

Exploring the Role of Sociocultural Barriers in Extent of Dropout Among Females Students from Secondary Schools in District Bajaur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa–Pakistan



Hammad Zada	Ph D. Scholar, Department of Rural Sociology, Agriculture University Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Hammadzada941@gmail.com
Rizwan Ullah	M Phil Scholar, Department of Rural Sociology, Agriculture University Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Rizwanullah@awkum.edu.pk
Syed Hakim Ullah Khan	Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Rural Sociology, Agriculture University Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Email: Syedsocio@gmail.com

Abstract: A cross-sectional study was carried out with the sole purpose of assessing the effects of sociocultural barriers in extent of Dropout among female students from secondary schools in District Bajaur. Using Sekaran criteria, a sample size of 169 respondents was purposefully chosen. A conceptual framework consisting of a dependent variable (the extent of dropout) and an independent variable (sociocultural). For primary data collection, a well-structured questionnaire was used. Furthermore, Univariate and Bi-variate analysis was conducted through the uses of SPSS software (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences). After the analysis of data at the Bi-variate level, a highly significant association ($P=0.000$) between the extent of drop out and sociocultural barriers (statements), namely, parents prioritize boy's education more as compared to their girl child, cultural norms and beliefs constrain girl education, parents believes that religious education is more important than formal education, strict purdah (ideal) for women is the cause of dropout. Similarly, a significant association was found between nature of dropout and Traditional values as too much education spoils girls for marriage are reason for dropouts ($P=0.001$), When girls reach maturity, the family tends to arrange their marriage instead of continuing their study ($P=0.001$). Study recommend that Government should ensure provision of "Free, equitable, inclusive & Compulsory schooling" to all students especially girls as per the constitution of the country (Article A-37). Government should arrange provision of all desired education supplies to students inside the school.

Keywords: Cross Sectional Study, Education, Sociocultural, Female Students, Bajaur.

Introduction

The education term has been defined differently by different scholars and philosophers keeping in view different perspectives. Broadly speaking, education mean to inculcate and promote good qualities in an individual and empower him with desirable information, services, benefits, and critical thinking. Nobody can deny the importance of education in the

modern arena. The importance of education in Islam can be judge from the verses of the holy Quran that people who know and people who are ignorant are not equal (Sura.al-zumar: 39:9). Education plays an important role in the development of an individual, society, and a country (Khan, 2016). The constitution of Pakistan empowers the state to afford the basic education of each and every citizen to eliminate

illiteracy (Constitution of 1973, Article 37).

According to Combas and Ahmad (1974), Education is divided into three main categories which are the following.

The types of education with structured hierarchically are known as formal education while acquiring education from lifelong routine life through socialization process is called informal education whereas benefiting from a systematic way outside from educational institutions is called non-formal education.

Dropping out is defined by National Centre for Education Statistics as leaving school without completing a high school education or equivalent credential such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Students leaving schools is a continuous process which begins with slight opposing attitude and then slowly increases until in actual the student completely drops out from school, and it's no longer hidden. The term 'actual dropout' refers to physical detachment of students from education system (Dupper 1993). Previous studies suggested that dropout of students from schools are involved in criminal cases and aberrant behaviour (Beauvais, Chavez, Oetting, Deffenbacher and Cornell 1996).

Compared to actual dropout ratio, hidden dropout of adolescent is not studied yet. Children who do not attend school but are enrolled have no part in the learning process, so the students are present, but they do not learn in class (Stamm 2012). Two occurrences may work as red light for unseen dropout, first one is not attending school regularly and the second is school mobility (Sever 2002).

Globally one million student dropouts from school every year which 7000 students per day (www.dosomething.org). In USA about 1.3-million students in high school leave school especially among minorities (i.e., blacks/native Americans) (APA, 2012). Likewise, students who fail make up 12 percent of the state 's dropouts (Tucci, 2010). In a report published by (Issue Brief, 2006) increase in the number of graduates in the US by just 5% could lead to joint savings and generate income of \$8 billion every year by reducing costs on crimes,

moreover dropout of pupils from schools is responsible for social and economic expenses to their families and country in which they live (Fact Sheet, 2010).

A report published by UNICEF (2009) reported that in south Asia about 7.571 million children ranging from 5 to 10 years never go to school and 25.29 million students are enrolled in secondary level, nevertheless most of the students are absent from school. Results shows that South Asia is 2nd top region where students dropped out from school. However, Africa is the topmost region with high dropout ratio.

According to a report published in 2013 by the AEPAM only 63 percent students pass through primary section, 40 percent passes through Middle section and 27% student passes from secondary class (AEPAM, 2013). 73% students are drop out before reaching to secondary class and this is the highest dropout rate in the globe. Dropout ratio is high at secondary level as 14.5% students dropped out at secondary level in countryside (ASER-Pakistan, 2017).

Status of education in comparison to KPK and rest of Pakistan in FATA is very low, especially that of females. The record of KPK government 2005 shows that the literacy ratio is 17.42 and which male and female proportion is 30 and 3. These are the shocking and distress status of literacy rate especially of females. There are 0.1 million above schools in Pakistan, nearly 20 thousand in KPK and 2425 over there in FATA. The ratio of male and female schools is 1:2. Girls have about 1600 schools, and it can be imaginary keeping in mind anti women education attitude of tribal area how many of them will be functional fully or partially. In Pakistan the enrolment ratio is 20 million and in KPK this ratio was 0.3 million (Social and living standard measurement survey, 2004-005).

Literature Review

There are different socio-cultural factors which include behaviour of child, family, peers, and schools, leading to dropout of students from educational institutions. Poverty and lack of parent's interest to monitor students schooling progress also leads dropout of school children (Zada, H., et al., 2022).

Sociocultural Constraints

Education system in FATA is greatly influenced by socio-cultural factors. These factors include marriages at early age, culture prohibitions and traditional antagonisms. Various tribal customs are still existing in FATA such as child marriage in which one's parents can decide child marriage even of the infants. This types of customs and beliefs leads to the child Labor which compel the children to earn for their family. Same case are female's early marriages they only get the primary schooling and do not get higher education (Ghani 2006-008).

Another factor in FATA that affect the female education is Purdah. Pashto is a complete code of life most of the female in FATA get primary education, but they do not continue to secondary and high secondary school as most of the people strongly follow the Purdah culture. Most of the people are afraid of the cultural beliefs and do not allow their females for schooling (Ibid). Females are also prohibited from leaving the homes unless she is accompanied by male member of the family (Launa et al, 2013).

Early Marriage

Holcamp 2009 discovered the impact of early marriage on girls. People in rural area beliefs that females leave their homes after marriage, and they do not get much attention to female education as compared to male ones. In Afghanistan the most prominent cause of female dropout is early marriage Mansory (2007). Study suggested that when the girls reached to maturity the family tends to organize wedding instead of continuing their education (Molteno et al., 2000).

In a report published by the PROBE team of India (1999) that parent is reluctant of getting higher education to their daughter as Higher education leads to high cost of daughter's marriage. However, in Bangladesh female with low financial income dropped out from the school as they are afraid of high cost of dowry. The research suggested that families with low economic status will face difficulties if their female get higher education. Hence these factors lead to high dropout of females from schooling

(Shahidul 2012).

Teen Pregnancy

Boyle et al., (2002) have also discovered that teen pregnancy is a main cause of female dropout. Students whose academics performance is bad also experienced temporary dropout, poverty, lifestyles, are also the causes of drop out of females. Dunne Leach, (2005) argue that some situation which are present in the surrounding about female education i: e economic and social job prospects and sex differences in education institutions also leads to school's dropout. Dunne and Leach, (2005) studied that the one of the main causes of female dropout is pregnancy and some of the state give permission to the student's re-enter to school after getting pregnant however this ratio is very less. Grant and Hallman (2006) suggested that readmission of the female after pregnancy in schools depends upon on certain facilities if the family can find a care giver for their child and to take proper care of the child.

Traditional Views

In a report published by Save the Children (2005) that female education is badly suffered in many regions around the globe. Religious and traditional beliefs restrain females from decision making. Sifuna and Chege (2006) investigated the idea that many cultures priorities male' educations over female' education. Kapakasa (1992) investigated the diligence of girls in school and discovered that initiation rites (religious ceremonies) have a substantial impact on girls' dropout rate when parents are more willing to pay for the event than their daughters' education.

Parents in African countries were more worried about female's role at household level, according to Atayi (2008), because this role does not require schooling because girls are expected to care for children and make food. According to Falkingham and Baschieri (2006), many Tajik girls solely attend religious classes, which give necessary skills for future married life as skilled women. Purdah (ideal) or female seclusion was identified to be a factor in girls dropping out by Sawada and Lokshin (2009). Traditional values, on the other hand, vary by place. According to

UNESCO (2010), traditional values are stronger in rural areas in developing nations than in metropolitan areas, and people frequently do not allow girls to leave their homes, even for school.

Materials and Methods

The present study was carried out in the district Bajaur (previously known as Bajaur agency). Further, district Bajaur comprised 7 tehsils where 3 tehsils namely Khar, Utmankhail, and Salarazi were purposively selected. As per the pilot survey which was carried out from March 20th, 2021 to April 21 the total enrolled students were 3381, whereas the dropout students were documented as 379 in classes 9th and 10th

respectively (see table 1). Thus 169 sample size was driven as per Sekeran's (2003) criteria. Further, the selected sample size was allocated proportionally to each stratum (Tehsils-based distribution) through the formula given by (S M Chaudry) (see table 2). Moreover, for taking primary information regarding the study dynamics (infrastructure impediments and nature of dropout from schools) structured questionnaire was used for data collection from potential sampled respondents i.e., household heads. Lastly, the data was coded into SPSS (25 versions) for further analysis i.e., descriptive and inferential statistics.

Table 1: Showing the name of schools along with their concerned Tehsils [enrolled & Dropout] with effect from 2015-2020.

Name of schools	Tehsil	Enrolled students	Dropout students
[GGHSS]			
Inayat kali	Khar	253	45
Raghgagan	Khar	204	38
Khar	Khar	1424	88
Nawagai	Nawagai	36	09
Bandgai	Utaman kheil	621	83
Pashat	Salarzi	164	22
Nari tangi	Salarzi	59	17
Kamal dara	Arang	496	47
Sharbatai	Arang	124	34
Total		3381	379

Source: Pilot Survey, 2021

Table 2: Proportional allocation of Sample Size

Tehsils	Schools Name (GGHS)	Dropout Ratio	Sample Size
Khar	Inayat Kali	45	26
	Ragghan	38	22
	Khar	88	51
Utmankhel	Bandgai	83	48
		22	12
Salarzi	Pashat		
	Nari tangi	17	10
Total		293	169

Source: Pilot Survey, 2021

Results And Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3: Demographic profile of the respondents

Characteristics	Respondents' response		
Marital status of the respondents	<i>Married</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>Divorced</i>
	160(94.7%)	7(4.1%)	2(1.2%)
Family head of the respondents	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>
	169(100.0%)		00(0.0%)
Family types of the respondents	<i>Joint</i>	<i>Extended</i>	<i>Nuclear</i>
	133(78.7%)	16(9.5%)	20(11.8%)
Any other family who daughters are dropped out from school	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
	102(60.4%)	31(18.3%)	36(21.3%)

Source: Pilot Survey, 2021

Table 3 depicted the socioeconomic characteristics of respondents in terms of marital status, household head, family type and other factor to determine the nature of dropout in terms of familial members or others. Thus, among the total 169 respondents, 94.7% were married, 100% households head were male, 78.7% of respondents belonged to joint families and 60.4% of respondents know the other family daughter or daughters who were dropped of school. It could be deduced from these findings that due to rural hinterland in nature the study

area (Bajaur) was based on patriarchal norms which is prevailed since the dawn of *Pashtunwali* (Pashtun code of conduct (Khan *et al*, 2019). Women in general while girls in particular were limited to domestic work which is sometime come under the domain of private sphere resulted into higher drop out from schools. On the other hand, sons were preferred to go to schools or come under the domain of public sphere resultantly evoked to involvement in greater jobs in future than female in the study area (Khan *et al*, 2018).

Table 4: Respondents Perception Regarding the Extent of Dropout

Statement	Yes	No	Don't know
Distance from school is the key factor of dropping out from school for female students.	130(76.9%)	29(17.2%)	10(5.9%)
Pregnancy is the significant cause of school dropout for girl.	81(47.9%)	68(40.2%)	20(11.8%)
Domestic work of girls at household level dysfunctional the school performance which resulted into dropout.	93(55.0%)	64(37.9%)	12(7.1%)
Parents' illiteracy cause dropout of girls from school.	110(65.1%)	50(29.6%)	9(5.3%)
Fear of failure in exams enforces dropout of girls from school.	56(33.1%)	99(58.6%)	14(8.3%)
Peer pressure of course mates cause to dropout of girls from school.	60(35.5%)	91(53.8%)	18(10.7%)
Long distance and unsafety on the way to girl's school encourages dropout.	127(75.1%)	32(18.9%)	10(5.9%)
Timely marriage for young girls is a priority as compared to schooling.	110(65.1%)	43(25.4%)	16(9.5%)
Lack of awareness regarding female education is also reason for female school dropout.	130(76.9%)	29(17.2%)	10(5.9%)

Source: Pilot Survey, 2021

Table 4 showed that the majority of the respondents 76.9% agreed that distance from school is the key factor of dropping off from school for female students. This statement was supported by Juneja (2001) who disclosed that, distance from school is the key factor of dropping out from school for female students. Likewise, the table further revealed that 47.9% of the respondents were the opinion that pregnancy is the significant cause of school dropout for the girl. This statement was also supported by Dunne and Leac dismantled that one of the main causes of female dropout is pregnancy and some states give permission for the student's re-enter to school after getting pregnant however this ratio is very less. However, this is not applicable in Pakistan's context. Similarly, 55.0% of the respondents were of the opinion that the domestic work of girls at the household level becomes dysfunctional the school performance which resulted in dropout. These results were also in line with Khan et al, (2019), Abena (1991), &

Atayi (2008) who disclosed that parents in Africa were more worried about the role of girls at home, because this role does not require schooling because girls are expected to care for children and make food. In addition, Brock & Cammish (1997) also studied that girl sometimes begin working at an earlier age than boys especially in rural areas and girls also tend to do more work in the household than boys. Studies indicate that female students tend to drop out of school to take care of their younger siblings.

Moreover, 65.1% of the respondents agreed with statement that parents' illiteracy caused dropout of girls from school, 58.6% did not agree with the statement that fear of failure in exams enforces dropout of girls from school, and 53.8% of the respondents disclosed that peer pressure of course mates cause to dropout of girls from school. Additionally, the table further showed that majority of the respondents 75.1% agreed with the statement that long distance and unsafely on the way to girl's school encourages dropout. According to Nekatibeb (2002)

distance from the school is the most significant barrier to females' education. Many studies in African regions report that school distance can discourage girls from being educated for two major problems. One of them is the amount of time and energy required to cross a distance by youngsters who are hungry. Another factor is parental concern about their daughters' sexual safety. In addition, 65.1% of the respondents

were in the favour that timely marriage for young girls is a priority as compared to schooling. Based on various studies suggested that when the girls reached to maturity the family tends to arrange their marriage instead of continuing their study. Moreover, most of the respondents 76.9% were in the opinion that lack of awareness regarding female education is also reason for female school dropout.

Table 5: Association between Sociocultural Impediment and Extent of Dropout

S.NO	SOCIOCULTURAL IMPEDIMENTS	NATURE OF DROP OUT			TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE P=VALUE
		Yes	No	Don't know		
1.	Parents prioritize boy's education more as compared to their girl child.					
	Yes	89(24.9%)	22(13.0%)	2(1.2%)	113(66.9%)	X ² =22.370
	No	26(15.4%)	12(7.1%)	5(3.0%)	43(25.4%)	P= (0.000)
	Don't know	5(3.0%)	4(2.4%)	4(2.4%)	13(7.7%)	
2.	Cultural norms and beliefs constrain girl education.					
	Yes	90(53.3%)	16(9.55)	4(2.4%)	110(65.1%)	X ² = 26.347
	No	25(14.8%)	11(6.5%)	4(2.4%)	40(23.7%)	P= (0.000)
	Don't know	5(3.0%)	11(6.5%)	3(1.8%)	19(11.2%)	
3.	When girls reach maturity, the family tends to arrange their marriage instead of continuing their study.					
	Yes	76(45.0%)	20(11.8%)	6(3.6%)	102(60.4%)	X ² = 17.715
	No	41(24.3%)	17(10.1%)	2(1.2%)	60(35.5%)	P= (0.001)
	Don't know	3(1.8%)	1(0.6%)	3(1.8%)	60(35.5%)	
4.	Parents believe that their daughters will become morally corrupt if they get too much education.					
	Yes	42(24.9%)	16(9.5%)	4(2.4%)	62(36.7%)	X ² = 12.918
	No	77(11.2%)	19(11.2%)	5(3.0%)	101(59.8%)	P= (0.012)
	Don't know	1(0.6%)	3(1.8%)	2(1.2%)	6(3.6%)	

Source: Author, 2021

Association between Sociocultural Impediments and Extent of Drop Out

The study shows that respondent's response about the existing relationships between sociocultural impediments and nature of drop out, a highly significant association (P=0.000) was found between nature of drop out and parents prioritize boy's education more as compared to their girl child. Leung and Zhang (2008) found that parents' preference for sons encourage more of them to invest for in their sons' well-being to take care of parents in the

future. In fact, parental gender bias investment occurs particularly when parents have limited/lower income and resource, causing girls to leave school earlier than boys.

Similarly, a highly significant association (P=0.000) was found between Cultural norms and beliefs constrain girl education and nature of drop out. Save the Children (2005) indicates that cultural norms and beliefs constrain girls' education especially in many developing parts of the world. In these societies, traditional values and some religious beliefs constrain girls from

making their own decisions and expressing their own opinions.

Moreover, a significant association ($P=0.001$) was found between nature of drop out and When girls reach maturity, the family tends to arrange their marriage instead of continuing their study. This statement was supported by Ghani (2006-008) who stated that various tribal customs are still existing in FATA such as child marriage in which one's parents can decide child marriage even of the infants. This types of customs and beliefs leads to the child Labor which compel the children to earn for their family. Same case are female's early marriages they only get the primary schooling and do not get higher education. Subsequently, a non-significant ($P=0.012$) relationship was found between Parents believe that their daughters will become morally corrupt if they get too much education and with nature of drop out.

Additionally, a highly significant ($P=0.000$) association was found while analysing the relationships between nature of drop out and Parents believes that religious education is more important than formal education. According to Falkingham and Baschieri (2006), many Tajik girls solely attend religious classes, which give necessary skills for future married life as skilled women.

The study exhibits the presence of a non-significant ($P=0.892$) relationship was found between nature of drop out and Parents fear that their daughter will be a victim of sexual harassment, so they stop schooling. Colclough et al., (2000), studied that Parents are afraid for the safety of their children when they must travel longer distances to school if school distance is considered too far from home, young girls tend to drop out more due to for the vulnerability to sexual harassment.

The table further reveals the presence of a highly significant ($P=0.000$) associations was found between nature of drop out and Strict purdah (ideal) for women is the cause of dropout. This statement was supported by Launa et al, (2013), stated that most of the female in FATA get primary education, but they do not continue to secondary and high secondary school as most of

the people strongly follow the Purdah culture. Most of the people are afraid of the cultural beliefs and do not allow their females for schooling. Females are also prohibited from leaving the homes unless she is accompanied by male member of the family.

Furthermore, a significant association ($P=0.001$) was found while analysing the association between Traditional values as too much education spoils girls for marriage are reason for dropouts and nature of drop out. The statement was supported by Ghani (2006-008) suggested that Various tribal customs are still existing in FATA such as child marriage in which one's parents can decide child marriage even of the infants. This types of customs and beliefs leads to the child Labor which compel the children to earn for their family. Same case are female's early marriages they only get the primary schooling and do not get higher education.

Conclusion

Dropout is a major social issue worldwide and its effects both genders, males and females but compared to males, female dropout ratios is high in entire world. There are many factors contribute to this issue, important among being economic, infrastructure, traditional values and militancy. Pakistani society and with special reference to Pashtuns is a male dominant society where more importance is given to males in over females likewise in the same way parents prefer their son's education at all cost while least concern in shown in case of their daughter education. Parents want their daughter to work in home and arrange their marriage early instead of continuing their study. Due to poverty parents cannot afford their children education, her schooling cost, transport fee, their clothing and cannot arrange their books and daily expenses due to which they dropout. Another important constraint was traditional values, cultural norms, Pashtunwali and religious education which impeded girls from their education. Parents believed that religious education was far more important than formal education along with unavailability of resources and a smaller number of female schools were also reasons girls dropped out.

Recommendations

To control the worse situations of students' dropouts from educational institutes relevant stakeholders should take some remedial measure, such as

1. Government should ensure provision of "Free, equitable, inclusive & Compulsory schooling" to all students especially girls as per the constitution of the country (Article A-37). Government should arrange provision of all desired education supplies to students inside the school.
2. Government should consider building new schools in proximity of areas/villages so that girl's students shouldn't travel immense distances to go to schools.
3. Establishment of schools with availability of all basic facilities such as adequate teaching staff, boundary wall, furniture, electricity, drinking water and computer/ science lab.
4. To address economic constraints of households to send their daughters to schools, government, Education Ministry, and other developmental stakeholders should consider provision of cash stipend and other safety net interventions under social protection. Such social protection interventions will address household's food security and livelihoods.
5. Community awareness should be encouraged to develop the interest of parent and students towards study and avoid school dropout. Political Representatives, Religious Leaders, Local Influential, Local District Administration, Volunteers, Civil Society Organizations & Print, Electronic and social media should be utilized to create awareness among the masses towards girl's education.

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