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Understanding women’s empowerment: the role of husbands

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Throughout history and across nations still today, men on average are superior to women in terms of power. Especially in developing nations patriarchy and gender inequality are still prevalent.

Empowering women is seen as important step to accelerate economic development and as one of the central issues in the process of sustainable development for many nations worldwide.

This research defines women’s empowerment and investigates the relation between different components.

Women’s empowerment

“The expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437)

Women’s empowerment entails a process from being un-empowered to becoming empowered.

Personal empowerment

Relational empowerment

Societal empowerment

Personal beliefs and actions

Beliefs and actions in relation to identifiable others

Outcomes on the broader societal level

Figure 1. Women Empowerment Model

Personal & Relational empowerment

Economic development alone cannot result in the development of women’s empowerment.

To achieve change towards more equality, both parties of the relationship need to be involved.

The pathways through which the process of women’s empowerment occurs it shaped by specific contexts and strongly influenced by laws, social norms and cultural practices.

People in collectivistic societies give meaning to their identity through relationships with others.

Personal Belief: “I am able to do things as well as most other people”

Relational Belief: “My spouse physically assault you in the last six months?”

Conclusion

• To understand women’s empowerment it is important to differentiate between personal, relational, and societal levels.

• Relational dynamics are crucial in the development of women’s empowerment.

References:


