

Is Press Freedom an Effective Tool to Empower Women? A Cross-Country Empirical Study

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Introduction

The women empowerment contributes significantly in enhancing economic growth of a country. It enhances the potential and talents of women to become a talented worker, perfect mother and responsible house manager (King and Mason, 2001; Sen, 1999; UNIFEM, 2008).

Women empowerment is positively related with betterment of a society. A powerful, educated and earning woman contributes a lot in improving health, education, and quality of life of a family. The betterment of families means betterment of society that causes betterment of the whole nation. The discrimination against women in developing countries is higher than developed countries.

One of the factors that play a key role in protecting women rights is press freedom. Media covers various human rights violation in the world and forces national and international organization to take step against tyranny against human.

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Outlines

- Theory
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Theory

- If media has full freedom then it can easily report any misconduct against society or an individual (Apodaca, 2007). Crocco (2007) emphasize that women rights and human rights are not different things.
- Media helps in protecting the rights of women by diffusion of information and providing knowledge in a society.
- Media plays a significant role in assuring social rights to women by reporting physical torture and abuses against women.

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Research Questions

- (1) What is the impact of press freedom and media on women empowerment?
- (2) Does freedom effects different dimensions of women empowerment equally?

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Model

We have followed empirical studies of the literature that have also employed women rights, gender equality or gender discrimination as dependent variables (Neumeyar and de Soysa, 2007& 2011; Oostendorp, 2009; Kucera and Milberg, 2000).

$$WR_{it} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 Y_{it} + \beta_3 DEM_{it} + \beta_4 PF_{it} + \beta_5 FER_{it} + \beta_6 FPLF_{it} + \beta_7 FPOP_{it} + \beta_7 X_{it} + e_{it}$$

Where

WR stands for women's rights

Y stands per capita GDP

DEM stands for democracy

PF stands for press freedom

FER stands for fertility

FPL stands for female participation in labor force

FPOP stands for share of females in total population

X stands for Matrix of Regional dummy variables

e stands for error term

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Data Description and Variables

The data of women's economic, political and social right is taken from Cingranelli and Richards (Human Rights Database). Women's rights indexes are based on discrete data and have ordinal ordering ranges from 0 to 3.

The data of democracy is taken from the polity IV (2014). The data is given for countries since their existence on the world map. The Index of democracy lies in the range of -10 and 10. Where 10 refers to complete democracy and -10 refers to complete autocracy in a country.

Data of press freedom is extracted from Freedom House (2014). It ranges from 0 to 100 where index values between 1-30 indicate press freedom, value between 30-60 indicates partial freedom of press, and values between 61-100 indicates no press freedom.

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Women Rights in the World

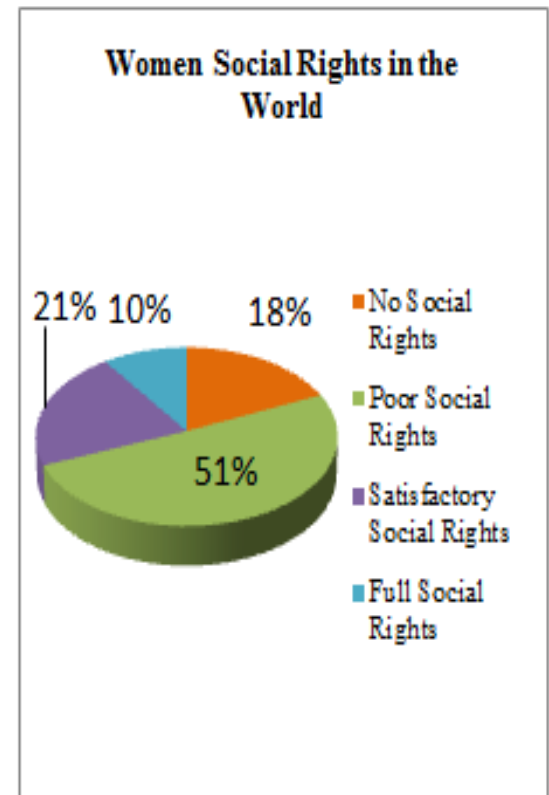
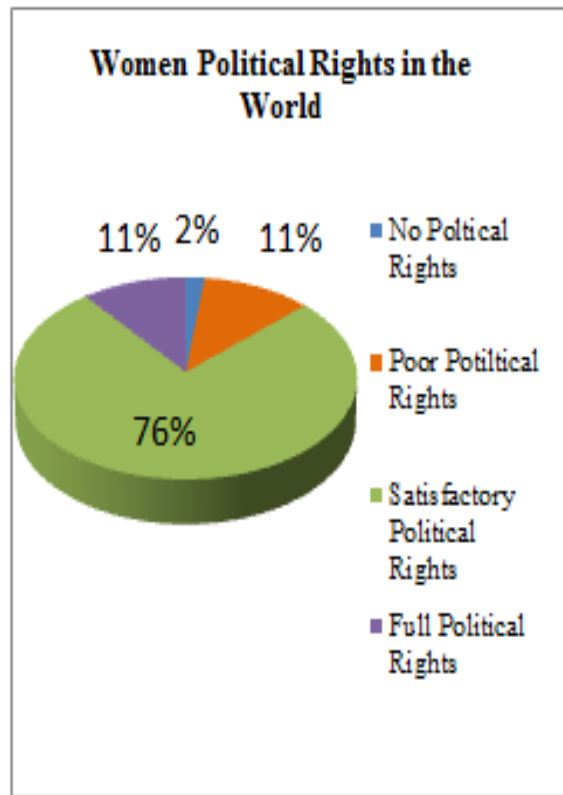
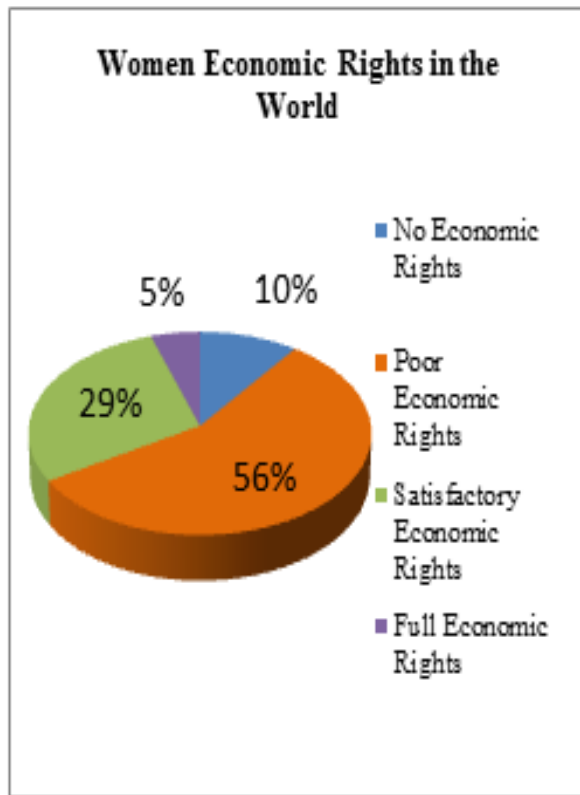


Figure 5: Women Economic Rights

Figure 6: Women Political Rights

Figure 7: Social Economic Rights

Women Rights in Low Income Developing Countries

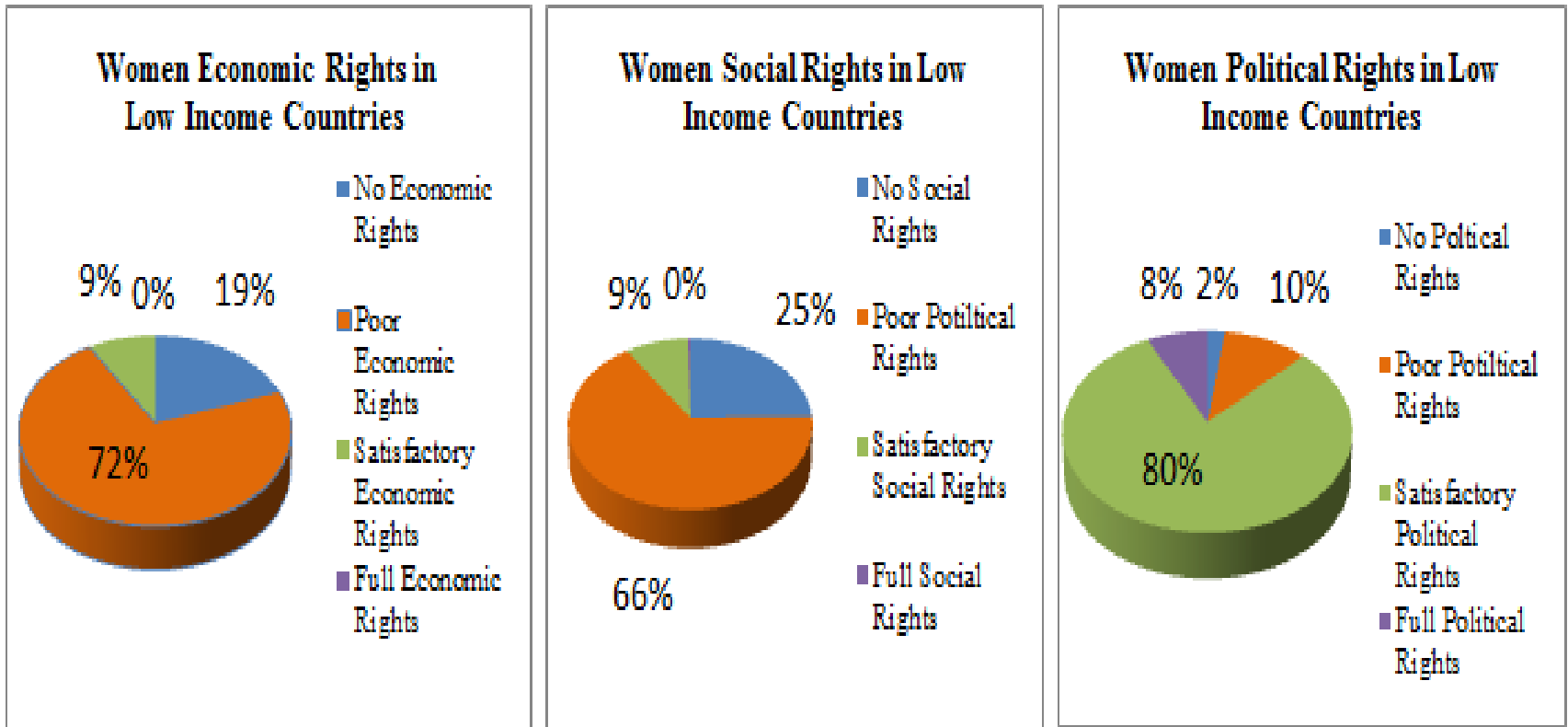


Figure 8: Women Economic, Political and Social Right in Low Income Countries

Table1: Empirical Results of Ologit Models

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Per capita GDP	0.574*** (0.0479)	0.515*** (0.0537)	0.514*** (0.0538)	0.492*** (0.0578)
Democracy	0.00476 (0.00317)	0.00416 (0.00318)	0.00217 (0.00321)	0.00226 (0.00321)
Press freedom	0.00770*** (0.00268)	0.00764*** (0.00269)	0.00748*** (0.00270)	0.00797*** (0.00274)
EAP	2.220*** (0.222)	2.104*** (0.228)	1.520*** (0.245)	1.583*** (0.252)
ECA	1.958*** (0.192)	1.765*** (0.209)	1.390*** (0.215)	1.489*** (0.235)
LAAC	2.113*** (0.206)	2.053*** (0.209)	1.710*** (0.214)	1.784*** (0.225)
SA	1.447*** (0.290)	1.339*** (0.294)	0.948*** (0.295)	0.970*** (0.296)
SSA	1.277*** (0.200)	1.432*** (0.211)	0.885*** (0.227)	0.958*** (0.237)
EU	2.860*** (0.225)	2.745*** (0.230)	2.302*** (0.239)	2.423*** (0.265)
Others	2.108*** (0.227)	2.048*** (0.229)	1.580*** (0.239)	1.686*** (0.260)
Fertility		-0.130** (0.0546)	-0.178*** (0.0553)	-0.189*** (0.0562)
Labor force (Female)			0.0204*** (0.00324)	0.0202*** (0.00324)
Female population				-0.0232 (0.0218)
Observations	2,334	2,333	2,333	2,333
LR chi2(13)	1034.50	1038.81	1078.83	1079.96
P-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R2	0.2076	0.2086	0.2166	0.2168

Academic Contribution

- The investigation of women empowerment and press freedom relationship is based on anecdotal stories and case studies. To the best of our knowledge, no one has empirically explored the impacts of press freedom on women empowerment.

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Conclusion

- The empirical results of order logit model suggest that press freedom is an efficient tool that helps in protecting economic, political and social rights of women. The increase in freedom of press will enhance the log odds of getting full rights for women vs. zero, poor and satisfactory women's rights.
- The women of European Union enjoy complete economic, social and political rights because media is free in European Union. On the other hand in MENA region women are discriminated because press is not free. The graphical and statistical analysis also supports the positive relationship between press freedom and women rights.

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Policy Implications

This analysis purposes following policy implications:

- Policy makers, who want to extract the full potential of human capital of a country, should take positive steps in making favorable policies for women through which they can flourish their channels.
- Freedom of press is an important tool that helps women to fight for their economic, political and social rights. Free media protects the rights of women by reporting biased attitudes of society against women. It assists in proving respectful social status to women by informing people about the due rights of women. It is recommended by our study that press freedom is pre-requisite to abolish discrimination against women.

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Thank You!