

CAUSES OF DROPOUT OF FEMALE STUDENTS AT GRADUATE LEVEL OF EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

It is established fact that women played their role effectively in the progress and prosperity of countries due to their education. Through their education they can become well aware about their capabilities which enable them to perform their responsibilities equally as men perform in society. But in Pakistan participation rate of female education particularly at graduate level is low. Every year many students drop out and do not complete their education. Now question arises what are the causes of dropout of female students at graduate level? For answering this question this study was designed. These were the objectives of study: (i) To analyze the national data about the participation rate of female students at graduate level of education in Pakistan. (ii) To identify the hurdles in the ways of females in obtaining their education at graduate level. (iii) To examine the educational facilities required for females at graduate level. (iv) To assess the role of parents, traditions and social norms affecting female education at graduate level. This was survey study and during the survey forty public girls' degree colleges ten from each province of Pakistan (total four provinces) were selected randomly. Further from each college ten dropout female students during the session of graduation 2010-2012, their parents and teachers were selected as sample of study. Therefore total sample comprised on four hundred students, four hundred parents and four hundred teachers (hundred of each category from each province and ten from each college). Through questionnaire data was collected. Collected data was analyzed through percentage. On the basis of analysis it was concluded that poverty, custom of early marriages, heavy domestic work and cultural norms against the female educational were the main causes of females' dropout at graduate level of education. Lack of education facilities required for females, media effects and fear of failure also increasing the dropout of female students. For minimizing the dropout ratio among female students financial support, more job opportunities, media campaign and more education facilities were recommended.

Keywords: Female Education, Participation Rate, Norms, Education Facilities, Progress, Prosperity.

1. Introduction

Education plays a very significant role in the development of nations across the globe. It has been taken as powerful instrument for the socio economic and political development. In human societies now education is called investment. Education is a basic human right and equally important for males and females. Therefore, education for all intends to build society that will make efforts to achieve the goals of equality, development and peace. According to the report of the secretary general (2003) education for all aims to establish integrated societies and environments. These will work for achieving the goals such as eradicating the poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.

Chege and Sifuna (2006) stated that lot of efforts have been made to empower the women through providing equal opportunity and access to property, wealth and education. By the 20th century world scenario has been changed as women have greater access to educational programs at all levels. Female education has been taken as key indicator

for the development of nation. World Bank economists also viewed that female education is a developmental instrument in world (Brent, 2005). According to World Bank (2002) girls' education is important factor for ensuring the economic development of nation but by ensuring the health, financial, safety, liberty of females and ensuring their participation in social, economic and political activities. UNICEF (2004) report also indicates that girls' education leads to more equitable development, stronger families, better services, better child health and effective participation in governance. Despite all these benefits of female education, mostly developing countries are facing the problems of dropout at all levels of education. Pakistan is also suffering with this issue. Now question arises why many girls dropout do from their institutions particularly at graduate level. For answering this question existing study was intended to explore the causes of dropout from colleges in Pakistan.

2. Review of Literature

It is established fact that females make the half population of the Pakistan. As a reasonable number of population females can contribute effectively for the progress of society. It is only possible if they are educated because through education they will aware about their effective role and responsibilities. According to Khalid (1975) education can make the females effective participants of society. Through their education they can participate in decision making of society. They can become agent of social change to fight against hunger, poverty, diseases and all social evils. Overall educated females can become productive asset for the nations. They can become good mothers, views, sisters, daughters and citizens. Hence significance of the female education can be examined as under:

- Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SWA) ascertained that seeking knowledge (education) is obligatory for all Muslims (male &female). (Hadith)
- Doing struggle against the global challenges demands the increasing role of educated female in societies (Yutang, 1965).
- Education can help the females to take initiative for their development and betterment of lives (Basset, 1978).
- Education can empower the female as uneducated females are mostly ruled (Young, 1952).
- Education can help the females to know their rights and responsibilities and sense of right path identification in society (Lobo, 1974).
- Education can make the females more productive for society (Jerome, 1971).
- Educated mothers can give good nations as they are the first learning academy for children (Woolfolk, 1980).
- Female education can enable the females to participate in politics through which their concerns can be addressed in public policies (Nussbaum, 2003).
- "The future must not belong to those who bully women. It must be shaped by girls who go to school and those who stand for a world where our daughters can live their dreams just like our sons." (Obama's Address, in United Nations General Assembly, 2012).
- Female education can eliminate the violence against women (Khoja-Moolji & Shenila, 2015 and Khan & Hafiz, 2013).
- Female education can empower the females in their practical lives and this empowerment can enhance the chances of national and international development of nations (Stromquist, 2015).

Not only in Pakistan but many in developing countries females face many hurdles to get education. In this context many studies have been conducted about the dropout phenomena of male and female students at different levels of education. According to Graeff-Martins (2006) comparatively in developing countries students' dropout rate is very high.

Through different studies lot of causes were explored though causes of dropout for both male and female may differ. Hence financial aspect of families mainly contribute in dropout issue (Grant and Hallman 2006). Hence customary attitude, strict cultural values, early marriages, parents' discrimination towards female education, economic conditions etc become the main reasons of low female education in developing and particularly in Pakistan (Human

Development Report, 1998). A Synthesis Report of Education of All (2000) also highlighted that rigidity of community, people's lower income conditions and patriarchal system of our society affect the phenomena of females' education.

For overcoming the issue of low female education and females dropout strenuous efforts have been made by government and non government bodies but purpose has not fully achieved. Mostly attitude of people towards female education has affected the all efforts related to promotion of female education. Though people could cooperate to implement all these efforts but they were not in favor of female education. Eventually their discriminatory attitude towards female education will harm themselves. Zia (1989) also pointed out that attitude of community is not cooperative for promoting female education. Due to the male dominating society mostly females are kept deprived from education and other privileges such as their right of property, marriage, vote etc. While UNICEF Report (1992) indicated that in male dominating society mostly people considered female education can destroy the peace and happiness of home. Females can only be given domestic duties. Different studies also pointed out fear of failure in exams, poor academic performance during sessions, unemployment, parents' attitudes, parents illiteracy also increasing the dropout problems particularly at graduate level. Ultimately these dropout students will face difficulty in searching reasonable employments or work and performing productive activities in society (Baditoi, 2005, De Carvalho, 2001, Tanner, Krahn & Hartnagel, 1995).

On the basis of different studies conducted in the context of female dropout education at different levels of education mainly following reasons were explored:

- Parent's preference and encouragement for their son's Education not for daughter's education (Leung & Zhang 2008).
- Parents do not invest in education equally for all (Boys & Girls) (Glick & Shan, 2000 & Kingdon 2005).
- School fee was found significant reason for the dropout of female students (Lloyd et.al. 2000).
- Girls have more load of household work as compare to boys, which cause the females' dropout from their education (Ersado, 2005).
- School distance was the foremost factor which affected the female education and mostly became the cause of female dropout in education particularly in Africa (Juneja 2001).
- Practices of early marriage of girls were also found the cause of dropout from their studies (Holcamp, 2009).

Overall in Pakistan dropout rate is very high that affect the enhancement of literacy rate, individual betterment and national development. While focusing the importance of female of education this study was conducted to explore the causes of dropout of female education at graduate level. At this level of education students are prepared for further master degree or specialized knowledge about a field or discipline. In Pakistan graduate level comprises on Bachelor degree (13 and 14 grades). For analyzing the participation rate of female at graduate level Economic Survey of Pakistan 2015-2016 shows that total number of degree colleges is 1417 out of these female colleges are 268. Total enrolment of these colleges is 1517687 and total enrolment of female students is 161532 accordingly total teachers in these colleges are 36767 from these female teachers are only 6208. Overall this data shows that female participation rate is very less than male. On the other side phenomena of dropout of females further retards the promotion of female education which eventually affects the development of nation.

2.1 Objectives of Study

Following objectives were focused during this study:

1. To analyze the national data about the participation rate of female students at graduate level of education in Pakistan.
2. To identify the hurdles in the ways of females obtaining their education at graduate level.
3. To examine the education facilities required for females at graduate level.
4. To assess the role of parents, traditions and social norms affecting female education at graduate level.

3. Methodology

This was survey study and during the survey forty public girls' degree colleges ten from each province of Pakistan (total four provinces) were selected randomly. Further from each college ten dropout female students during the session of graduation 2010-2012, their parents and teachers were selected as sample of study. Therefore total sample comprised on four hundred students, four hundred parents and four hundred teachers (hundred of each category from each province and ten from each college). From this sample data was collected through questionnaire and this questionnaire was developed on three point scale followed by Mostly, To Some Extent and Never. For developing the questionnaire family related factors such as poverty, domestic work, parents illiteracy, cultural related factors such as early marriages, norms against female education, parents discriminatory attitude, media influence and institution related factors such as long distance, unsafe environment, ineffective curriculum, teaching learning process, examination system and unemployment were focused. Hence during the collection of data informal discussion was also done related to operational measures for resolving the issue of dropout. Collected data was analyzed through percentage.

Table 1: Instrument

S#	Statements	Students	Teachers	Parents
1.	Poverty enforces to the dropout of girls from college.	81%	74%	85%
2.	Early marriage causes to the dropout of girls from college.	54%	61%	52%
3.	Family customs lender the girls education at degree level	83%	74%	86%
4.	Unsafe environment of surroundings/Risk on way of girls contributes to drop out of the girls from college.	76%	69%	85%
5.	Domestic work causes to dropout of girls.	79%	65%	80%
6.	Parents' attitude towards girls' education less important than boys causes to dropout.	82%	81%	78%
7.	Excess of children for parents causes to drop out of the girls.	62%	71%	73%
8.	Parents' illiteracy causes to drop out of the girls from college.	85%	82%	79%
9.	Unaffordable educational costs cause to dropout of girls from college.	65%	59%	70%
10.	Long distance of college hinders the girls to continue their education	87%	81%	86%
11.	Lack of education facilities in college causes to dropout of girls.	54%	51%	59%
12.	Improper teaching learning process causes to dropout of girls.	61%	59%	53%
13.	Fear of failure in exams enforces to dropout of girls from college.	76%	71%	61%
14.	Threatening behaviour of course mates causes to dropout of girls from college.	86%	83%	81%
15.	Curriculum more theoretical (without tone of life) causes to dropout of girls from college.	75%	69%	72%
16.	Negative role of media (Electronic and Social) causes to dropout of girls from college.	62%	81%	80%
17.	Lack of employment opportunities causes to dropout of girls from college.	52%	51%	52%

S#	Statements	Students	Teachers	Parents
		Girls	Boys	Both
18.	Whose education is more preferred in society?	14%	59%	27%

4. Results and Discussion

The present study was intended to explore the causes of female drop out from their colleges in Pakistan. Data collected through questionnaire from drop out students, their parents and teachers was analyzed by using percentage. Accordingly table No.1 reveals that majority of the students; teachers and parents were of the opinion that poverty of the family mainly enforced the female students to drop out from their college education. Due to this poverty factor parents at large scale cannot afford the educational costs for different aspects such as tuition fee, price of books, learning material etc and other expenses of college activities(study trips, funfair, exhibition, drama, games or recreational events). Different studies also showed that low income level of parents causes the drop out of students. Findings of these studies showed that status of low income and socioeconomic of families were more likely to drop out of students (Battin-pearson et.al.2000, OECD, 2010, Bhatti, 2007, Malik, 2002, Rumberger, 1983).

While focusing the cultural and family constraints, majority of the respondents (student, teachers, parents) opined that practice of early marriage, family customs (such as preference given to sons, oppressing the females for their basic rights of education, propriety, vote, disliking the jobs of females etc.) burden of domestic work (as girls mostly share the domestic responsibility or household work with their mothers) parents' discriminatory attitude towards their daughters' education, parents illiteracy, and excess of children (particularly in low income families) affect the female education. Particularly at graduate level these factors enforce the female students to leave their education incomplete. As data of above mentioned table indicates that these factors cause the high drop out of female students at graduate level. Many other studies also pointed out that there is difficult to merely explore factor that is mainly causing this drop out phenomena. Hence many factors related to family concerns were identified by these studies. Such as early marriages (Mansory, 2007) social values against the free mobility of females in society (Hafeez, 1993) domestic work (Education Sector Reforms, 2001) harassment of females at work place may demoralize the community about their females education (Noor, 1992) and illiteracy of parents (UNESCO, 2003).

According to the data of this study many institutional level factors were also explored which cause the dropout of girls their colleges. So far respondents at large scale agreed that lack of education facilities, colleges at long distance, unsafe environment on the ways of colleges, unattractive teaching learning process, fear of failure in exams, theoretical curriculum/courses without having no link with daily life skills or masses needs, lack of employment opportunities, threatening behavior of class fellows and negative role of media were also enforcing the female students for discontinuing their education. Findings of different studies also highlighted institutional level factors which contribute to increase the dropout rate in institutions. For instance overcrowded classrooms with lack of educational facilities (Alexander, 2008) students discouragement by their poor academic performance (Baditoi, 2005, Manacorda, 2012) institutions at long distance and risky ways to reach institutions (Juneja, 2000). Mostly Pakistani institutions are unable to provide quality education and training due to their poor curriculum, teaching learning process and examination system (National Education Policy, 2009) increasing the unemployment rate in society (Kuczera et al, 2010) are the important determinants of institutional dropout for students.

According to the data of above table majority of the respondents were of the opinion that mainly people liked to educate their sons instead of girls due to the family, cultural and economic constraints. Even majority of the respondents in favor of boys education instead giving the equal importance to girls and boys education. Study of Cheg and Sifuna (2006) also identified that many cultures were in favor of boys' education instead girls. Hafeez (1998) through his study explored males are traditionally considered economic providers for their families so they preferred to get education.

Overall different factors affecting the female students' decisions to dropout from their education explored by different studies and existing study can be summarized as family related factors, institutional related factors and community or society related factors.

4.1 Recommendations

Keeping in view the sensitivity of the female dropout phenomena following recommendations were given on the basis of data and informal discussion with respondents during the data collection:

Guidance and counseling sessions may be arranged for students, parents and elders of the families and community who directly involve in decision making particularly about the education of their females.

Religious cleric from community and community leaders may be involved to bring into practice of Islamic philosophy with its true sense as Islam teaches education is fundamental right of man and woman.

The prevailing atmosphere of community is overall considered unsafe, risky and threatening particularly for females which hinders their free mobility. Families do not permit their females to go or travel alone at long distance. In this regards government and community may take operational measures to ensure the safety and security of females. These steps may not only decrease the dropout of females from their institutions but promote female education at all levels.

Government should take the drastic steps to make the education system productive and qualitative. For this purpose need based curriculum and more earning/jobs opportunities should be ensured. As data showed that financial constraints such as poverty and unaffordable educational expenditures enforce female students to leave their education incomplete. Government can support the needy students by bearing their all expenditures of educational activities. Even though parents may also be given some financial assistance to encourage them to promote female education. For this purpose budget of education may can be increased and ensured to spend it fully on education.

Now a day media is considered a key contributor to give the awareness about social issues and problems at large scale. Through media campaign importance of female education religiously and socially can be promoted among the people. Even though the strategies can be formulated for using the social media in providing e-education/e-classes particularly for those female students who particularly dropout from their institutions due to long distance and cultural barriers against the free mobility of female students.

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