

Journal of Educational Research & Social Science Review (JERSSR)

Exploring Parents Perception and Causes of Low Enrolment for Girls Education in District Swat

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Abstract



The aim of this study was to explore the parents' perception regarding their girls' education, the major objectives of the study were to find out the perception regarding female education, identify causes of low enrolment. The research questions were also corresponded to objectives of the study e.g. what kind of problems faced by the parents for their girls' schooling, availability of schools and parents' consent on sending their daughters to school? Steps needed by the government to promote female education? The data were gathered and the results were quantified by using percentage, mean and SD. Half of the research parents pointed out that there were non-availability of girl high schools or situated in faraway areas from their homes, therefore parents stopped their girls' schooling. Parents also shared the view about families with low income often left the school due to poverty. According to the findings, mothers were of the opinion that awareness programs regarding girls' education and health care instead of stipend money may help the female students for education within a conservative society.

Keywords: Low Enrolment, Parents Perception, Dropout

Introduction

This is the responsibility of the state to provide free and obligatory education to all children from age 5 to 16 as determined by law in constitution of Pakistan article 25A (Siddiqui, 2010). Education is fundamental right of every child which shows gender equality in attaining education in Pakistan. Different governments have taken initiatives to improve education. Pakistan education statistics 2011-12-EMIS shows that 28% girls are enrolled in Pakistan at high-secondary schools which is low. Sineta (2012) mentioned that every developing country tries to achieve goal of universal education but still low socio-economic and marginalized students have no access to basic education like in the African country Malawi. Malawi introduced financing strategies for poor and marginalized children to provide basic education. They started stipend program to increase girls' enrolment from 2005 to 2009. Kelly (2009) said that India current education policy had successfully raised overall enrolment but still girls were behind in education. Policy makers paid attention to improve girls' education. In Tamil Nadu a "special incentives scheme" for girls' education was started in 1994, to encourage the enrolment of female students. Zeeshan and Ahmad (2014) reported that in 2008 the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province had the literacy rate for 57% for male and 20% for female respectively. The basic reasons for this low female literacy rate were low income and conservative society. In rural areas girls were anticipated to collaborate with their mothers in domestic work and some families followed the old custom of not sending their daughter to high school. They only completed their basic education at primary level just because they were girls however dropout was controlled but enrolment was still low in Swat.

Problem Statement

. This study focused on the perception of parents that how the study also intended to investigate the reasons of low enrolment of girls in district Swat.

Rationale of the Study

The study analyzed the parents' perception that what they thought and how they felt about girls education. Parents might also realize the importance of education when they would come to know the attention of the government towards female education. The study explored the issues of decrease in

girls' enrolment like poverty, early marriages and conservative society. Poor families who could not afford stationary of their daughters might also be able to send their daughters to school, when they might fulfil the charges incurred on getting education through stipend amount. The money could attract them for further schooling. The government might come to know about effectiveness of the program, whether the target of enrolment was achieved or not if yes it should be continued and if the results were negative so it should be reshaped. The government would pay more attention to the problem of decrease in enrolment and might be able to tackle the exact problem in enrolment. The purpose of the study about gender specific program is to remove gender disparity in education and explore parents' p

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study were to:

1. Exploring the perception of parents about girls' education.
2. Identify the causes of low enrolment in girls' education.

The above two objectives were designed for this research study; Following research questions were designed from the research objectives

Research questions

- 1.1 Is there high school available for girls at secondary level and do parents agree with the importance of girls' education?
- 1.2 Which problems parents face while sending their daughters to schools?
- 1.3 To what extent poverty and social taboos are main hurdles in girls' education?

Review of the Literature

The children who do get enrolled, 31 percent drop out before they finish primary school. While a decrease in the non-enrolled children (from 25 million to 24 million) yet children from 5 to 16 still not going to school. While a significant reduction has been observed in gender disparity, 52 percent of all girls within the age bracket of 5 and 16 years in Pakistan are currently out of school compared to 43 percent of all boys. The aim of bringing to light the existing picture on the state of education in the country is to underscore the urgency of dealing with EFA. (National Education Management Information System (NEMIS, 2015).

Creative Strategies for Girls' Education

In Pakistan, the Punjab education sector introduced reform programs. For example, distribution of free textbooks, infrastructural developments, recruitment of teachers (regular and contract), increase in the entrance qualification of teachers. These reforms for the sake of education have been working but certain mechanisms are still to be fully applied (Chaudhury & Parajuli, 2010).

Globally, there are over 50 million school-age children who are not enrolled in school. According to the United Nation (2015a) on primary school there are 57 million school age children who were not enrolled in school Many countries in Latin America had implanted stipend money program for girls' education, and attracted low income families to receive financial support for their children schooling and motivate them for further education. It provided access and demand for education in rural areas where the enrolment was affected by poverty and school attendance was much lower than urban areas after the age of 10 (Castellanos, 2015)

Parents' Perception Regarding Girls' Education

The study focused on parents' perception regarding their daughters' education, continuous absenteeism and their recommendations for abolishing the issue. Many issues like student's illness, undesirable relations with other students, school violence, and some other factors were also found that were causes of student absentia. Most participants were low income or single parents. They faced challenges when attempted to send their children on daily basis. Many parents of absent children raised the point that there were gap communication and they unable to solve their academic problems, then they did not take any interest in their children schooling. There should be a proper way of communication to help the school and parents and the root cause for the absence is understood. School management and teachers could also collaborate with the parents of the students to solve the matter of daily attendance and absentia of the students.

Yoder and Lopez (2013) suggested the results that parents were hopeful about engaging in educating their children but often failed to become actively involved because they felt marginalized. Enhancing academic achievement and promoting positive behaviour in young people. That qualitative study used a Grounded Theory approach to examine parent's perceptions of their ability or inability to

be involved in their children's education. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data on parents (N = 12) of youth who participated in public housing after-school program by way of focus groups. Results suggested that parents were willing to participate in their children education, but often failed to become actively involved because they felt that being parents they should be involved in the whole educational process. Furthermore, more challenging for them was to overcome in the face of oppression. Marginalization was manifested cyclically for those parents. Implications of different strategies helped parents to become more involved in the educational process.

Methodology

Research Design

The study is descriptive in nature. The convenient sampling technique was used to collect the data (80) parents of the students who were out of school from the same area were interviewed to analyze parents' perception about female education and government incentive program for increase in girls' enrolment. The total population of the study was selected from District Swat

(80) parents of non-enrolled students in the vicinity of the selected schools were also selected to be in

Table 1

Detail of parents sampling to the study who were interviewed

Total schools	Selected schools	Committee members	Selected committee members	Parents of non-enrolled students	Total sample size
40	20	240	120	80	200

Table 5 shows the twenty selected girls high schools at district Swat. The population was comprised 240 committee members (parents). The researcher selected 120 reviewed. parents among them and 80 parents of none enrolled children were selected and interviewed through semi structured group interviews.

Development of Research Tools

The tools were developed keeping in view the objectives of the study The researchers reviewed literature and gone through different studies while planning to develop research tools and got main ideas for tools development. The researcher designed the tools (questionnaire, open-ended questions and semi structured interview) on the basis of following research studies.

Semi structured interview

Semi structured interviews were conducted with similar indicators as in questionnaire. It was scheduled in advance with flexible structure to get deep exploration of the one hundred and twenty (120) respondents (parents). There were pre-set questions about their perception regarding girls' education, their financial status, social and cultural constraints and their contribution towards female education. They were also interviewed regarding stipend money program; the total amount, disbursement, checking and monitoring procedure, latest status of the money (continuation), effect of the money, (pros and cons) and to what extent they were in favour of stipend money as incentive. There were further sub questions in the list which were also asked from female students' mothers and the same interviews were conducted and asked relevant questions from eighty (80) mothers whose girls left the school after primary level in the vicinity from the selected school.

Validity and Reliability of Research Tool

Research tool was validated through expert opinion. Two PhD teachers from faculty of education and three senior head teachers from district Swat validated the tool. They gave their opinion to rephrase and delete some items as they were not much relevant to the study

Data Collection

The researcher personally went to the field and data were collected accordingly Eighty (80) parents of non-enrolled children in the vicinity from selected school were interviewed. They all were agreed for responding and told different reasons of school leaving and shared their perception regarding girls' education. It is mentioned here that total two hundred twenty (240) responses were collected.

Data Analysis

Table 2

Girls' dropout rate

Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	X	SD
1.	Girls' dropout rate was more than boys.	26 43.3%	27 45.0%	5 8.3%	2 3.3%	0 0%	4.28	.7611

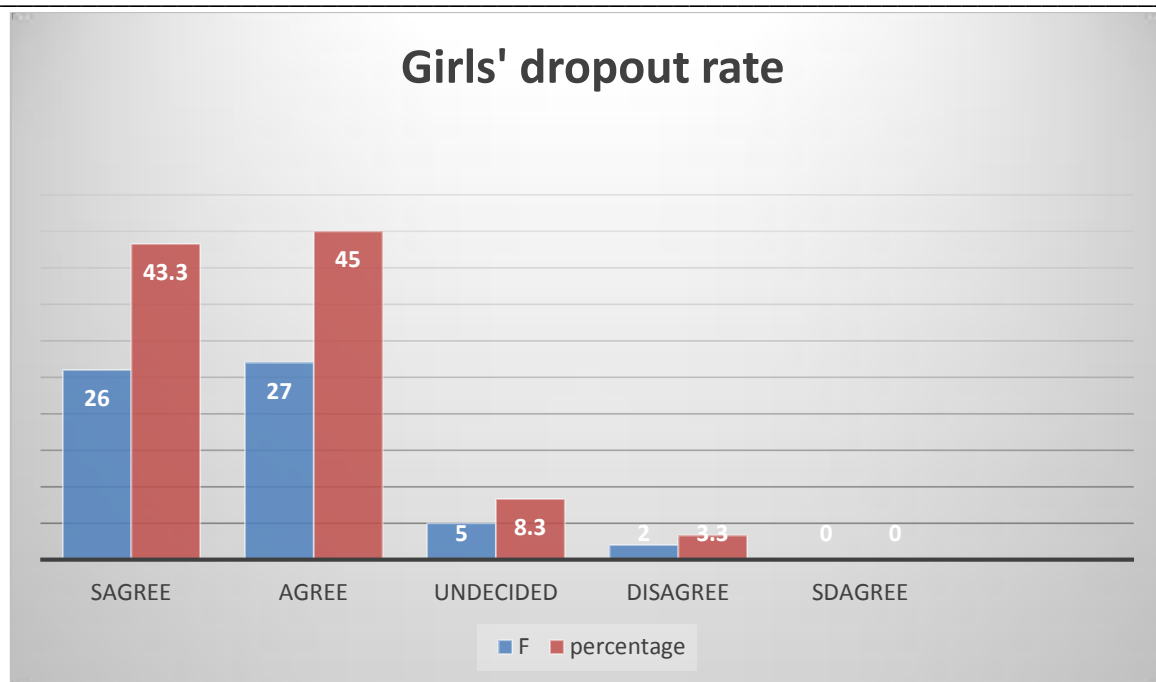
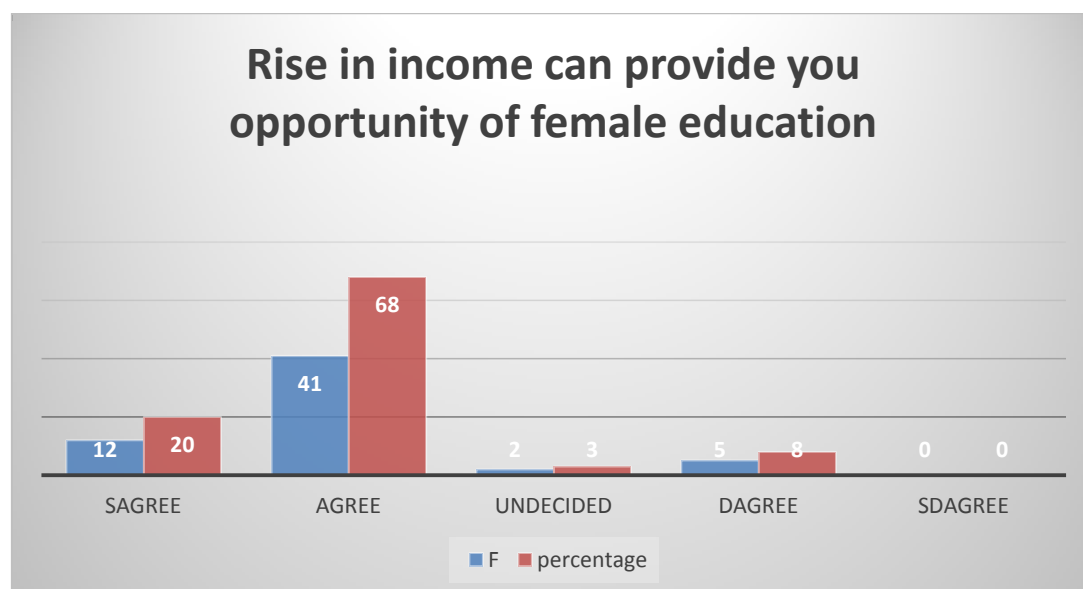


Table 2 shows that nearly all the respondents 45% were agreed and 43.3% were strongly agreed with the above statement that girls' dropout rate was more than boys at district Swat. Mean ($M=4.28$, $SD=.7611$) also shows the agreement of the respondents with the statement.

Table 3

Rise in income

Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	X	SD
1.	Rise in family income increases the chances of female education.	12	41	2	5	0	4.00	.7591
		20.0%	68.3%	3.3%	8.3%	0%		



Above graphic lines showing that 68% respondents were agreed and 20% were strongly agreed with the statement that poverty was the main hurdle in female education and most of families were poor that's why they stopped their daughters' further schooling.

Table 4*Poverty and female education*

Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA
2.	Parents did not use to send their girls to schools because of poverty.	2	10	6	0	1
		9.1%	45.5%	27.3%	0%	9.1%

The above table showing us that many of the respondents 45.5 % were agreed and 9% were strongly agreed with the statement that poverty is the main hurdle for girls' education.

Girls' dropout rate

Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA
1.	Girls' dropout rate was more than boys.	0	16	4	0	0
		0%	72.7%	18.2%	0%	0%

Table showing nearly all the respondents 72.7% were agreed that girls' dropout rate was more than boys in district Swat.

Early marriages

Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA
1.	Stipend money started to girl students at high school level to delay early marriages.	0	0	2	9	9
		0%	0%	9.1%	40.9%	40.9%

The above table shows that mostly respondents opined that this stipend money program did not help in delaying early marriages. The table provide the information that still there were trend of early marriages (at student age).

Parents' perception of enrolled students

Sr. No	Parents' statements of non-enrolled children =80	N	%age
1.	Almost half of the respondents were disappointed that there is no need of stipend money if there is no high school in a village. They said that most often the schools are far away and parents stop their girls schooling. They thought their daughter are not secure while going to school on foot.	38	47.5
2.	Almost half of the survey mothers told that we want to send our daughters to school but sometimes father and brothers oppose to it. And they told that educated girls are become shrewd and they become expressive which is not good in our society.	38	47.5
3.	Some of them told that there is no high school for female in their villages. The government should pay attention to open high schools.	30	37.5
4.	Some parents were disappointed with bad condition of buildings and furniture of schools. They criticized the location of schools' buildings of female schools.	26	32.5%
5.	Few of survey respondents explored their ideas about early marriages of girls. They told that this is the way to get rid of a burden.	24	30%
6.	During data collection the researcher noticed that some amount of respondents believed in gender discrimination. They paid attention towards boys' education.	24	30%
7.	Due to lake of awareness or ignorance some people not send their girl to school after primary. They force their daughters for marriage in very young ages or domestic work.	22	27.5%
8.	Some told that there was no restriction for girls' schooling but they themselves did not want to go to schools. They took interest in domestic work.	16	20%
9.	Some mothers criticized the school environment and behavior of teaching staff.	16	20%
10.	Some of them told that their daughters often absent from school due to sickness.	16	20%

Findings of the Study

- Ninety five (95%) respondents (parents) were of the opinion that government should provide uniform and shoes to the students. They also told that transport was a very big issue for female students.
- Forty eight (48%) research respondents (parents of enrolled students) and 47% respondents (parents of non-enrolled children) pointed out that there was non-availability of girl high schools and mostly the schools were far away and parents stopped their girls' schooling. They thought their daughter were not secure while going to school on foot

3. Thirty two (32%) research respondents (parents of non-enrolled children) were disappointed with bad condition of buildings and furniture of schools. Mothers also criticized the school environment and behaviour of teaching staff.

Findings related to objective no.2 related to causes of low enrolment

1. Seventy seven percent (77%) of the research respondents (parents) said that girls at district Swat got married in very early age and it was also a hurdle in their further education. According to their culture girls get married in early ages and many of them hardly continue their education after marriage.
2. Seventy two percent (72%) respondents (head teachers) were of the opinion that girls dropout rate was more than boys at district Swat.
3. Seventy two percent (72%) respondents (teachers and head teachers) told that rise in family income increases the chances of female education. Most of the families were poor that's why they stopped their daughters' further schooling.
4. It was found that 48% mothers were of the opinion that sometimes their husbands and sons don't allow their girls for further schooling, although mothers became helpless in this regard.

Conclusions

1. Poverty was a main hurdle in getting education. The researcher found that most of the people were poor and they thought that their daughters left the school due to poverty. The stipend money was a financial support to poor students therefore it should be continued that students may fulfil their educational needs (shoes, uniform, and stationary). Respondents (parents) also shared the idea that the stipend amount should be increased with the passage of time as money value is lowered
2. It was concluded that girls in district Swat got married in very early age according to their culture and some of them hardly continue their education after marriage that was also main hurdle in their further education. The respondents suggested awareness programs regarding girls' education and health that they may get rid of early marriages.
3. There were also non availability of high schools for female in some villages, hence their daughters had to go to another village for school. The parents suggested that government should pay attention to open girl high schools in every village. Some of the parents in the survey responded that there was no teaching staff or lack of science teachers at high schools in their villages. They also criticized the school environment and behavior of teaching staff with students. Some told there was no restriction for girls' schooling but they themselves did not want to go to schools because of school environment.

Discussion

The study was conducted to explore the ideas and opinions of parents of enrolled and non-rolled female students in district Swat, The selected area was affected due to militancy in 2009, especially female education was suffered and buildings of girl schools were destroyed. Female enrolment ratio was less than boys at primary level food items (oil, wheat and biscuits) were provided to promote girls' education. The aim of the study was to explore the factors affecting girls' enrolment, and how their parents dealt with them The researcher collected the data accordingly There were different responses from different participants, but most of them generally pointed out poverty, academic performance and behaviour of student as criteria used to select beneficiaries. These were the major characteristics (i) criteria for selection, (ii) measurement of poverty, (iii) stakeholder involvement and (iv) impressions about the selection process. Criteria of selection an important consideration in the selection of beneficiaries in this program. Looking at poverty and academic performance as criteria for selection, reported in his study that during his data collection process he found the respondents, those who directly said they dropped out by choice and did not point any particular reason for doing so. During the interview process, such beneficiaries looked him straight into his eyes and told him that it was their personal choice to drop out. So that type of participants exists everywhere in the world, how government should deal with them (Senita, 2012). From the findings, it is clear that some beneficiaries dropped out because of their home environment. Some parents involved the girls in the business not merely by choice but because they were trying to meet their daily needs. These are typical parents in developing countries who because of poverty tend to utilize children in family business. This program is one of the fruitful programs for promotion of girls' education in Bangladesh. The change in behaviour and norms were found sufficiently due to financial incentives in

developing countries. The stipend program compelled the students for further schooling and it would assist them passing SSC exam. In Bangladesh specific objectives of stipends to girls in secondary schools are, to increase girls' enrolment in secondary school, retain them in secondary education, assist them in passing the SSC examination to enhance their employment opportunities as primary school teachers, extension workers, health and

Recommendations

On the basis of above findings and conclusion drawn from the research study here are some suggestions and recommendation:

1. For promoting girls' education, awareness programs regarding importance of girls' education should start in rural areas of district Swat.
2. Awareness program regarding health care and demerits of early marriages should be focused by the government which would aware the parents about demerits of early marriages that how could it severely affect the education and health of their children.
3. For promoting girls' education girl high schools should be available in every village and filling of vacancies (teaching staff) should be made sure in those schools where there is need on urgent base. Accessibility to school should be made easy through constructing new schools in far-flung villages.

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