

INVESTIGATION OF PROBLEMS FACED BY FEMALE STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL

Taiyyibah Naeem and Muhammad Arshad Dahar ¹

¹Division of Continuing Education, PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Corresponding Authors' Email: drarshad1969@uair.edu.pk

ABSTRACT: *The present study aimed to investigate the problems that female students face at higher level. Identification of the problems that female students face at higher education level was the first aim of the study. Secondly, to find out the gender discrimination about female education. Thirdly, to analyze these problems that female students have to face regarding their higher education and to suggest guidelines to solve these problems. This study was conducted in district of Rawalpindi. One hundred and twenty female students of higher education level were taken as a sample of the study. By using simple random sampling technique, four universities were selected as sample of the study. A close ended questionnaire was used to administer all the 120 female students for this study. The findings of the study suggested that girls have to face different problems based on gender roles and it was due to the men dominant society. Study also pointed out the problems that girls have to face to get permission from their parents to get admission at higher education level. It has also been discussed that girls have to face gender discrimination and the problems that they have to face due to co-education. The most significant finding about girls' struggle to overcome these problems was also revealed that brought some positive change for other girls of their families.*

Key words: higher education, female students, problems, gender discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

Education is generally viewed as the intellectual and moral training of individuals through which their potentialities are developed, the traits of the Creator are inculcated in them and the culture of the people is transmitted to the coming generations. Through educational process, a nation develops its self-consciousness by development of its individuals who create it. Education is a social institution which trains an individual mentally, physically, ideologically and morally. So the individual can be capable of having complete awareness of one's mission and purpose of life. Financial constraint is another major barrier that parents have to face about female education. Khalid and Mukhtar indicated in their research on "The Future of Girl's Education in Pakistan" noted that "Even if there is a minimal tuition fee charged in schools, expenditures on uniform, textbooks and other materials, besides the opportunity cost of sending daughters to school, serve as constraints. Opportunity costs increase when children grow up and become more useful in the family's income-earning/domestic activities. This explains higher school drop-out rates among grown up girls (grade 4 & 5)". So as daughters got mature, they get busy at home and withdrawn from institutes to help in home tasks [1].

Khan investigated that usually more resources are invested on boys' education and for their development as compared to girls' education. Priority to sons is given because they are being considered the earning source. And they are given better and skillful education for resources in the World. On the other side, girls are being taught only domestic work that how to be good wives and good mothers [2].

Education is equally important for both men and women. But, unfortunately in some countries, people neglect the society. In spite of the beneficial acceptance of the women education at the universal level, more than 180 million out of the 300 million illiterate children are girls [5].

The low status of female education in Pakistan is due to many restrictions, such as social, political, religious and cultural rules concerning women's role in society. Such situations demand through investigation to explore the main causes of

importance of education for girls. In some under developing and poor countries girls are still unlikely to access school and educate themselves. This is the reason why girls are unable to fight for their rights because of lack of education. According to Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) it is right of everyone either its man or woman to get an education. It is an interesting fact to note down that country which emphasizes on the education of girls are developing and the countries that neglect the importance of education for girls are mainly poor countries. It is a most powerful way to lift the people out of poverty [3].

More specifically, in KPK and Baluchistan women are severely bound by cultural constraints and prejudices. They are involved in productive, reproductive and community work for 14-18 hours, in these areas the female literacy rate stands between 15 per cent and 25 per cent. A day as well as in northern tribal areas the education of girls is strictly prohibited on religious grounds. Those girls who go schools their attendance rates in primary, secondary, and postsecondary schools are lower than boys." This is a basic misconception of Islam [4].

Throughout the world, education is acknowledged as the main factor of socio-economic development of a society. It has become the most powerful tool, not only for the economic development but also for the cultural and social improvement of the society. The success and progress of a nation depends on literate society. Without education the development of any nation cannot be imagined. We see education as the basis for the development and advancement of the women's status in the society. It is an instrument for the maintenance of their role as equal spouse of the

this problem. Sathar stated that Education is supposed as a sign of status for women and as an instrument for the empowerment of girls. Higher education enriches the society and develops individual lives. It permits people to enhance and enjoy "life of the mind". It endorses values which are broader and public like religious groups, families and household or linguistic and ethnic group [6].

Davis and Lehman stated that students and parents both have to face financial problems. This is also the cause of child abuse in kids. It is also can be the cause of socio-emotional problems in students like depression, financial stress, low self-esteem and even it affects the academic performance [7]. Qureshi and Rarieya, stated that the feudal system and the absence of democracy (and democratic attitudes) also promote inequalities by creating powerlessness among large sections of poor people, including women. Feudalism perpetuates an unsafe environment where the disempowered in general, and girls/women in particular, are vulnerable to assault, kidnapping, physical violence and honor killing which is often socially, and until recently, legally condoned. The above attitudes find sympathy in a rigid and restrictive and often misleading interpretation of the status of women in Islam which is also used to create barriers for women's access to family and public resources. Such socio-cultural constraints restrict girls to participate in productive concerns causing great hindrance in governing the girls' educational institutions in the society [8].

Khattak investigated that social structure element like traditionalism to purdah is another problem that students have to face. The community people have considered it as the element of integrity of the family. They thought that if female go out of their homes, the families' honor would turn out to be on risk. Our community observes purdah- as a religion and social obligation for female, in which she practices not to expose herself to the stranger/male individuals other than her family members. According to the community members to stay at home by females is a value- and value is expected to be practiced by each individual of that society. People think that if their females are seen outside their homes, it will be bad. They think that their respect will be at stake and females going out may bring stigmas with them. Khattak stated that issues of safety and security are another social problem that parents have to face about girls' higher education. Long distance travel to universities usually considered dangerous for the personal security of females. Incidents of female's sexual abuse and harassment are the reasons to the security of females dominate parents' decisions of not sending daughters, especially when educational institutions are at long distances [9].

Another major issue that students have to face is lack of counseling and it causes different negative consequences among students. It needs counseling facilities for university students. Whenever such types of services are provided to the students, it works a lot. The awareness about the future also helps to manage different problems [10,11]

Ismail, found that major problems about female education are i) that educational institution are in far flung areas, ii) problems of separate educational institutions, iii) fear of extremists, iv) frequent changes in educational policies, etc. Education is very important not only for an individual but for the society as well. Education is directly linked with society and its progress; for that reason, without education, a society cannot make any development. Higher education is the potent agent for the progress, this also reflect the broad recognition that it contributes to the development. Education is the basic

and fundamental right of every individual in any society. Education is necessary for the progress of a society that its men and women should get higher education and play their part in the advancement of the society which can only take place if both men and women are made highly educated. While educating both men and women is essential to the process of development, failing to invest in female education can reduce the potential benefits of all types. Female literacy is the challenge of the day [12].

Pakistan is one of the countries with lowest literacy rates in the world. And if we talk about the girls' education, more than 40 percent of girls do not get admission in school. "The condition is more worrying in rural areas especially and it is because of cultural and social Hindrance. Trend of early marriages is another major barrier that parents have to face about female education. Buzdar says that in Pakistani culture, marriage of daughters is considered the foremost responsibility of parents. Marriages in the family, cast list and baraderi, especially of girls' marriages are the common customs in every society. Girls' parents also have to bear economic pressure for collecting dowry for their daughters. These social trends are seemed to be one of the causes of parents' priority to invest in boy's education. Because they think that it is for safety of old age and it is attached with the good economic capability of boys. It gives sufficient explanation to invest in education of sons. It is also discussed that scarcity of resources is the serious problem that parents have to face about girls' education [13,14,15].

Yasmeen stated that Higher education is always expected to represent social norms such as arguments and debates. It also plays main role in country's progress and development as well as for the advancement of females. Higher education helps females in two ways. It allows educated females to go for leadership in society and also permit them to become role model for other young girls [16].

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the problems that female students face at higher education level.
2. To find out the gender discrimination about girls education.
3. To analyze the problems that students have to face regarding their higher education.
4. To suggest guidelines to solve these problems and minimize their impact

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research Design

Following method was assumed for this study. The study was descriptive in nature.

Population

Population of the study contained of all the girls studying in the universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Sampling Procedure

Sampling procedure was made on two stages. At first stage four universities were selected. In second stage 120 female students were selected randomly.

Instrument of the Study

The study was descriptive in nature and a close ended questionnaire was used for data collection. Questions were divided into eleven different problem domains. Five-point Likert scale was used to develop a close ended questionnaire.

Data Collection

Researcher visited the sample of respondents personally and administered the questionnaire for data collection. Respondents were fully informed by the researcher about filling procedure of the questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

After the collection of data by using above mention instrument were interpreted, analyzed and tabulated according to the objectives of the study.

RESULTS

The present study was aimed to investigate the problems faced by girls at higher education at level. The data collected by using above mention instrument were interpreted, analyzed and tabulated according to the objectives of the study. The results are being interpreted in the following.

Table 1: Problems faced by Female students at University level.

Sr .	Statements	Mean	S.D	Df	Chi-Square	Sig.
1	Physical environmental problem	4.15	.476	9	92.16	.000
2	Learning problem	3.51	.631	9	69.33	.000
3	Co-educational problem	4.04	1.24	8	60.75	.000
4	Gender Discrimination	3.88	.412	7	59.46	.000
5	Social problem	4.04	.342	8	74.40	.000
6	Financial problem	4.43	.388	7	65.46	.000
7	Accommodation problem	4.30	1.01	9	109.83	.000
8	Transportation problem	4.01	.410	7	52.26	.000
9	Impact of media	4.15	.476	9	92.16	.000
10	Religious misconceptions	3.51	.631	9	69.33	.000
11	Law and order Issues	3.86	.889	13	95.83	.000

N=120

From the above table all the variables are significant as p is less >0.05, the value of Chi square is .000 which is less than the value of 0.5 which shows that above mention problems females have to face at higher education level. The results shown in the above table represents that young girls have to face many problems in the Universities for higher education due to many reasons some are mention below:

They have physical environmental problems such as classrooms with proper facilities are not available especially for the research students. Computer lab facilities and printing facilities are very less. Co-curricular activities are not separately arranged for girls in co-educational institutes. Students have communication gap with teacher. Female

students feel hesitation from male teachers. Due to the students' involvement in political activities, students face learning problems. It is due to the joint family systems and braderi system in our society, because in middle class families boys are not educated so they think that if wife's is more educated than husband they will dominate husband and may not care their family responsibilities. People think that girls haven't any need to do jobs in this way they are not in the favor of girls' higher education. Girls face accommodation problems due to the lack of residential facilities. The environment of universities and hostels is deteriorating day by day due to modernization of the society. Private accommodation is very expensive and have no proper security arrangements are available. Lack of transport facilities is another big problem that students have to face. Inflation is also a big issue which is a big hurdle for the higher education. Due to poverty and lack of financial resources they have to face financial problems. There is a lack of separate women educational institutions so they have to face more problems in co-educational institutions because being Muslims it is not allowed in Islam.

FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of data and review of related literature the study found that:

- 1. Pakistan is an Islamic country:** Islam is the main religion of country and 96 per cent of the people are Muslim. In Islam, it is clearly stated that education is obligatory for every Muslim men and women. This shows that education is compulsory for women as it is important for men. And women should receive education.
- 2. Problems of Access to Education:** Most of the people in Pakistan lives below the average salary that is very less and people are even unable to manage their domestic dues or expenses. That is why it is why they do not pay much attention on education. It is impossible for them to enroll in higher education institutions.
- 3. Problems of Separate Higher Educational Institutions:** There are not sufficient separate educational institutions for women in Pakistan. It is a big hindrance in women higher education. Girls have much insecurity about co-education institutions.
- 4. Male partiality:** in Pakistan mostly Parents give preference to the education of their boys over girls. Whenever there is a tradeoff between sons and daughter to send them in school, they always prefer to spend on son's education because they think that they will be the future earning hands of parents.
- 5. Fear of extremists:** Different extremist/terrorist groups are not in the favor of girls' education as they have given threatening letters to many government and private institutes to stop female education. It is another problem that not only girls but their parents also have to face this problem at higher education level.
- 6. Repeated changes in educational policies:** from the time when Pakistan came into being, different governments have announced many policies and plans

for the promotion of literacy rate, especially the literacy rate in girls' education. But the problem is that they all have been unable to implement their plans and programs due to many cultural, social and political hurdles.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study indicate that the girls face enormously difficult situations in the process of getting admission into higher educational institutions. Analysis of the types and forms of problems suggested that grounds of these barriers were deep rooted in gender discrimination based on patriarchal structure of society as a whole.

If we looked into the above mentioned themes, we might come to realize that all these themes impliedly worked for gender-segregated and male-dominated society. The findings of the study also suggested that despite these cultural barriers girl's motivation level for higher education had gone up thus reflecting their moral courage to defend their rights. Analysis of the discussion regarding coping-strategies adopted by girls to overcome cultural barriers suggested that all these girls tried to convince their families, but when this strategy did not work out, they adopted strategy of emotional black mailing. If we analyzed above discussion in context of family structure, segregated society and power relationship, it became clear that females were less privileged.

It is a natural phenomenon that when less privileged are suppressed, a time comes that they may revolt to get their due right. May be, in this case of girls, they were left with no choice but to convince their families by using emotional black mailing as a last resort to convince their parents for university/higher education. The findings of this study have also shown the problems faced by girls during process of handling these strategies. They had to face family's anger, relatives' wrath and isolation to mend their attitude by spurning the idea of education. Their household responsibilities were increased to distract them from studies altogether.

The most important conclusion that emerged from the analysis of data was the positive impact of females' student efforts to get higher education on the other girls of family and community. Through findings, it was also observed that their presence in higher educational institutions brought some positive implications for other girls of their families. These respondents shared their views that some of the girls of their family were following their footsteps and getting education in a relative smooth way.

REFERENCES

1. Khalid, H. S., and Mukhtar, E. M. "The future of girl's education in Pakistan: A study on policy measures and other factors determining girls' education". Report, *UNESCO, Islamabad*. (2002)
2. Khan, A. S. "Gender Issues in Higher Education in Pakistan", *the Bulletin*. (2007)
3. Pakistan MDG Report. 'Planning Commission Centre for Research on Poverty Reduction and Income Distribution', *Islamabad* (2005)
4. Situational Analysis of Women in Pakistan—An Overview.
http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Country_Briefing_Papers/Women_in_Pakistan/chap_01.pdf (2001)
5. World Bank. <http://go.worldbank.org/K9L01MQLOO> (2007b)
6. Sathar, Z. A., Lloyd, C. B., and Haque, M. *Investment in Children's Education and Family*. (2000)
7. Davis, C. G., Lehman, D. R., Silver, R. C., Wortman, C. B., & Ellard, J. H. Self-blame following a traumatic event: "The role of perceiveavoid ability". *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, **22**, 557-567. (1996)
8. Qureshi, R, and Rarieya, J. Gender and Education in Pakistan. *Amazon.co.pk* (2007)
9. Khattak, K. M. "Community Attitude Towards Female Education in NWFP". *Ph. D. Thesis Peshawar University, Peshawar*. (2008)
10. Cranford, J. A., Eisenberg, D., & Serran, A. M. "Substance use behaviors, mental health problems, and use of mental health services in a probability sample of college students." *Addictive Behaviors*, **34**, 134-145. (2009)
11. Hunt, J., & Eisenberg, D. "Mental health problems and help-seeking behavior among college students". *Journal of Adolescent Health*, **46**, 3-10. (2010)
12. Ismail, S. "Women's Education in Pakistan". (2009)
13. Buzdar and Ali. "Parents' Attitude toward Daughters' Education in Tribal Area of Dera Ghazi Khan (Pakistan)". (2011)
14. Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Education, "Financing of Secondary, Higher Secondary and College Education". (2004-2005)
15. Ministry of Education, Academy of Education Planning and Management, *Pakistan Education Statistics*, (2004-2005)
16. Yasmeen, S. "Impact Of Higher Education In Understanding Of Social Recognition Of Women", *Ph. D. Thesis University of Arid Agriculture Rawalpindi*. (2000)