Impact of Father Education on Female Education in Pashtun Society of District Charsadda, Pakistan

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Abstract: Female education is the key element of development. Pashtun culture, it is still challenging for the female to acquire higher education due to socio-economic and cultural constraints. This study investigates the impact of literate and illiterate fathers’ of Pashtun culture on the education of their female child. The study was conducted in the rural areas of District Charsadda of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. A comprehensive survey was made with the help structure questions to collect data from 140 respondents (male having daughter/daughters of age 5 years or above). It has been concluded that the highly educated fathers allow their girls for higher education as compare to the fathers having less or no education. The study also identified other barriers to female education; such as parrahdah, poverty and co-education at universities. The study recommends that increase in female schools, colleges and transport facility will bridge the gap between male and female education.

1. Introduction

Education plays a dominant role in the betterment of society and development of a nation. It has always been regarded as an essential tool for development, linked to the empowerment and independence of a women [1]. Half of the world population consist of women and by ignoring her participation in the development process, will ultimately be an obstacle for the development of a country. Educated woman has major contribution in the improvement of human capital as well as the economic growth [2]. Within the development community there is a general agreement that female education has a positive relationship with socioeconomic development. If a woman is educated she will have unlimited choices and opportunities to participate in the labor force. Thus, the higher female literacy rate will tend to improve the per capita income of a state, which is a fundamental aspect in the economic development of a nation [3]. It is not possible for a society to be progressive in any aspect, in the absence of female education [4]. Education enables a women to reduce gender biased violence, as well as it can assist her in conducting everyday activities in a better which may improve the life probability of her child [5]. There are sixty five million girls in the world who had never attended school, hundred million girls who had not completed the primary education, and about five hundred million females who remained uneducated [6]. This determines the inequalities and the prevalent suffering of girls, especially in the most developing communities. As a result of rising female illiteracy and lack of gender equality in education most of the developing nations of the world are facing poverty, health, and fertility issues, and overall socioeconomic development. Similarly it has been reported by the Government of Pakistan in 2006 that female education is an efficient way to reduce the gender inequalities, it increases the participation of women in the process of development.

1.1. Female Education in Pakistan

In Pakistan education remained the biggest challenge since independence in 1947. The overall literacy rate of Pakistan is 58 percent, among which 70 percent are male and only 47 percent are female [7]. About 60 percent of the total literate population is consist of female which shows that woman has constitutes the larger portion of illiteracy in Pakistan [8]. Women residing in the rural areas of Pakistan receive less attention comparatively to the women of urban areas, in the context of development and education policies. Similarly there are substantial inequalities in the female literacy rates amongst the four provinces; Balochistan (25 percent) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (36 percent) shows the lowest level of female literacy rate (10 years and above) as compare to Sindh (43 percent) and Punjab (52 percent) [7]. Whereas the women of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) rarely attend school or attain very low education as compare to the women in other provinces of Pakistan. Therefore the tribal areas of KPK notable has the lowest ratio of female education.

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1 Pakistan has four provinces namely, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa (formerly known as North West Frontier of Pakistan, Punjab and Balochistan.)
enrolment, as only 11 percent of women are literate in the Pashtun dominated tribal area [9].
Pakistan’s Gender Equality Education Index (GEEI) remain lowest in the South Asia at 0.20, indicating the low net attendance rate of girls in primary and secondary education. Similarly, Pakistan has the lowest gender development index reveals the inferior conditions of health, education and income of woman as compare to man [10].
Moreover, there is no homogeneity in education at the national level which also results in uneven development in the female literacy rate. According to the researches of development researchers and practitioners women in Pakistan, are significantly less educated than men [11, 12 & 13] This gender discrimination in Pakistani society ultimately results in higher female illiteracy rate, which in further reflects the low status of women in society.

There are several reasons identified by the researchers mentioning gender disparities in education. In a developing country like Pakistan, culture plays a vital part in promotion and deprivation of the female education. The socio-cultural and religious norms in the rural areas of Pakistan serve as a hinder to female education [14]. Likewise Nayak and Nair [15] indicated that girl’s education is low in the region, many of the girls being intellectual and accomplished to learn are unable to attend school due to socio-cultural norms, gender biases and poverty. Parents are interested in education of girls but poverty, lack of awareness, early marriage, and co-education are the main factors hindering it. Religious and cultural constraints remain the prime reason of girls’ dropout [16]. Along with the cultural and financial reasons, parents’ education also has a significant relationship with the child education. An educated mother is more likely to educate her child [17]. Similarly, Khattak and Khattak [18] explored that father education also has a positive impact on education quality of girls. The literate father favors to send his girls to private institutes for better education as compare to the illiterate father who focus on the quality education of his male child. This shows the prevalence of gender inequality in the society even in the 21st century.

1.2. Pashtun Culture and Female Education

Pakistan is a patriarchal society and women here face several kind of discrimination which discourages her social, economic and political status in the society. Culture plays a central role in the Pakistani societies. Every province has its own particular cultural and traditional way of life. In Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KPK), Pashtun culture is dominant. Pathans are also known as the Pashtuns and Pakhtuns, it is centuries old civilization [18]. The Pashtun culture depends largely on tribal customs and traditions and this society follows the tribal and kinship system. The life of a Pashtun is governed by the strong codes of Pakhtunwali or Pashtunwali (an unwritten code of honor). As, Rahman [20] describe Pashtunwali as a conventional, naturally democratic, centuries-old phenomenon in the Pashtun culture and socioeconomic organization. On the basis of Pashtunwali, the Pashtun society has followed the feudal social structure and has never experienced slavery of any other civilization. They are defines as aggressive, hospitable, ferocious in enmity, generous in friendship, strict about religion and strange warrior race of romantics [21]. The codes of Pashtunwali underline the male autonomy, assertiveness and aggressiveness for honor, known as Izzat. Barth [11] identified the three major institutions which are prominent and has central position in the Pashtunwali codes; such as Melmasti, hospitality and the honorable use of materials and goods; Jirga, councils and principled solution of public affairs; Purdah, seclusion of women and disciplined domestic life.
The societal norms of Pashtun culture derive its basic principles from Islam therefore it is conventional and often very traditional. People belonging to this traditional culture hold strong to the concept of honor, self-respect, purdah (veiling) and segregation of genders. Similarly women in the Pashtun culture are considered respectable and regarded as symbol of honor that protects the honor of the family to an extent to embrace death in return. The mobility of women in Pashtun culture is prohibited and she is responsible for conducting household activities within the boundaries of her home [22]. Women in this culture always face challenges when it comes to education, participation in politics and management of economic resources due to the fact that male controls all the economic resources and manages socio-cultural environment [23]. According to the Pashtun traditional concept female education is a “western conspiracy” and a mean of vulgarity in the society [24]. Wider the gender gap, the decrease in female education in Pashtun society. The female education is dramatically lower than the male education. And this remains a primary concern of the relevant policy makers. During 1990, an increasing trend was observed for female literacy rate among the Pashtun society, but after 9/11 this process reversed. And the rising insurgency among the northern province of Pakistan worse off the female education, 190 government schools for girls were destroyed and about 8000 female teachers get unemployed [25]. The persistent cycles of war and conflict, extremism, militancy and the introduction of strict cultural and religious beliefs have further intricate and extravagant the question of gender justice and female education in the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KPK). The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan report highlighted that about
108 schools for girls remained dysfunctional in FATA. The insurgents primarily targeted the girl’s schools and ban female education in the regions they were active. In six districts of KPK about 7, 21,392 students were influenced by the militancy among which about 3, 71,604 were females. This violence against the female education highly effected the female enrollment in conflict affected regions. [26] Many of the researches have been done on gender and development and women empowerment issues in general [27, 28 &29]. But there have been relatively few researches on the theme of relationship between fathers’ education and girls’ education. This study, therefore, sought to explore and analyze Pashtun fathers’ attitude the female education and their contribution in gender discrimination.

2. Objectives of the Study
The objectives of this study are as follows;
• To find the impact of Pashtun fathers’ education level on the decision of sending female child for education.
• To explore the major reason of not sending female child for higher education in the Pashtun culture.
• To analyze if the gender gap still prevail in the context of education among the Pashtun culture.

3. Material and Methods
The study empirically analyzes the impact of father education level on the decision of allowing female child for education. This study was undertaken in district Charsaada of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. District Charsasada is divided into three thesils: Tehsil Charsadda, Tehsil Shahbqadar and Tehsil Tangi. There are 49 union councils (UC) in the district, among which 40 are rural and 9 are urban. For the purpose of this study three rural union councils i.e. UC Nisata, UC Umerzai and UC Turangzai were selected randomly. The total population of mentioned union councils is 68672 [30], whereas the male population is 35436. And 380 males were selected by using random sampling technique for initial screening. The sample was distributed among the selected union councils according to its total population by using the proportional allocation approach. Therefore, 112 respondents were selected from UC Turangzai, while 136 and 132 from UC Nisata and UC Umerzai respectively. The inclusion criteria to select the respondent were those male who were from Pashtun family and had daughter/daughters of age 5 years or above. As result of screening 70 uneducated respondents were identified who were having a daughter/daughters of age 5 years or above. Therefore for the sake of comparison 70 educated respondents having a daughter/daughters of age 5 years or above were selected from the sample. So, the sample for this study was 140 respondents. For the purpose of data collection questionnaire were used, while focusing on male having female child/children of age above 5 years. As the study is quantitative in nature, descriptive statistics approach has been used for the data analysis. Through descriptive statistics, the data collected is assemble and represented in meaningful manner. It is displayed in the form of graphs, frequency and percentage tables, and pie charts.

4. Results and Discussion
The statistical analysis illustrates the results in the form of frequencies and percentages. The statistical analysis of quantitative data is interpret for testing the significance of results by using correlation technique, as well as presented in tables, and charts in this section.

According to the data, 50 percent respondents are uneducated. While 50 percent were educated; among which about 14 percent completed primary education only, 20 and 27 percent completed secondary and tertiary education respectively. The distribution of respondents according to union councils is presented in Table 1, showing that UC Nisata has the higher percentage of uneducated respondent as compare to UC Umerzai and UC Turangzai. It also shows that UC Turangzai has the highest percentage (about 7 percent) of respondent completed tertiary education, and UC Umerzai has the highest number of respondents (about 8 percent) completed secondary education.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to education status and Union Councils (in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Status</th>
<th>UC Nisata</th>
<th>UC Umerzai</th>
<th>UC Turangzai</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td>12.86</td>
<td>16.42</td>
<td>20.72</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>13.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>20.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>16.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 illustrated that uneducated fathers have about 30 percent of girls having age 5 years and above, among which about 19 percent were educated or currently enrolled in school. While fathers who have

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completed primary education have only 1 percent of their girls were uneducated. While fathers having secondary and tertiary education, about 2 percent of their female children were not educated.

### Table 2: No. of Female Child (Age 5 Years & Above) and their Education (in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Status of Father</th>
<th>No of female child (age 5 years &amp; above)</th>
<th>No female child attended/currently going to school.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td>30.17</td>
<td>19.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>16.58</td>
<td>15.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>29.14</td>
<td>27.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>24.11</td>
<td>23.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>86.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey

It is evident from Fig. 1 that the educated fathers have large number of educated daughters as compare to the uneducated fathers. About 65 percent of the educated girls had uneducated fathers, while 95 percent had educated fathers. The proportion of girls who never attended school (about 34 percent) was higher among the girls whose fathers were uneducated.

Figure 1: Father Education status and Female Education

The bivariate Pearson Correlation test was conducted to find the strength and direction of the relationship between girls’ education status and their father’s education status. The results were statistically significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) and r = 0.566, showing that there is a direct relationship between father education and female education. Since 32% of the variance is shared, the association is obviously not a strong one. These results show that there are other barriers i.e. social and cultural, to female education as well.

### Table 3: Correlation between Female Education and Father Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Education</th>
<th>Female Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Education</th>
<th>Female Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.566**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), r (140) = 0.566; p<.01. r²= 0.32

Figure 2 shows that the existence of socio-cultural barriers in the Pashtun society serves as an obstacle to female education. Both educated (82 percent) and uneducated (86 percent) fathers evidently enumerate that traditional norms contribute to higher extent in decreasing women’s education. The presence of financial constraints among the Pashtun society also helps in the prevalence of female illiteracy because it is difficult for the parents to afford the educational expenses for their girls. Among the uneducated respondents (76 percent), poverty was the second threat to female education while the educated respondents (61 percent) considered parddah as the second barrier. The Pashtun codes of life such as Haya restrict the female to the home boundaries, it is unable it difficult for the Pashtun to allow their girls to study along the males in university and college. This concept still persist among the families having uneducated household heads. It is not an unfamiliar fact that in the Pashtun culture woman is consider as a statue of modesty and chastity. Due to the practice of parddah, women are not allowed to work outside. As a result there is lack of female teacher in the institutes, specifically universities, which make it difficult for the parents to allow their girls for higher education. Due to the concept of parddah followed by the Pashtun, a family rarely allows their women to be taught by male teachers or to study along the males. According to this study, 74 percent of the uneducated respondents consider parddah and co-education as the third most important barrier to female education. Whereas, more than half of the respondents considered “absence of female teachers” as a hindrance in female education.

Similarly the educated respondents considered poverty and parddah as the secondary and tertiary determinants of increase in female illiteracy rate. In Pashtun residing areas, the schools are located at long distance; along with it there is no proper facility of transport available in schools nor in the local area. Therefore the parents are not willing to enroll their female child in schools due to lack of separate facilities for girls, nor can they allow their girls for boarding schools [31]. The absence of school nearby
is also an important issue, as more than half of the total respondents favored that the distance of school is also contributing in the female illiteracy. According to the report by Asian Development Bank, it remain challenging to reduce the female illiteracy in the 21 century. As in the rural areas the schools are located at distance from the population and serve as an obstacle for sending girls to schools situated at distance [8].

The Pashtun society practice the early marriage since centuries, and it remained a socially and culturally acceptable phenomenon among them. The results of this study shows that only the very few (11 percent) of the educated parents consider it as an element of female illiteracy, while 52 percent of the uneducated father agreed with it. This shows that the practice of early marriage has declined to some extent among the Pashtuns.

Figure 2: Constraints to Female Education

In Pakistan, women are significantly less educated than men. At the primary level, the male enrolment rate is almost double the female enrolment rate. In most areas, less than half of girls ever enroll in school compared with 50 to 80 percent of boys [32] . These figures among Pashtun tribes compare unfavorably, to a significant degree, to other parts of the country, and alarmingly so to other countries in the region with similar levels of economic development. The gender gap in education stems from decades of discriminatory cultural norms, which in turn reflect the low status of women in Pashtun society. Woman is considered subordinate to a man; her place is in the home. This study reveals that the gender gap still exist among the Pashtun society. Figure 3 shows the gender gap among the Pashtun society in the context of education. The enrollment of girls is comparatively lower than the boys, especially in the tertiary education (23 and 9 percent). The figure also shows that the enrollment of girls having educated fathers is higher as compare to those having uneducated fathers. But the decreasing trends of female enrolment persist from primary to tertiary education level, for both educated and uneducated father.

Figure 3: Gender Gap in Education among the Pashtun Society

Figure 4 reveals that the respondents preferred government educational institutes for their girls over the private institutes. Both educated (57 percent) and uneducated (76 percent) fathers consider it feasible for their girls. The primary reason highlighted by the respondents, was the lack of financial support require for bearing the cost of private schools expenditure, whereas the secondary reason was the presence of female teachers in the government schools. It can also be predicted that the Pashtun still invest less in their girls, having the concept in mind that the girls will leave their home after marriage.

Figure 4: Preference of School for Girls

The table below highlights the perception of Pashtun male regarding the importance of female education. More than three quarter of the respondents strongly
agreed with the fact that female education is highly important. Whereas more than half (52 percent) agreed to send their girls for higher education, and very few (6 percent) disagreed to it. There were 31 percent of the respondent who disagreed to spend equally on their male and female child education and less than 30 percent were willing to spend equally on both male and female child education. Therefore in developing countries of the world, the private returns to boy’s education is relatively higher than the return to girl’s education. Therefore many girls are drop out from school. Similarly 39 percent of the respondent strongly disagreed to allow their girls for education in the co-education, while less than quarter (14 percent) of the respondents strongly agreed to send their girls for education to co-education institutes.

Table 4: Respondents view regarding female education (in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Education is Important</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to send girls for higher Education</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to spend equally on male and female education</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to send girls to Co-education</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study concluded that female education among the Pashtun culture still face impediments. It depends on the father education to some extent, educated fathers allow their girls to attain education as compare to the uneducated fathers. But there are several other barriers to female education such as traditional norms, parrdah and poverty. The unavailability of female teachers and co-education in the universities also restrict the female for higher education, and the enrollment of girls in higher education remain low. The grounds of these cultural barriers were deep rooted in gender discrimination based on patriarchal structure of society as a whole. The results also concluded that the gender discrimination still persist among this society; as the fathers, irrespective of their education status, enroll their girls in government schools, they prefer to spend more on their boys education rather than spending equally on both. The enrollment of boys remain higher as compare girls’ enrollment in all primary, secondary and tertiary education. The study concluded that all respondent strongly agreed with the importance of female education.

6. Recommendations

To overcome the gap in male and female literacy rate among the Pashtun society, certain measure should be taken by the government and the local community organizations. School, colleges and universities for female should be install in the Pashtun populated areas. And only female staff and administration should be hired in those schools. Along with it transport facilities should be provided to the females in all educational institutes. To encourage the participation of female in the field of education, scholarships should be granted to them. There is an urgent need of a comprehensive women’s education program countrywide to be launched by the government, through which the parents and females both should also be educated about the importance and value of higher education for female.

References


