

This research matches researchers’ works like Leroy (2004) who has researches about insurance support and social insurance services of head of household women.

The third hypothesis of research is: there is a meaningful relationship between “employment status” and “empowerment” of women under welfare cover.

Due to this fact that sig (significant) equals 0.000 and id less than 0.05, so, there is a meaningful relationship between “employment status” and “empowerment” of women who are under welfare organization cover. It means that, the third research hypothesis is proved.

This hypothesis matches researcher’s works like Nazok Tabar and Veisi (1387) who studied about social, cultural and educational status of head of households.

The fourth hypothesis of research is: there is a meaningful relationship between “financial status” and “empowerment” of head of household women under welfare organization cover.

Due to this fact that sig (significant) equals 0.000 and is less than 0.05. so, there is a meaningful relation between “financial status” and “empowerment” of women under welfare organization cover. So, the fourth hypothesis is proved.

This hypothesis matches the researcher’s works like Nazok Tabar and Veisi (1387) who studied about social, cultural and educational status of head of household women.

Suggestions:
- Women are one half of population of the society and are able to be one half of human labor. So, they must help women by involving them in social and economical development and gaining needed social status and suitable position.
- Economical problems, cultural poverty, husbands’ addiction and divorces are cases that make groups of women face so many problems as social pathology, so, we must try to root out these problems to have a safe society.
- Building cooperative workshops and creating cooperative occupations can help head of household women to meet their needs.
- The government should let head of household women use social insurance service.
- The government should provide head of household women with educational facilities.
- Head of household women are the most portions of poor people in the country and because of concerning statistic, there should be deeper revision in their subsistence. We know that, the most serious problems of these women are their job and housing. So, officials should pay more attention to them.

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