



## A Qualitative Meta-Analysis of Factors Influencing the Empowerment of Rural Women

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### Abstract

**Purpose-** Empowering women is essential for the development of any country across economic, social, political, and other dimensions. When a woman is empowered, she gains the opportunity to better understand and advocate for her rights, thereby enhancing her economic and social standing. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to identify and examine the most significant factors influencing the empowerment of rural women and to classify these factors based on their relative importance using a qualitative meta-analysis approach.

**Design/methodology/approach-** In this study, from a total of 73 published articles on the topic of rural women's empowerment, 48 relevant articles were selected based on their alignment with the research objectives and their use of fieldwork and literature-based methodologies. The timeframe for the domestic studies ranged from 2012 to and for international studies from 2011 to 2024. Initially, the research problem and objectives were defined, and then, among the available studies, those meeting the inclusion criteria were sampled. The data extracted from these studies were then collected, coded, and categorized based on the research aims. Ultimately, the findings were standardized to a common scale to allow for comparison. The geographical scope of the selected studies included Iran, as well as countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

**Findings-** The results indicate that in the economic domain, income generation (17.1%), employment (13.8%), access to loans and banking facilities, and land ownership (9.2%) are among the most influential factors. In the socio-cultural domain, factors such as literacy and education (8.5%), cultural norms (7.6%), and knowledge and skills (6.7%) play a critical role. In the psychological domain, self-confidence (14.4%), the ability to make independent choices (9.8%), and self-esteem (8.5%) were key determinants. Politically, mobility freedom (26.1%), women's participation in managerial and governmental positions (19.1%), and restrictive governmental regulations (14.2%) were the most significant. Among these categories, political factors accounted for the largest share (12.4%), followed by economic (5.5%), psychological (3.5%), and socio-cultural (3.2%) factors in contributing to the overall empowerment of women.

**Originality / Value-** The findings of this study can contribute to identifying the most critical factors affecting the empowerment of rural women and can inform the development of effective support policies. Such policies may include promoting gender awareness through mass media, forming rural self-help groups through governmental and non-governmental organizations to provide social and economic support and etc.

**Keywords:** Empowerment, Rural women, Indicators, Qualitative Meta-Analysis.

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## 1. Introduction

According to international reports, rural women in developing countries face unfavorable conditions across various indicators such as poverty, literacy, employment, and access to resources and job opportunities. Therefore, strategies aimed at creating diverse opportunities for these women—as half of the population and human capital—through their engagement in different sectors, can contribute to their empowerment and, ultimately, to community development (Ahmadi & Fakour, 2019). Today, women's empowerment has become a higher priority in the global development agenda and is strongly linked to multiple development outcomes. Achieving gender equality and empowering women is the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which is set to be realized by 2030 (Soharwardi & Ahmad, 2020). Women's empowerment has emerged as a focal point in the programs and activities of the United Nations and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. Consequently, it has also become a major concern for social scientists, policymakers, bureaucrats, and researchers. However, there is no consensus among scholars on the exact definition of the term “empowerment.” Different academics have attempted to define the concept from their own perspectives. The term “empowerment” carries diverse meanings across socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts. Exploring local interpretations of empowerment across the globe reveals a wide range of definitions. These definitions often encompass concepts such as power, self-control, self-reliance, personal choice, the ability to fight for one's rights, independence, decision-making power, and freedom. Such definitions are deeply embedded in local value systems and belief structures. One of the most common interpretations of empowerment refers to increasing the power of disadvantaged groups to a level that becomes comparable to that of dominant groups (Mandal, 2013).

The empowerment of women is a dynamic and multidimensional process that enables women to gain control over their lives and strengthens their agency (Mazaheri et al., 2015). It improves women's quality of life and enhances their ability to participate in decision-making processes across social, cultural, and economic dimensions, contributing to their present and future well-being

(Falahati et al., 2020). In developing countries, women constitute a significant portion of the rural population and assume diverse roles and responsibilities. Rural women are active both within the household and in outdoor activities such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, and handicrafts (Noori & Alimohammadi, 2009, cited in Mamsen, 1995). Compared to their male counterparts, women generally have lower levels of education, earn less income, possess fewer assets, and have less economic control. This disparity disrupts various aspects of their lives and subjects them to poor health, limited educational and occupational opportunities, and reduced autonomy over personal choices (Saluja et al., 2023). As a result, women often suffer from exclusion and marginalization, missing out on employment, education, healthcare, and justice, due in part to patriarchal socio-cultural norms that limit their access to development and empowerment opportunities (Isran & Isran, 2012).

Thus, gender norms and cultural barriers often constrain women's participation in decision-making processes and their access to resources, hindering both their empowerment and their involvement in rural development (Ali & Kamraju, 2023). Ignoring women's roles and perspectives restricts their participation in development programs (Jabeen et al., 2020). Active participation of women in rural affairs first requires their empowerment. Accordingly, in order for women to realize their capabilities and potential, they must engage with the various factors that affect their empowerment in line with relevant policies and programs (Gholami Avati et al., 2010, cited in Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2002). Once empowered, women are able to make independent decisions based on their full potential, thereby improving their family's quality of life and becoming productive members of society (Sabir & Majid, 2023).

Given the current circumstances and the abundance of studies conducted on the empowerment of rural women and its multiple dimensions—as well as the diversity of theories on this subject—there is a clear need for a comprehensive review of the literature on women's empowerment. Identifying the key factors affecting the empowerment of rural women can help recognize existing obstacles and propose practical solutions. Accordingly, the aim of this research is to identify the most influential factors contributing to the empowerment of rural women across different dimensions, through a review of studies conducted

in Iran from 2012 to 2024 and international studies from 2011 to 2024. For this purpose, researchers' viewpoints and findings have been reanalyzed using a qualitative meta-analysis method to extract the most significant factors influencing rural women's empowerment.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Empowerment has been defined in a variety of ways. It is generally understood as a process through which individuals progress in overcoming barriers and engaging in activities that enable them to determine their own destiny (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2016). Women's empowerment, specifically, refers to gaining the ability to think and act freely, fostering a sense of self-worth, believing in the capacity to bring about desired changes, exercising the right to make choices and control one's life, realizing one's full potential, and achieving equality within society (Phala & Mukonza, 2021).

The American Oxford Dictionary defines women's empowerment as making women stronger and more confident in controlling their lives and asserting their rights—that is, giving them the power to confront the challenges of being women in society. For centuries, women were not equal to men in many respects. They were denied the right to vote, own property, or work in many professions. Having emerged from that dark era, women now possess greater agency to pursue any path they choose. This means they have the freedom to determine their future, choose a career, vote, and do anything a man can do. When we speak of women's empowerment today, we refer to women who assume leadership roles. Whereas in the past women were subordinate, empowerment now implies increased spiritual, political, social, and economic power (Waghmode & Kalyan, 2014).

Empowerment is therefore a multidimensional process comprising economic, psychological, political, social, and cultural aspects. Economic empowerment is defined as the ability of women to earn sufficient income to lead a decent life and meet their basic needs (Ebad-Allah et al., 2022). It encompasses access to credit, increased household asset ownership, control over financial affairs, and financial autonomy (Dalal et al., 2012). Women's access to credit and savings enhances their economic roles and decision-making power in matters related to finance (Marinova, 2010). Common indicators used to assess women's economic empowerment include income, savings, access to and control over markets, raw materials,

equipment, capital, credit, and facilities (Katsekpore et al., 2024).

Social empowerment helps women develop a sense of independence and self-confidence, enabling both individual and collective action toward their goals (Jose et al., 2021). It is a process that fosters autonomy, power, confidence, and other necessary tools for initiating change and paving the way for a better future. It occurs at both individual and collective levels and supports marginalized groups—including women—who lack access to basic needs, healthcare, education, and more. Social empowerment also involves transforming social relationships, institutions, and discourses that marginalize the poor and perpetuate poverty (Sen et al., 2023).

Psychological empowerment refers to enhancing women's self-belief in achieving their goals. It differs from actual power or decision-making and instead reflects how women internally evaluate their ability to reach their goals (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010, p. 646). It is characterized by indicators such as intellectual independence, increased self-esteem, a sense of personal power, and enhanced self-efficacy (Kwaku Kyem, 2004). Through this process, women develop greater autonomy and self-confidence. As their confidence grows, they become more capable of defending their rights and gaining control over resources. They learn to recognize their internal desires and needs and develop the necessary skills to fulfill them (Fallsoleyman et al., 2023).

Political empowerment of women is defined as a process of increasing their capacity through expanded choices, agency, and participation in social decision-making processes. Political empowerment of women is considered a tool for economic development as it enhances institutional quality (Awoa et al., 2022). It is a process that enables women to increase their mobility, break social isolation, strengthen their self-confidence and societal roles, and establish a presence in public spaces (Israr et al., 2020).

Several theories have been proposed to conceptualize women's empowerment. One such theory is the Cultural and Social Differences Theory, which argues that in addition to addressing existing inequalities, women must simultaneously question and resist the underlying structures that perpetuate inequality across different levels (Tarasi et al., 2019). According to this theory, cultural norms—internalized through socialization—frame politics as a male domain, assigning women's



responsibilities solely to household and family roles. These expectations constitute significant barriers to women's empowerment in various spheres of society (Charmchian Langerodi & Alibaygi, 2013).

Given these persistent inequalities and barriers, gender equality has emerged as a strategic approach to integrating the concerns and experiences of both women and men into all political, economic, and social policies. This ensures that both genders benefit equally, preventing the continuation of inequality. Accordingly, the empowerment of women and the achievement of gender equality have become crucial issues (UN Women, 2020). Gender equality increases productivity, promotes innovation, and strengthens inclusive and sustainable development. It also improves health and education outcomes and boosts political and social participation. Recognizing its importance, many organizations and development-oriented governments have pursued policies and programs aimed at reducing gender disparities. These efforts seek to empower women, promote their rights, and create an enabling environment for their full and equal participation in all aspects of society (Jimmy & Olsson, 2023). At the same time, empowering women requires establishing necessary infrastructures to support their development across economic, social, cultural, political, and educational domains, enhancing their capacity for choice, self-reliance, and control over their own lives (Niaghi, 2019).

One such infrastructure is seen as a prerequisite for sustainable development, which emphasizes the real and active participation of women alongside men in development processes. Without question, women's full participation depends on their empowerment, which serves as the foundation for their involvement in development (Mozaffari, 2015).

Among the most influential frameworks is feminist theory, which attributes women's lower societal status to limited opportunities, family constraints, and lack of educational resources. Feminists argue that, since gender equality is a recognized right, women must be entitled to legal protections, employment, education, and asset ownership (Sadeghi et al., 2011, citing Valarie, 1999). They further advocate for equal opportunities in all domains, asserting that men must revise their attitudes and perceptions about traditional female roles (Sadeghi et al., 2011, citing Sargent, 1999). In this view, empowerment means enabling women to access resources and exert greater control over their lives—leading to enhanced independence, self-

confidence (Seifi, 2020), and self-esteem, which improves their self-image (Ugbomeh, 2001).

In the realm of psychological empowerment, Spreitzer's theory stands out. It conceptualizes psychological empowerment as a motivational construct comprising four core cognitive dimensions: Meaning – the extent to which individuals perceive their work as meaningful. Competence – the belief in one's capability, skills, and abilities to perform tasks, helping women trust in their own decision-making capacity (Monje-Amor et al., 2021). Self-determination – the autonomy to decide how to perform tasks, associated with freedom and independence. Impact – the perceived degree of influence one has on strategic, administrative, or operational outcomes (Oliveira et al., 2023). This theory highlights that women gain confidence, power, and knowledge to collaborate with others who share similar goals for societal change (Hibbs, 2022). Women come to believe that with confidence, competence, and self-efficacy, they can increase their motivation, personal well-being, and engagement in national programs such as education, politics, health, agriculture, and development (Manuere & Phiri, 2018). Another prominent model is Malhotra's framework, which identifies two key dimensions of women's empowerment: resources/capacities and agency. The first dimension, resources, can be intangible, human, or social, including education, wealth, employment, social connections, and access opportunities (Kabeer, 2001). These are considered prerequisites for empowerment and the first step toward expanding women's choices. Resources are thus foundational capital that facilitate the empowerment process and protect women against unexpected life challenges (Kalantari et al., 2010, citing Alderman, 1997; Agarwal, 1997).

Agency refers to the capacity to make strategic life choices and control over critical resources and decisions. Malhotra's model emphasizes that agency can be strengthened through reforms in: Social structures (e.g., access to higher education and improved literacy rates among women), Legal systems (e.g., rights to property, divorce, and legal protection), Economic frameworks (e.g., access to well-paying jobs and leadership positions), Political institutions (e.g., voting rights and female representation in government at local and national levels) (Malhotra et al., 2002).

To measure agency, assets are used as indicators. These include human, material, social, political, and psychological assets (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005).

Material (financial) assets—such as capital, credit, and raw materials—can lead to bank loans, input acquisition, new business development, and increased income and savings. This fosters women's financial independence, decision-making power, and overall empowerment (Khalvati et al., 2007, citing Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005). Social (human) assets—such as education, awareness, and skill development—enhance women's knowledge and abilities, leading to increased psychological assets, including self-confidence, self-worth, and the elimination of traditional stigmas. This encourages participation in collective activities and the articulation of personal aspirations. Political assets—including voting rights, civil liberties, and participation in formal and informal groups—enable women's political empowerment (Khalvati et al., 2007). According to Kabeer (1999), resources and agency together form what Sen refers to as "capabilities"—the ability to live the life one values and achieve meaningful goals. Political assets, such as the right to vote, civil liberties, membership in formal and informal groups, political participation, and presence in political offices, play a crucial role in empowering women (Khalvati et al., 2007). Together, **resources** and agency form what Sen refers to as *capabilities*—that is, the ability of women to live the kind of life they value and to pursue meaningful ways of being and doing (Kabeer, 1999). In Alsop and Heinsohn's empowerment framework, in addition to agency, a third dimension known as the structure of opportunity is introduced. This structure is defined as the formal and informal institutional contexts in which individuals operate. These contextual factors interact with resources and agency to produce varying degrees of empowerment. Within this framework, women utilize their *choice opportunities* and subsequently evaluate the outcomes of these choices. The structure of opportunity is shaped by the presence and performance of formal and informal institutions and legal systems. It encompasses laws, regulatory frameworks, and prevailing social norms, all of which determine whether individuals or groups have access to assets and whether they are allowed to make use of them (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005).

The structure of opportunity includes formal and informal institutions such as the state, society, and the labor market. According to the conceptual model proposed in this theory, increasing agency is made possible through the accumulation of various

types of assets: Social and human assets such as education, schooling, and skill development; Financial assets including income, employment, savings, and investment; Psychological assets such as self-confidence, self-belief, and a sense of self-worth; Political assets including voting rights, and holding positions in political and governmental institutions. These assets are developed and exercised within the opportunity structure—an arena in which formal and informal institutions interact and operate. Governments play a critical role in empowering women through mechanisms of justice, policymaking, and public service delivery. Under the justice dimension, governments empower women by providing access to institutional mechanisms—both formal and informal—for addressing problems, enhancing women's awareness of organizations that protect their rights, and ensuring fairness in how these organizations engage with women (Figure 1). In the domains of policy and service provision, governments play a significant role in empowering rural women by facilitating their participation in electoral activities, granting them the right to vote, and providing access to various essential services. These include healthcare, education, recreational opportunities, public utilities, and other community services, all of which contribute meaningfully to the empowerment process. At the family level, the head of the household—typically the father or husband—can enhance women's empowerment by granting them autonomy in decision-making and encouraging their participation in family and social matters. Providing women with freedom of movement to access healthcare centers, schools, workshops, and training courses, as well as supporting their involvement in diverse activities, can significantly contribute to their sense of agency and empowerment. Within the community, the degree of women's participation in social activities and their influence in community-level decision-making processes directly affects the empowerment of rural women. The market dimension also plays a crucial role and encompasses labor, financial, and goods markets: In the financial market, women's access to income, loans, and credit facilities—as well as their ability to save and invest across various sectors—enables them to purchase agricultural inputs, raw materials, and consumer goods. This purchasing power, referred to as the "goods dimension," fosters their autonomy and financial empowerment. In the goods market, rural

women's and girls' access to inheritance also plays a key role in enhancing their empowerment, offering them control over economic resources and property. In the labor market, the division of labor

and responsibilities, the extent and volume of household duties, and the pursuit of income-generating home-based or small-scale enterprises are all significant contributors to women's empowerment. (Figure 1).

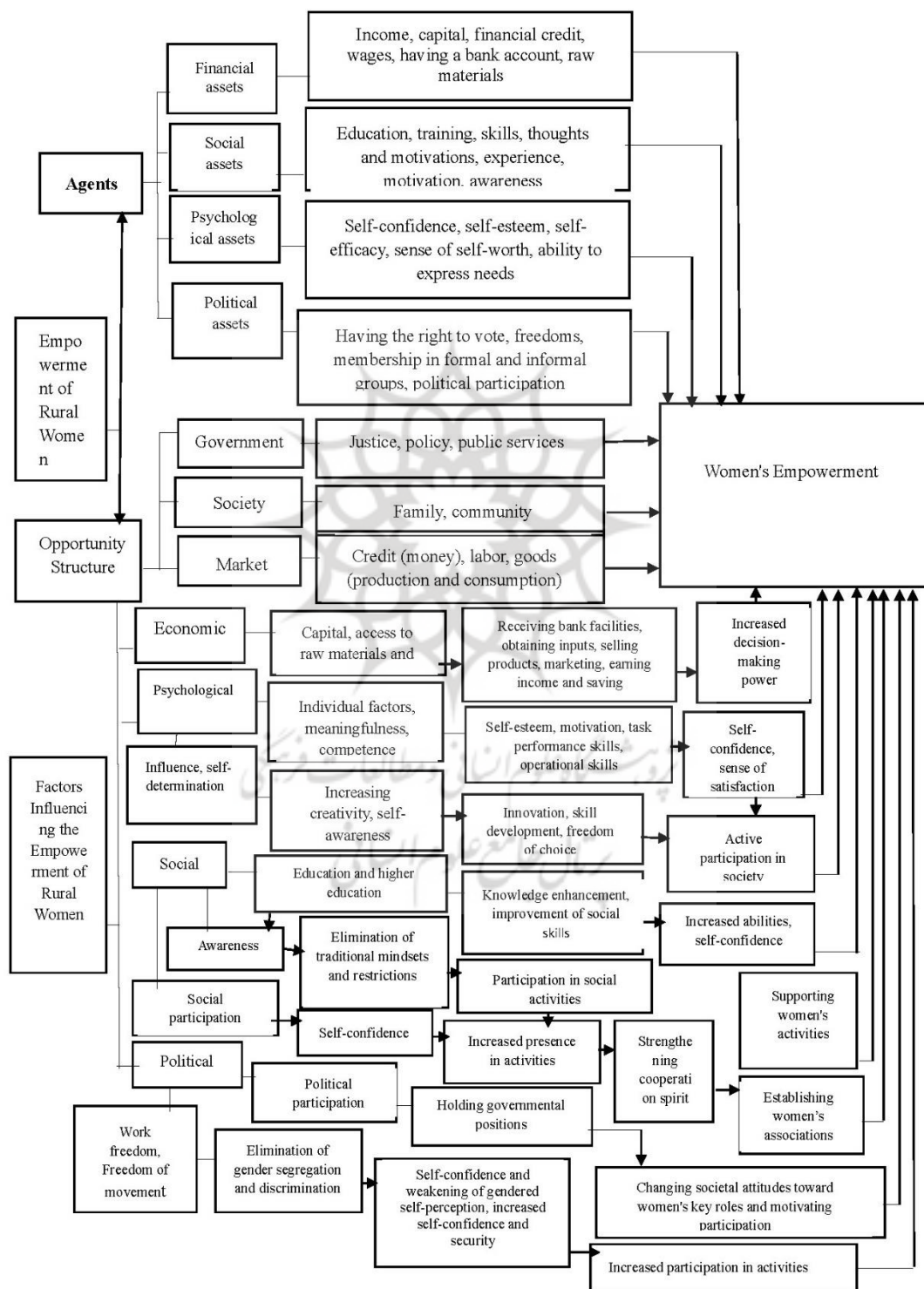


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Research

### 3. Methodology

This study employs a combination of library-based (documentary) research and qualitative meta-analysis. The documentary method was used to review the background, literature, theoretical foundations, and relevant conceptual frameworks. The qualitative meta-analysis method involves synthesizing the results of multiple studies to derive new, integrated findings (Shiyani & Zare, 2019, p. 79, citing Mohammadi, 2019). In other words, meta-analysis gathers previous research on a particular topic, analyzes, and classifies them accordingly. This approach converts the results of various studies into a common scale and then applies preliminary and limited data analysis techniques. In this method, the research problem is first identified and the objective of the study is clarified. Then, from the body of existing studies, those that align with the research criteria are selected as samples. The data extracted from these studies are collected, coded, and categorized based on the research objectives. Finally, the results are standardized to allow for meaningful comparisons

(Parhizkar et al., 2023, p. 904, citing the Statistical Analysis Academy of Iran, 2021). The study covers a time span from 2012 to 2022 (1391–1401 in the Iranian calendar) and 2011 to 2024 for international research. Data were gathered from various sources, including the Scientific Information Database (SID), the Comprehensive Humanities Portal, the Noor Specialized Journals Database (Noormags), and Google Scholar. Subsequently, studies on women's empowerment—particularly rural women's empowerment—were reviewed. The geographic scope of the selected research includes Iran as well as countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. The statistical population of this research consists of articles that address the empowerment of rural women and identify influencing factors. In total, 73 articles were initially reviewed. In the first stage, 10 articles were excluded due to lack of direct relevance. In the second stage, 15 articles were eliminated due to topic duplication. Ultimately, 48 articles were selected for final analysis (titles of the selected articles are listed in Table 1).

**Table 1. List of studies utilized in the meta-analysis**

| Title of Study                                                                                            | Author(s)                                           | Year |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------|
| Qualitative analysis of factors influencing rural women's empowerment in Ilam province                    | Naseri & Asgari                                     | 2024 |
| Identification and analysis of dimensions and components of rural women's empowerment using mixed methods | Zafarinasab, Golzari, Nourian, & Razavi             | 2023 |
| Evaluation of empowerment level of rural women in Kermanshah                                              | Azimi, Alibaygi & Papzan                            | 2022 |
| Political and social empowerment of women in South Caucasus in the post-Soviet era                        | Atai & Zangeneh                                     | 2021 |
| Meta-synthesis of factors affecting rural women's empowerment                                             | Zafarinasab, Golzari, Nourian, & Razavi             | 2021 |
| Economic and social empowerment of rural women in Zanjan province                                         | Moghaddas Farimani, Mirtorabi & Ghaemmaghami        | 2020 |
| Role of rural women's empowerment in analyzing socio-economic-cultural factors                            | Falahati, Ghasemi, Badsar                           | 2020 |
| Internal and external factors influencing rural women's empowerment (Kermanshah & Hamedan)                | Mohammadi, Avatefi-Akmal, Zamiri-Arasteh & Rahimian | 2019 |
| Drivers of rural women's empowerment: Case study of Zanjan                                                | Tarasi, Karimzadeh & Aghayri Hir                    | 2019 |
| Strategic planning for psychological empowerment of rural women                                           | Ghasemi, Alizadeh & Ghandehari                      | 2018 |
| Evaluation of factors influencing rural women's empowerment in Esfahan                                    | Abolfathzadeh, Yousefi, MozaffarAmini               | 2016 |
| Explaining factors influencing women's empowerment in rural settlement development                        | Shafiei Sabet & Yousefi                             | 2016 |
| Social and psychological factors affecting empowerment of women heads of households (Abas Abad)           | Mojarradi & Badsar                                  | 2016 |
| Identification of socio-economic factors affecting rural women's empowerment (Rostam)                     | Qanbari & Ansari                                    | 2015 |
| Occupational empowerment factors of rural women (Ilam)                                                    | Seyedeh, Eshraqhi Samani & Poursaied                | 2015 |
| Survey and analysis of components affecting rural women's empowerment (Esfahan)                           | Barghi & Qanbari                                    | 2014 |



| Title of Study                                                                         | Author(s)                                                 | Year |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Economic empowerment of women and girls in Africa, Latin America and Caribbean         | Safavi, Zamiran, Maarefvand & Arshi                       | 2014 |
| Psychological empowerment of rural women                                               | Charmchian Langerodi & Alibaygi                           | 2013 |
| Assessing economic and social empowerment of rural women                               | Sadi, Shabanali Fami & Latifi                             | 2012 |
| Empowerment of women: Oku Forest Area, Cameroon                                        | Foncha & Eforkwe                                          | 2024 |
| Women's empowerment models in Indonesian villages: role of Quran recitation traditions | pakuna, Hunowu, Datamula, Sunarsi, Wahyini, Tamu & Daulay | 2024 |
| Bibliometric analysis of women empowerment studies after SDGs (2015–2022)              | Adeleye, Olivo & Farkas                                   | 2024 |
| Economic empowerment of rural women in Wolaita, Ethiopia                               | Kuma & Godana                                             | 2023 |
| Women empowerment in India: A critical analysis                                        | Singh & Singh                                             | 2023 |
| Tribal women's empowerment: Challenges and prospects                                   | Bukhari, Khushk, Khoso & Shah                             | 2023 |
| Measuring women empowerment in the Global South                                        | Desai, Chen, Reddy & McLaughlin                           | 2022 |
| Gender federalism and political empowerment in Sindh, Pakistan                         | Ahmed, Maqsood & Nawaz                                    | 2021 |
| A study on women's empowerment in India                                                | Rani                                                      | 2021 |
| Measuring women's empowerment in developing countries: A systematic review             | Nahar & Mengo                                             | 2021 |
| Dimensions and drivers of rural women's empowerment in Nigeria                         | Obayelu & Chime                                           | 2020 |
| Status of women's empowerment in Bangalore, India                                      | Menon & Sharma, Rajintha                                  | 2020 |
| Empowerment index of rural women in Mohmand, Pakistan                                  | Israr, Rahman, Ahmad & Pervaiz                            | 2020 |
| Factors affecting women's empowerment in Bangladesh                                    | Tabassum, Begum, Rana, Faruk & Miah                       | 2019 |
| Comparative study of urban and rural women's empowerment in Tamil Nadu                 | Saravanakumar & Elizabeth Varakumari                      | 2019 |
| Women's empowerment in East Africa                                                     | Miedema, Haardörfer, Webb Girard & Yount                  | 2018 |
| Women's empowerment drivers in Uganda                                                  | Sell & Minot                                              | 2018 |
| Empirical evidence on rural women's empowerment in South Punjab, Pakistan              | Abrar ul haq, Jali & Islam                                | 2017 |
| Empowerment index: A tool to measure rural women's empowerment in India                | Roy, Chatterjee & Dutta Gupta                             | 2017 |
| Socio-economic and psychological factors of women's psychological empowerment          | Batool, Ahmad, Qureshi                                    | 2016 |
| Multidimensional approach to women's empowerment in rural Nigeria                      | Ayevbuomwan, Opoola & Adeoti                              | 2016 |
| Empowerment and social participation of Muslim women in South India                    | Cherayi & Justin                                          | 2016 |
| Social and economic determinants of women's empowerment in Pakistan                    | Bushra & Wajiha                                           | 2015 |
| Women's empowerment in rural local government in Bangladesh                            | Hossain                                                   | 2015 |
| Individual and social factors influencing women's empowerment in Egypt                 | Assad, Nazier & Ramadan                                   | 2014 |
| Women empowerment in India: A study                                                    | Waghamode & Kalyan                                        | 2014 |
| Concept and types of women's empowerment in India                                      | Mandal                                                    | 2013 |
| Measuring rural women's empowerment in Bangladesh                                      | Mahmud, Shah & Becker                                     | 2012 |
| Women's empowerment in Oman: Based on empowerment index                                | Varghese                                                  | 2011 |

#### 4. Research Findings

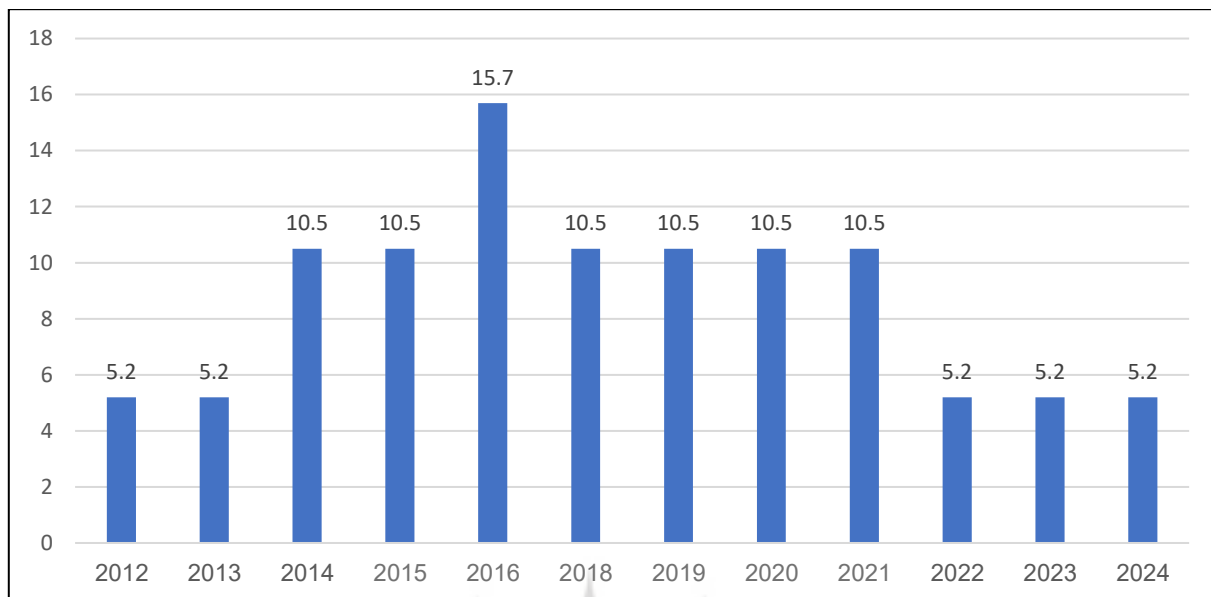
The findings of the study are presented in two parts: descriptive findings and qualitative findings.

##### 4.1. Descriptive Findings

The years in which the studies related to the research topic were conducted in this meta-analysis vary across domestic and international research: Among the 19 domestic articles analyzed: 1 case

(5.2%) was conducted in 2024, 1 case (5.2%) in 2023, 1 case (5.2%) in 2022, 2 cases (10.5%) in 2021, 2 cases (10.5%) in 2020, 2 cases (10.5%) in 2019, 1 case (5.2%) in 2018, 3 cases (15.7%) in 2016, 2 cases (10.5%) in 2015, 2 cases (10.5%) in 2014, 1 case (5.2%) in 2013, and 1 case (5.2%) in 2012. (Figure 2).

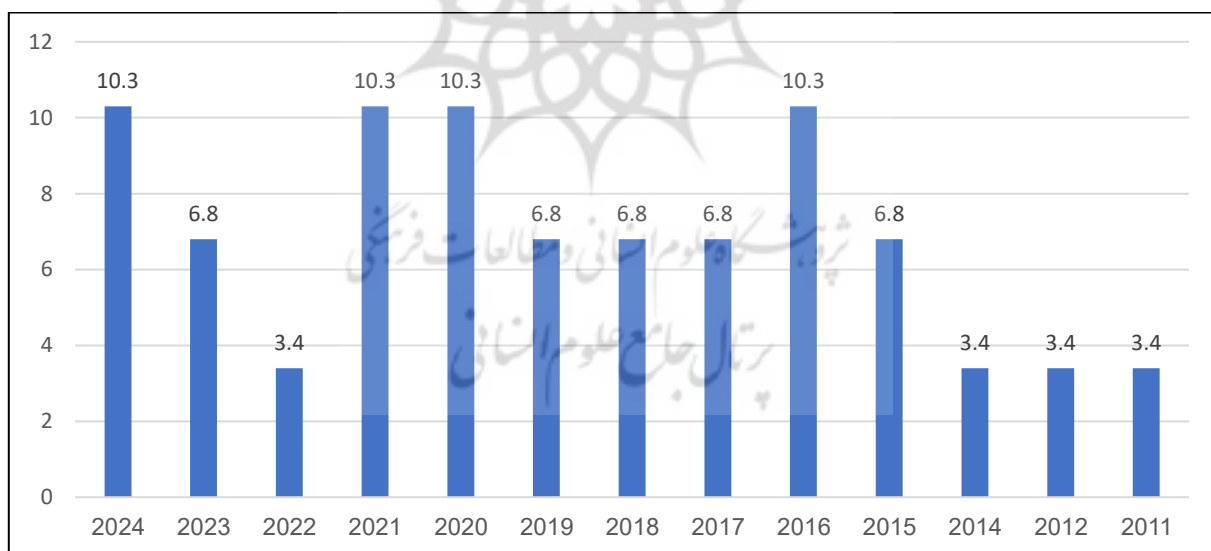




**Figure 2. Frequency of domestic studies based on year of publication**

In the international studies reviewed, out of a total of 29 articles: 3 cases (10.3%) were conducted in 2024, 2 cases (6.8%) in 2023, 1 case (3.4%) in 2022, 3 cases (10.3%) in 2021, 3 cases (10.3%) in

2020, 2 cases (6.8%) in 2019, 2 cases (6.8%) in 2018, 2 cases (6.8%) in 2017, 3 cases (10.3%) in 2016, 2 cases (6.8%) in 2015, 1 case (3.4%) in 2014, 1 case (3.4%) in 2012, and 1 case (3.4%) in 2011. (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Frequency of international studies based on year of publication**

An analysis of the number of co-authors in the reviewed studies reveals the following:  
6 studies (12.5%) had one author, 16 studies (33.3%) had two authors, 17 studies (35.4%) had three authors, 8

studies (16.6%) had four authors, 1 study (2%) had five authors, and 1 study (2%) had six authors. (Table 2)

**Table 2. Frequency of the number of co-authors**

| Number of Authors | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5 | 6 | Total |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|---|---|-------|
| Frequency         | 6    | 16   | 17   | 8    | 1 | 1 | 48    |
| Percentage (%)    | 12.5 | 33.3 | 35.4 | 16.6 | 2 | 2 | 100   |

In both domestic and international studies, the distribution of authors' academic positions among the 137 identified contributors was as follows: 60 individuals (43.7%) were university faculty

members, 36 individuals (26.2%) were researchers, 29 individuals (21.1%) were PhD students or graduates, and 12 individuals (8.7%) were Master's students or graduates. (Table 3).

**Table 3. Frequency of authors' academic positions**

| Academic Position | Faculty | Researcher | PhD Students/Graduates | Master's Students/Graduates | Total |
|-------------------|---------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| Frequency         | 60      | 36         | 29                     | 12                          | 137   |
| Percentage (%)    | 43.7    | 26.2       | 21.1                   | 8.7                         | 100   |

Authors of the 48 reviewed articles came from 14 different academic disciplines: 12 articles (15.1%) in Agricultural Economics, 11 (13.9%) in Economics, 9 (11.3%) in Sociology, 8 (10.1%) in Agricultural Extension and Education, 8 (10.1%) in Rural Development, 6 (7.5%) in Women's Studies,

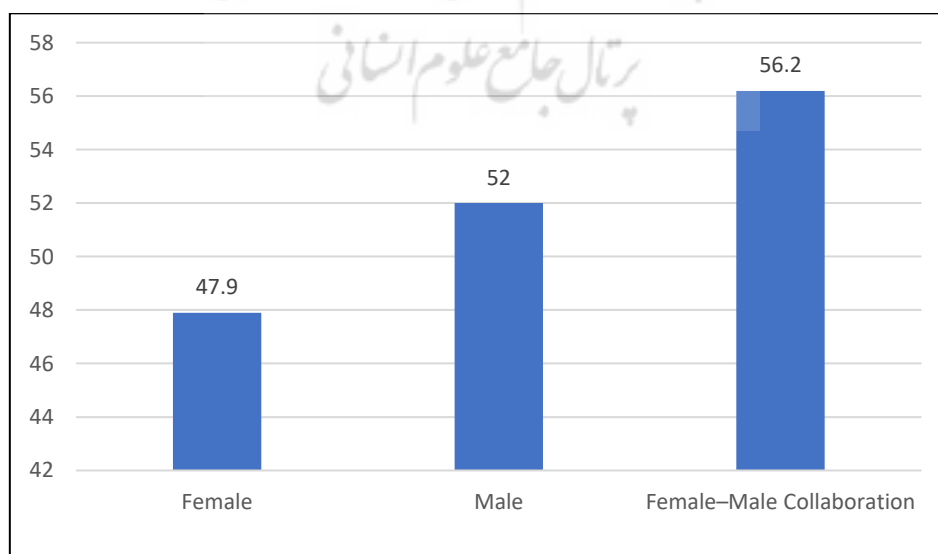
5 (6.3%) in Geography, 5 (6.3%) in Psychology, 3 (3.7%) in Health Sciences, 3 (3.7%) in Political Science, 3 (3.7%) in Law, 2 (2.5%) in Social Work, 2 (2.5%) in Educational Management, and 1 (1.2%) in Environmental Sciences. (Table 4).

**Table 4. Frequency of researchers' academic disciplines**

| Discipline     | Agr. Economics | Economics | Sociology | Agr. Extension | Rural Dev. | Women's Studies | Geography | Psychology | Health | Pol. Sci. | Law | Social Work | Ed. Management | Environment | Total |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|--------|-----------|-----|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------|
| Frequency      | 12             | 11        | 9         | 8              | 8          | 6               | 5         | 5          | 3      | 3         | 3   | 2           | 2              | 1           | 79    |
| Percentage (%) | 15.1           | 13.9      | 11.3      | 10.1           | 10.1       | 7.5             | 6.3       | 6.3        | 3.7    | 3.7       | 3.7 | 2.5         | 2.5            | 1.2         | 100   |

Regarding gender distribution among researchers involved in studies on women's empowerment: 23 cases (47.9%) involved female authors, 25 cases

(52%) involved male authors, and 27 cases (56.2%) involved both female and male collaboration. (Figure 4).


**Figure 4. Frequency of researchers by gender**

Based on the reviewed studies on women's empowerment in this meta-analysis: 7 cases (11.6%) focused on economic topics, 11 cases (18.3%) on social topics, 16 cases (26.6%) on

combined economic and social topics, 7 cases (11.6%) on economic, social, and psychological topics, 8 cases (13.3%) on psychological topics, and 11 cases (18.3%) on political topics. (Table 5)

**Table 5. Frequency of topics addressed in women's empowerment studies**

| Topic          | Economic | Psychological | Social | Economic & Social | Economic, Social & Psychological | Political | Total |
|----------------|----------|---------------|--------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Frequency      | 7        | 8             | 11     | 16                | 7                                | 11        | 60    |
| Percentage (%) | 11.6     | 13.3          | 18.3   | 26.6              | 11.6                             | 18.3      | 100   |

Regarding the methodological approach: 5 cases (10.4%) used a descriptive approach, 14 cases (29.1%) descriptive-analytical, 9 cases (18.7%) survey-based, 1 case (2.1%) grounded theory, 1 case

(2.1%) exploratory, 1 case (2.1%) causal-comparative, 1 case (2.1%) descriptive-exploratory, 5 cases (10.4%) descriptive-correlational, and 11 cases (22.9%) literature review. (Table 6).

**Table 6. Frequency of studies by research approach**

| Approach       | Descriptive | Descriptive-Analytical | Survey | Grounded Theory | Exploratory | Causal-Comparative | Descriptive-Exploratory | Descriptive-Correlational | Literature Review | Total |
|----------------|-------------|------------------------|--------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Frequency      | 5           | 14                     | 9      | 1               | 1           | 1                  | 1                       | 5                         | 11                | 48    |
| Percentage (%) | 10.4        | 29.1                   | 18.7   | 2.1             | 2.1         | 2.1                | 2.1                     | 10.4                      | 22.9              | 100   |

Based on research method: 33 cases (68.7%) were quantitative, 11 cases (22.9%) qualitative, 3 cases

(6.2%) mixed methods, and 1 case (2%) meta-synthesis. (Table 7).

**Table 7. Frequency of studies by research method**

| Method         | Quantitative | Qualitative | Mixed | Meta-synthesis | Total |
|----------------|--------------|-------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Frequency      | 33           | 11          | 3     | 1              | 48    |
| Percentage (%) | 68.7         | 22.9        | 6.2   | 2              | 100   |

Research tools used in the studies: 18 cases (37.5%) used questionnaires, 14 cases (29.1%) used document analysis, 9 cases (18.7%) interviews, and

7 cases (14.5%) used combined tools (interview + questionnaire). (Table 8).

**Table 8. Frequency of studies by research tool**

| Tool           | Questionnaire | Interview | Combined (Questionnaire & Interview) | Document Analysis | Total |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Frequency      | 18            | 9         | 7                                    | 14                | 48    |
| Percentage (%) | 37.5          | 18.7      | 14.5                                 | 29.1              | 100   |

Use of statistical techniques: 12 cases (23.5%) used Anova, 17 cases (33.3%) regression analysis, 1 case (1.9%) SWOT analysis, 1 case (1.9%) Kendall's Tau-b, 2 cases (3.9%) grounded theory analysis, 2

cases (3.9%) Spearman test, 5 cases (9.8%) correlation and Chi-square, and 11 cases (21.5%) did not include hypothesis testing. (Table 9).

**Table 9. Frequency of studies by statistical analysis method**

| Method         | ANOVA | Regression | SWOT | Kendall Tau-b | Grounded Theory | Spearman | Correlation & Chi-Square | No Hypothesis Test | Total |
|----------------|-------|------------|------|---------------|-----------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Frequency      | 12    | 17         | 1    | 1             | 2               | 2        | 5                        | 11                 | 51    |
| Percentage (%) | 23.5  | 33.3       | 1.9  | 1.9           | 3.9             | 3.9      | 9.8                      | 21.5               | 100   |



Theories used in the reviewed studies: The study incorporates a diverse theoretical base to analyze women's empowerment. The following theories and their relative contributions were identified: 5 items (10.4%) from Sara Longwe's framework, 2 items (4.1%) from Alsop and Heinsohn's model, 8 items (16.6%) from Kabeer's theory, 3 items (6.2%) from Welfare theory, 2 items (3.8%) from gender and development theory, 6 item (12.5%) from gender equality theory, 6 items (12.5%) used Malhotra's theory, 2 items (4.1%) from Poverty alleviation theory, 1 item (2%) each from the following: Equality theory, Efficiency theory, Exploitation theory, Marginalization and integration theory,

Structural-functional theory, Class and state incapacity theory, Action theory, Feminization of poverty, Everyday life sociology, Ugboome's theory, Glass ceiling theory, Biological differences theory, Effectiveness theory. other theories, poverty alleviation, equality, efficiency, marginalization & integration, sustainable development, cultural and social difference, feminist theories, structural-functionalism, class/state incapacity, action theory, sociology of everyday life, Ugbomeh 's theory, glass ceiling, biological differences, effectiveness, Hashemi's theory, Lin Bennet's theory, and social exclusion. (Figure 5).

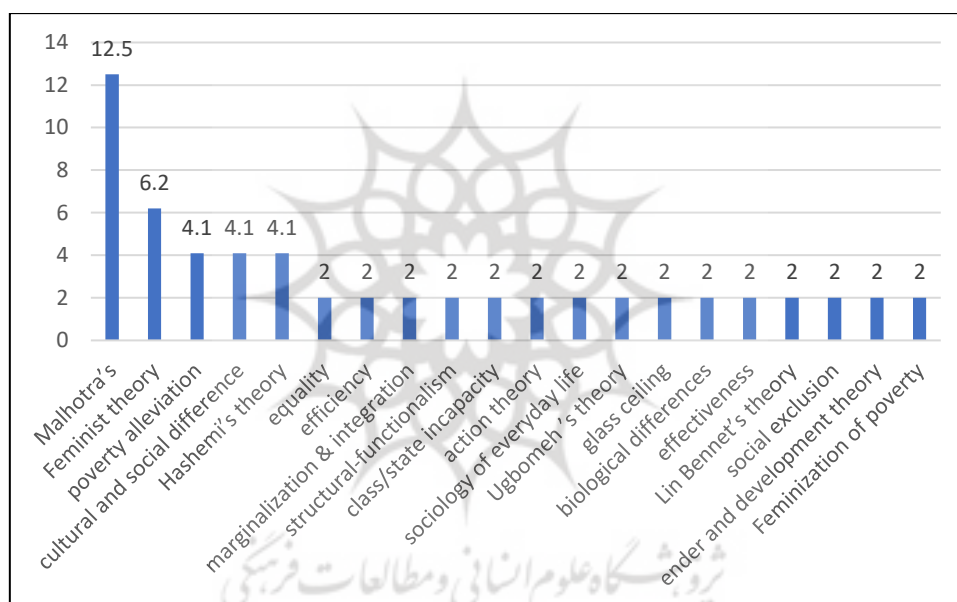


Figure 5. Frequency of theories used in the reviewed studies.

## 4.2 Qualitative Findings

**Content Analysis of Articles on the Empowerment of Rural Women-** The analysis of research findings on the empowerment of rural women revealed that the studies are categorized into four main dimensions: economic, socio-cultural, psychological, and political.

### 4.2.1 Economic Factors

According to Table 10, among the economic factors influencing rural women's empowerment, income generation holds the highest share with 17.1%. It is followed by employment (13.8%), and access to loans and banking facilities as well as land ownership (both with 9.2%). (Table 10).

Table 10. Economic Factors Influencing the Empowerment of Rural Women

| Variable                               | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Variable                   | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Income generation                      | 26        | 17.1           | Marketing                  | 6         | 3.9            |
| Employment                             | 21        | 13.8           | Access to inputs and tools | 5         | 3.3            |
| Access to loans and banking facilities | 14        | 9.2            | Cooperative membership     | 5         | 3.3            |

| Variable                         | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Variable                                    | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Land ownership                   | 14        | 9.2            | Access to raw materials                     | 4         | 2.6            |
| Savings                          | 10        | 6.5            | Access to water resources                   | 4         | 2.6            |
| Market access                    | 9         | 5.9            | Livestock ownership                         | 4         | 2.6            |
| Sale of products                 | 8         | 5.2            | Access to suitable transportation           | 3         | 1.9            |
| Access to financial institutions | 8         | 5.2            | Entrepreneurship and business creation      | 3         | 1.9            |
| Business startup investment      | 6         | 3.9            | Access to job-related and production skills | 2         | 1.3            |
| Total                            | 152       | 100.0          |                                             |           |                |

#### 4.2.2 Socio-Cultural Factors

As presented in Table 11, among the socio-cultural factors, literacy and education (8.5%) was the most

cited, followed by restrictive cultural norms (7.6%), knowledge and skills (6.7%), and access to health services (6.5%). (Table 11).

**Table 11. Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing the Empowerment of Rural Women**

| Variable                                                | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Variable                                               | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Literacy and education                                  | 38        | 8.5            | Age                                                    | 12        | 2.7            |
| Restrictive cultural norms                              | 34        | 7.6            | Spouse's occupation                                    | 11        | 2.4            |
| Knowledge and skills                                    | 30        | 6.7            | Participation in religious ceremonies                  | 10        | 2.2            |
| Health and medical services                             | 29        | 6.5            | Participation in women's conferences                   | 10        | 2.2            |
| Gender                                                  | 27        | 6.0            | Membership in women's associations                     | 9         | 2.0            |
| Marital status                                          | 25        | 5.6            | Membership in governmental or non-governmental NGOs    | 9         | 2.0            |
| Patriarchal and male-dominated culture                  | 22        | 4.9            | Awareness of market conditions                         | 7         | 1.5            |
| Housework and child-rearing                             | 19        | 4.2            | Awareness of citizenship rights                        | 7         | 1.5            |
| Participation in technical and vocational training      | 19        | 4.2            | Collaboration with officials and authorities           | 5         | 1.1            |
| Attending educational and extension programs            | 19        | 4.05           | Support from spouse and family                         | 5         | 1.1            |
| Use of mass media (radio, television, newspapers, etc.) | 16        | 3.6            | Engagement in charitable and public service activities | 3         | 0.67           |
| Access to and usage of the internet                     | 16        | 3.6            | Legal and economic rights such as mahr                 | 1         | 0.22           |

| Variable                                   | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Variable | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Participation in exhibitions and festivals | 15        | 3.3            | dowry    | 2         | 0.45           |
| Awareness of emerging technologies         | 13        | 2.9            |          |           |                |
| inheritance                                | 13        | 2.9            |          |           |                |
| insurance coverage                         | 13        | 2.9            |          |           |                |
| Total                                      | 444       | 100.0          |          |           |                |

#### 4.2.3 Psychological Factors

According to Table 12, the psychological factor with the highest impact on women's empowerment is self-confidence (14.4%), followed by the ability

to act upon personal desires (9.8%) and self-esteem (8.5%). (Table 12).

**Table 12. Psychological Factors Influencing the Empowerment of Rural Women**

| Variable                                   | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Variable                                           | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Self-confidence                            | 22        | 14.4           | Initiative                                         | 4         | 2.6            |
| Autonomy in acting on personal will        | 15        | 9.8            | Group work                                         | 4         | 2.6            |
| Self-esteem                                | 13        | 8.5            | Perseverance and seriousness                       | 3         | 1.9            |
| Positive mindset                           | 9         | 5.9            | Women's leadership                                 | 3         | 1.9            |
| Motivation                                 | 8         | 5.2            | Self-reliance in challenges                        | 3         | 1.9            |
| Use of others' opinions in decision-making | 6         | 3.9            | Value placed on women's opinions                   | 3         | 1.9            |
| Belief in one's own abilities              | 6         | 3.9            | Trust of men in women                              | 3         | 1.9            |
| Intellectual Independence                  | 5         | 3.2            | Trust in Experts                                   | 4         | 2.6            |
| Responsibility                             | 5         | 3.2            | Problem-solving for novel challenges               | 3         | 1.9            |
| Risk-Taking Behavior                       | 5         | 3.2            | Government attention and support for women         | 3         | 1.9            |
| Future Planning                            | 5         | 3.2            | Openness to adopting innovative and modern methods | 2         | 1.3            |
| Self-Efficacy                              | 4         | 2.6            | Continuous learning                                | 2         | 1.3            |
| Ability to mentor others                   | 4         | 2.6            | Voluntarily engaging in tasks and activities       | 1         | 0.65           |
| Autonomy                                   | 4         | 2.6            | Women's trust in each other                        | 3         | 1.9            |
| Total                                      | 152       | 100.0          |                                                    |           |                |

#### 4.2.4 Political Factors

According to Table 13, the most influential political factor in empowering rural women is freedom of

mobility (26.1%), followed by restrictive laws and regulations (19.1%) and women's presence in

leadership and governmental positions (14.2%).  
(Table 13).

**Table 13. Political Factors Influencing the Empowerment of Rural Women**

| Variable                                       | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Variable                    | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Freedom of movement (mobility)                 | 11        | 26.1           | Participation in elections  | 5         | 11.9           |
| Women in leadership and governmental positions | 8         | 19.1           | Laws supporting women       | 3         | 7.1            |
| Restrictive governmental laws and regulations  | 6         | 14.2           | Participation in rallies    | 2         | 4.7            |
| Political representation of women              | 5         | 11.9           | Presence in judicial bodies | 2         | 4.7            |
| Total                                          | 42        | 100.0          |                             |           |                |

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Women's empowerment is defined as a process that brings about change in women's lives and enables them to lead a complete human life. This process encompasses both external dimensions (such as health, education, awareness, mobility, participation in decision-making, etc.) and internal dimensions (such as self-awareness, self-confidence, self-belief, etc.), ultimately leading to an improved quality of life for women. Therefore, enhancing women's empowerment necessitates identifying and analyzing the contributing factors. Given the significance of the topic, this study aimed to identify the key factors influencing the empowerment of rural women and to categorize these factors through a qualitative meta-analysis. Based on the reviewed literature, the influential factors were classified into four categories: economic, socio-cultural, psychological, and political. According to the findings, among the economic factors, income generation was the most prominent variable, accounting for 16.7% of the total. Therefore, providing income-generating opportunities for women through support for agricultural activities, horticulture, handicrafts, tourism, entrepreneurship, access to financial resources and credit institutions, and promoting women's participation in economic activities and market access can significantly contribute to their empowerment. Moreover, women's membership in savings cooperatives, access to low-interest loans, ownership of land and water resources, and the presence of formal cooperatives in villages can enhance their ability to launch businesses and

increase their income. The second most influential economic factor was employment (13.8%). Confining women to unpaid and exhausting household tasks, along with limited access to adequate training and financial services, hinders empowerment. Therefore, enabling women to participate in technical and vocational training, providing financial support such as low-interest loans, easing loan conditions, and improving access to raw materials and agricultural inputs can improve employment prospects and ultimately contribute to rural women's empowerment. In the socio-cultural dimension, access to employment, income generation, land ownership, water resources, and participation in training workshops were found to significantly enhance women's self-confidence. In the political dimension, the most influential factor was freedom of mobility, accounting for 26.1%. The ability of rural women to move freely—such as attending schools, hospitals, markets, or making personal choices without the interference of a spouse or male relatives—plays a critical role in their empowerment. Additionally, social participation—such as attending social events, helping neighbors during emergencies, volunteering in organizations like the Red Crescent, taking part in village meetings, organizing cultural programs, and voting—also contributes to empowerment. The second major political factor was women's presence in governmental and managerial positions (19.1%). Increasing women's participation in national and local elections without external interference and lifting legal restrictions—such as



the need for a husband's permission to travel—are extensions of freedom of mobility. Women's leadership in governmental positions enables the design and implementation of policies that respond to their needs, including access to healthcare, education, and social services. Moreover, female representation in institutions fosters broader political participation, enhances recognition by men and political groups, and expands job opportunities. Formal and informal education, exposure to media, and spatial mobility were also among the most impactful factors on women's empowerment. Educational institutions must implement more effective training programs for rural women. Agricultural organizations can also provide income-generation training with financial support in fields such as home gardening, childcare, livestock fattening, aquaculture, and handicraft production. Gender awareness through media is essential to raise consciousness among men and women. Key issues include tackling gender inequality in education, income, health, inheritance, early marriage, property rights, and divorce. Launching campaigns—such as awareness marches or public gatherings around International Women's Day, Human Rights Day, and Mother's Day—using posters and banners can serve as effective tools for spreading gender awareness. Moreover, cultural programs such as plays and folk music can highlight the importance of women and their empowerment. The government can establish legal counseling offices in family courts or rural areas to provide free legal advice to women on matters such as marriage, self-

esteem, protection from violence, and more. Creating women's self-help groups is essential for empowering women in rural areas. NGOs can support the formation of these groups, which offer both economic (e.g., microcredit) and social (e.g., legal support) assistance to their members. To promote effective economic empowerment, stakeholders should prioritize projects that combine financial literacy with access to services—such as gender-sensitive educational resources, enhanced technological infrastructure, and collaboration between financial institutions and training centers. By equipping women with skills and resources (e.g., access to loans and reduced collateral requirements), their economic independence can be strengthened. Governments and NGOs can foster knowledge-sharing networks and cooperatives in sectors like agriculture, horticulture, and industry, providing mentorship opportunities and boosting women's bargaining power in the market—ultimately reinforcing solidarity, teamwork, and collaboration.

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#### Authors contributions

The authors equally contributed to the preparation of this article.

#### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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## فرا تحلیل کیفی عوامل موثر بر توانمندسازی زنان روستایی

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### چکیده مبسوط

#### ۱. مقدمه

در کشورهای در حال توسعه زنان بخش زیادی از جمعیت جامعه روستایی را تشکیل می دهند و دارای نقشها و وظایف مختلف و متنوعی می باشند. زنان روستایی هم در فعالیت های درون خانه و هم در فعالیت های بیرون از خانه نقش بسزایی دارند. زنان در مقایسه با هم تیان مرد خود تحصیلات کمتر، دستمزد کمتر، مالکیت کمتر و کنترل اقتصادی بسیار کمتری دارند. این تبعیض در ابعاد مختلف زندگی آنها را مختل می کند و باعث می شود تا زنان از اشتغال، تحصیل، بهداشت و عدالت محروم شوند و با گوشه گیری و طرد شدن مواجه شده اند و با نادیده گرفته شدن زنان، امکان توانمندی آنان و مشارکت آن ها در طرح ها و برنامه های توسعه وجود ندارد. مشارکت زنان در امور روستا، قبل از هر چیز نیاز به توانمند سازی زنان دارد، پس زنان باید برای دستیابی به تواناییها و پتانسیل های خود مطابق با برنامه ها و سیاست هایی به عوامل مختلفی که برای توانمندی هایشان وجود دارد، بپردازند. اگر زنان توانمند شوند، می توانند آزادانه با پتانسیل کامل تصمیم گیری کنند و کیفیت زندگی خود را بهبود بخشند. با توجه شرایط موجود و با توجه به تعدد مطالعات انجام شده درباره توانمندسازی زنان روستایی و ابعاد مختلف آن و وجود نظریات متعدد در زمینه توانمندسازی زنان، نیاز به مروری جامع بر آثار حوزه توانمندسازی زنان می باشد. شناسایی عوامل مؤثر در توانمندسازی زنان روستایی می تواند موانع و مشکلاتی را که بر سر راه توانمندسازی زنان روستایی وجود دارد شناسایی و راهکارهایی را نیز پیشنهاد دهد.

#### ۲. روش تحقیق

هدف این پژوهش شناسایی مهمترین عوامل مؤثر بر توانمندسازی زنان روستایی در ابعاد مختلف، با مرور و مطالعه تحقیقات انجام شده بوده است. دیدگاههای محققان و یافته های آنها به روش فرا تحلیل کیفی مورد بازبینی قرار گرفت تا مهمترین عوامل مؤثر بر توانمندسازی زنان

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روستایی شناسایی شوند. در این تحقیق که در بازه زمانی ۱۳۹۱-۱۴۰۳ و ۲۰۱۱-۲۰۲۴ انجام شده است داده ها از بانک اطلاعات علمی جهاد دانشگاهی، پورتال جامع علوم انسانی، پایگاه مجلات تخصصی نورمگز، گوگل اسکولار جمع آوری شدند. قلمرو مکانی مطالعات، ایران و کشورهای آسیایی، آفریقایی، خاورمیانه و آمریکای لاتین بوده است. جامعه آماری پژوهش شامل مقالاتی است که به توانمندسازی زنان روستایی پرداخته اند و عوامل مؤثر بر توانمندسازی زنان روستایی را ذکر کرده اند. در این پژوهش ۷۳ مقاله مورد بررسی قرار گرفته است. در مرحله اول ۱۰ مقاله که با موضوع پژوهش ارتباط مستقیم نداشتند حذف شدند و در مرحله دوم ۱۵ مقاله به دلیل تکراری بودن موضوع حذف شدند و در نهایت ۴۸ مقاله جهت مطالعه انتخاب شد.

#### ۳. یافته های تحقیق

در بررسی یافته های مطالعات مربوط به توانمندسازی زنان روستایی، مطالعات در ابعاد اقتصادی، اجتماعی- فرهنگی، روانشناختی و سیاسی صورت گرفته است. در بعد اقتصادی مهمترین عوامل مؤثر بر توانمندسازی زنان روستایی کسب درآمد با ۱۷/۱ درصد و در مرتبه بعدی به ترتیب متغیرهای اشتغال با ۱۳/۸ درصد، دسترسی به وام و تسهیلات بانکی و مالکیت زمین با ۹/۲ درصد قرار دارند. مهمترین عوامل توانمندسازی زنان در بعد اجتماعی و فرهنگی شامل سواد و تحصیلات با ۸/۵ درصد، هنجارهای فرهنگی با ۷/۶ درصد، دانش و مهارت با ۶/۷ درصد و خدمات بهداشتی و درمانی با ۶/۵ درصد می شوند. در بعد روانشناختی نیز مهمترین عوامل توانمندسازی زنان شامل عامل اعتماد به نفس با ۱۴/۴ درصد، توانایی انجام خواسته ها با میل خود ۹/۸ درصد، عزت نفس ۸/۵ درصد می شوند. در بعد سیاسی عواملی مانند آزادی تحرک (رفت و آمد) با ۲۶/۱ درصد، قوانین و مقررات دست و پاگیر دولتی با ۱۹/۱ درصد و حضور زنان در پست

آگاهانه در مورد سلامت باروری و زندگی به طور کلی کمک می‌کند و منجر به افزایش اعتماد به نفس در آنان می‌شود. همچنین آموزش منجر به تغییر نگاه و فرهنگ مرد سالاری در جامعه می‌شود و شکاف های جنسیتی در درآمد را کاهش داده و می‌تواند نقش مهمی در کاهش نابرابری درآمد در بازار کار ایفا کند. در بعد سیاسی نیز گسترش حضور زنان و تصویر زنانه در ادارات منجر به افزایش مشارکت سیاسی زنان، به رسمیت شناخته شدن آنان توسط مردان و گروههای سیاسی، ایجاد فرصت‌های شغلی، افزایش قابلیت اشتغال می‌شود و همچنین باعث طراحی سیاست‌ها و سرمایه گذاری‌هایی می‌شود که به نیازها و نگرانی‌های زنان پاسخ دهد.

**کلیدواژه‌ها:** توانمندسازی، زنان روستایی، شاخص‌ها، فراتحلیل کیفی.

#### تشکر و قدردانی

پژوهش حاضر برگرفته از رساله دکترای سعیده رشیدی، گروه جغرافیا و برنامه‌ریزی روستایی، دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی، دانشگاه گیلان، رشت، ایران است.

های مدیریتی و دولتی با ۱۴/۲ درصد در توانمندسازی زنان نقش بالایی دارند.

#### ۴. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

توانمندسازی زنان به عنوان فرآیندی تعریف می‌شود که موجب تغییر در بافت زندگی زنان می‌شود و ظرفیت زنان را برای رهبری یک زندگی انسانی کامل فراهم می‌کند. این فرآیند منجر به افزایش کیفیت زندگی زنان در ابعاد اقتصادی، اجتماعی-فرهنگی، روانشناختی و سیاسی خواهد شد. در ابعاد اقتصادی می‌توان فرصت‌های تولید درآمد را برای زنان از طریق حمایت از فعالیتهای کشاورزی، باغداری، صنایع دستی و گردشگری، کارآفرینی گسترش دسترسی به منابع مالی و مؤسسات اعتباری و ترویج مشارکت زنان در فعالیتهای اقتصادی، دسترسی به بازارها انجام داد. در بعد اجتماعی و فرهنگی آموزش و تحصیلات زنان را با نگر داشتن در مدرسه توانمند می‌سازد و به آنان کمک می‌کند که مهارت‌هایی را برای توسعه اقتصادی و شخصی در آینده کسب کنند، همچنین داشتن سواد و تحصیلات نیز شانس اشتغال رسمی را برای زنان افزایش داده و به رفاه جسمی، روانی و توانایی آنان در انتخاب

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