

Primary School Dropouts of girls and Its Impact on Literacy: A Sociological Analysis of District Zhob, Balochistan

By

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Abstract:

Female illiteracy is a social curse especially when the illiteracy has a direct impact on the cause of women empowerment. Similarly, the excessive dropout of the girls from the schools of Zhob is leaving deep imprints on the literacy rate as a whole. Overriding poverty and the lack of financial resources have triggered a seriously concerning dropout of girls from the schools. Where impoverishment of the parents prevents them from sending their children to the schools, there the government is to be held equally accountable for its obvious attitude toward the abysmal plight of education in district Zhob. To determine the exact facts and figures, the quantitative method was executed and a total of 384 people were chosen for the research. 214 of them were females and the other rest were male participants. The results of the SPSS demonstrate that the girls' dropout in Zhob is caused by both by the *negligence of the government and poverty*.

Keywords: Zhob, Girls, Literacy, Dropout, Balochistan etc.

Introduction

The main purpose of the research is to dig out the causes and factors leading to the massive dropout of the female in the primary schools of district Zhob. But before shedding light on the plight of education in the district of Zhob, a background sketch of female dropout and female illiteracy at the world level and then at the national level in Pakistan is deemed necessary. It is universally acknowledged phenomenon that girls lag behind in the field of every aspect of life, especially education and development. The reasons vary from community to community and place

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to place. The UNICEF report reveals that around millions of people who are deprived of literacy, among them the two third majorities of them are girls. (UNICEF, 2011)

The ratio of girls' illiteracy is much higher than that of the boys. In some places religion hinders their progress whereas in some places the cultural constraint creates obstacles in the way of their education whilst in some places the financial crunch causes their confinement at homes keeping them away from education. The reasons differ, but their ultimate result is the same. Their ultimate consequence is mounting female illiteracy. The most vulnerable women live in terms of deprivation of education and illiteracy live in Africa and the Middle East. (Baluch, 2009)

Previously, Latin America was also considered a red zone in terms of women empowerment; however, they have registered great improvement over the past couple of decades. In the West, women have achieved more or less equal status in every field of life and their literacy rate is 99 percent. Women have emerged to defeat every challenge coming in their face in the West. They have evolved their confidence and strength bolstering their achievements to steer them out of every challenging situation. (Bank, 2014)

The educational plight of Zhob and the impact of female dropout from the primary schools on the literacy rate, the financial issues have been worsened by the lack of employment opportunities for the people who are educated. On the other hand, those persons who are not well educated, they do not have enough capital to invest for running a business. When combined, all these factors usher into financial crisis for the families to hardly make a living, thus, the girls have to bear the brunt of the financial crisis. The boys do manage to find ways for their education as they grow a bit older by earning some money either through picking garbage and selling them or through working in the shops of other people, but the girls are not liberated enough to take advantage of certain activities. (Vue, 2000)

They are confined to the homes and strictly forbidden to work in the shops. Therefore, they cannot always prove to the most functional members of the society. As the aftermath has followed, the entire fabric of the society is at stake. The breakdown of the education system has stuck a fatal blow to the social structure. The boys are advancing fast while the girls are confined to their homes being deprived of all the liberties and privileges of living.

This leads to low efficiency and low rates of survival as the students who are enrolled very late cannot adjust with the environment of the class and eventually get discouraged and decide to quit. The current statistics in

district Zhob show that the ratio of female dropout is 4.5 times more than that of the boys. The high margins of inequalities do force them to quit. Moreover, it is the constitutional obligation of the state to make the free education accessible to all and sundry under the article 25-A of the constitution of 1973. Every child who is ranging in the age from 5 to 16 years is supposed to be enrolled in the schools with the help of the government initiatives. (USAID, 2011)

Literature Review:

The people of Zhob are more concerned with the dropout ratio because the increasing number of female dropout from the schools is discouraging that is ultimately giving air the gender development gap weakening the cause of women empowerment and women rights. The report of the Alif Ailan reveals that 60 percent of the entire child populations irrespective of the genders get enrolled in the primary schools in Balochistan and the other 40 percent of the children never get the opportunity to go the schools.

On the other hand, the situation of boys is also poor and there is no huge marginal difference in their non-enrollment ratio as well. There are 11.2 million boys out of the schools. Much to the nation's chagrin, Pakistan is far away from the pledge of fulfilling the millennium development goal of United Nations for universal primary school enrollment of children as there are above 23 million children combined out of the schools. The situation of Punjab, Sindh and KPK is comparatively better; Balochistan and FATA lag much behind in terms of education which is essentially crucial for driving the society of its current miseries. (UNESCO, 2012)

For decades, Balochistan has been ignored and much of the resources have been channeled to security purposes and projects, nonetheless, leaving meager funds for education and other social sectors. Education has never gained the prioritized attention of the provincial or the central government since emergence of Balochistan in Pakistan. Illiteracy and poor educational institutions are the order of the day and low quality of education lingers around. Education is and ought to be the best service priority of the ministry of education and the government for promising development and glorious tomorrow. Otherwise, the entire future generation will suffer a severe setback on account of the abysmal plight of education. (Bilqees, 2004)

It is a melancholy to realize that Zhob is one the most mineral rich areas of the province, yet it remains unprivileged and the natives are deprived of the modern facilities in every aspect of life. Education is

also one of the affected areas. Educational factors triggering the dropout of the students from the schools are the lack of separate schools for girls; moreover, the existing schools are in very shabby conditions in the urgency to be renovated. The towns of Zhob far from the urban centers also witness to have some ghost schools bearing testimony to the poor management of the educational authorities. The presence of the ghost schools is, no doubt, a glaring example of the performance of the educational authorities.

Where there are no schools at all for the girls and the existing schools are in poor physical conditions, the number of the ghost schools are on the increase, the girls cannot find any other space for their higher education being forced to quit their education. How come the female education can be promoted under certain abysmal educational circumstances where even the male children do not get adequate education? In the given sense, the educational factors are also responsible for the dropout of the girls from the schools of Zhob. (Garza, 2006)

As far as the social causes and factors contributing in the rapid dropout of the female from the primary schools of Zhob are concerned, poverty make the top of the list of causes. The average person hardly makes the both ends meet which makes education and other social aspects like health benefits and other social benefits merely unaffordable for the poor people.

The Socio-religious causes also make a severe impact on the dropout of girls from the primary schools and their impact on dropouts has considerably reduced the number of girls' education at the higher level. Among the socio-religious aspects, the cultural constrain are significant factors in this regard. It has been proven through the above mentioned literature review through the social, political, religious and other factors that what factors have triggered the massive scale of dropout of the female from the schools of Zhob. If the given factors are not remedied, they can usher into an unbridgeable gender gap. (Bengali, 2014)

As a matter of fact, new targets for universal primary education have been set by Pakistan in its vision 2025. In accordance with the given vision, Pakistan has to establish certain initiatives that can make universal primary education for all Pakistani people possible; especially, in the tribal and rural areas where certain initiatives are the most in need. There is no educational revolution around the corner to truly establish proper standards of education on the ground as has been stated by the former chief minister and many other ministers and politicians. Balochistan needs

more attention. It needs resources rather than mere political statements. It needs genuine efforts rather than verbal slogans to strengthen a particular political cause. (Plan, 2017)

Methodology and Study Design:

To make the research more refined and convenient, quantitative method was used the survey method was used. It was the most apposite design for the given study.

Population:

In the population of the study, the teachers from the schools of Zhob, parents of the girls who had their education, some businessmen and the members of the civil society were involved.

Sample:

Stratified cluster random sampling technique was opted for to be applied in the given research study. The clusters were made through divided the population of 384 people. They were divided and categorized with respect to their genders, locale and their relations to the issue in debate. All the population belonged to district Zhob.

Instrument:

A questionnaire was designed containing a mixture of total of 24 questions. For these 24 questions, both the close ended and open ended designs were used. The perceptions and opinions of the pertinent population are beyond crucial; therefore, their views were taken with regards to the female dropout from the schools of Zhob. The type which was used for making the research more convenient was the Likert scale.

Data Collection:

Data was collected from the parents of the students who had quit their education and from the teachers to share their opinions regarding the mounting dropouts in the schools. All the research was conducted by the researcher himself. The questionnaire was distributed among 384 people and their opinions were analyzed via the SPSS as it shows more accuracy in the results. Extensive study was conducted and deep analyzed was made for every question.

Data Analysis:

The SPSS is the most crucial part of the research as it defines and shows the most accurate results for any literature which is put through it. For this study, the SPSS of 21 versions was applied. The views of the participating people were gathered and then put through

this software where some tables and graph were made showing the percentage and frequencies.

TABLE 4.1
Q. 4. Illiteracy of the parents along their financial issues force them to get their children out of school.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strong Agree	265	69.0	69.0	69.0
Agree	70	18.2	18.2	87.2
Neutral	32	8.3	8.3	95.6
Disagree	8	2.1	2.1	97.7
Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Illiteracy of the parents along their financial issues force them to get their children out of school. About this question, this table had the following percentage with the statistical results as 69 percent of the people had strong agreement while the people with only agreement comprised 18.2 percent. 8.3 percent of the participating persons stood to have neutral opinion. 2.1 percent of them disagreed and the final 2.3 percent of them disagreed in the strongest terms. No doubt, the financial issues are major hurdles in the way of promoting female education in district Zhob.

Q.10 Poverty compels the parents to prefer their male children for education.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strong Agree	133	34.6	34.6	34.6
Agree	129	33.6	33.6	68.2
Neutral	88	22.9	22.9	91.1
Disagree	24	6.3	6.3	97.4
Strongly Disagree	10	2.6	2.6	100.0

Total	384	100.0	100.0
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About the question that poverty compels the parents to prefer their male children for education, this table had the following percentage with the statistical results as 34.6 percent of the people had strong agreement while the people with only agreement comprised 33.6 percent. 22.9 percent of the participating persons stood to have neutral opinion. 6.3 percent of them disagreed and the final 2.6 percent of them disagreed in the strongest terms. The impoverished people often prefer their male children to pursue education as the financial resources are limited making it unaffordable for them to educate their children.

Q.24 Do female students face more financial issues to continue their education?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	325	84.6	84.6	84.6
No	29	7.6	7.6	92.2
Neutral	30	7.8	7.8	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Do female students face more financial issues to continue their education? for this question of focus, In the following close ended table, 84.6 percent of the participating people said yes while the other 7.6 percent were on denial. However, 7.8 percent were neutral. The overwhelming majority of the respondents say yes; which means that financial issues are the focal point of students as they seek education.

Discussion:

Considering the results gained from the data which was collected through sustained efforts and arduous hard work, it has been obviously proven that poverty and financial issues are equally responsible factors for the dropout of the girls from the schools as the government is responsible. If the parents are not sending their children to the schools because of some orthodox and traditionally cultural or religious beliefs, then they are wrong, but if they are not sending their children to the schools on account of the financial issues and the lack of resources, then they are not to be blamed. Every bright minded individual aspires to educate its family. Every responsible citizen wants the entire society to be responsible and well educated.

No matter what initiatives are undertaken by the government, unless the very basics of the problem are dealt with, nothing can register a major change in the education system. The focal point of the problem lies in the fact that the government is not yet realizing the gravity of the situation that is ultimately causing the aggravation of the education system in Balochistan in general and in Zhob in particular. There are numerous problems in the education system. The curriculum is not well designed and not advanced enough to meet the modern needs. It is though, disturbing, but not the major cause of the dropout of the female from the schools.

The girls may not well understand the course taught at the school and they may face problems in adapting the tough and obsolete material of the syllabus they are taught, but they endeavor to maintain their education. The very basic problems of education are multiple among which the top are the lack of finance both from the societal point of view and from the education budget of the government. The lack of finances on the part of the people of the society, in other words, their poverty prevents them from sending their girls to the schools as they cannot afford to continue with the education of their children.

Poverty is also a major cause of early marriages of the girls. Since the parents realize that the girls cannot be employed and cannot earn for them except doing the home chores, they tend to get them married at the early ages which as a result causes the blockage of their studies. The newly married brides are prevented from their husbands for getting education. Let alone the prospects of doing any office work or job, the girls are not even allowed to continue their education. As a result, most of the girls reaching to the middle school get married and after marriage they quit going to the schools. Some families with average resources can afford to educate a couple of their children.

They prefer to educate their males in the family rather than the girls. Their male siblings are preferred over them in every aspect of life. Zhob is not an industrial hub and in spite of its abundant minerals and other metal resources, more or less half of the population lives an average and simply poor life. There are no strong commercial activities and the people, especially, in the rural areas strive to make both ends meet. Poverty is dominant in the rural areas and the people do not have sufficient resources and capacity for girls' education.

Focusing on the problem on the part of the government, one can easily understand that the resources of the government all channeled to the security and the efforts for redirecting the resources toward public sector have not met with affirmative success. The lion's share of the budget goes to the security of the province as it is militant and insurgent hit province.

The public sector and the welfare projects do not get sufficient budget. Education is also affected by this lack of financial resources. Schools are waiting to be renovated and new projects to build schools are hanging in the balance.

New teachers are not recruited and the old teachers are not trained enough to make any huge difference in the classrooms. The district administration for education is not also keenly interested in the affairs of the schools. What makes the situation even worse is their oblivion toward the dropout of the girls as this major issue has remained unnoticed for years. The girls are bearing the brunt of lack of resources.

The remedies are also given by this research in the light of the following findings some recommendations are made which will introduce some change unless the government opts to act.

Findings:

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. It was found that the majority of the participating people who helped endorse the campaign for women literacy were female and most of them were from the rural areas of Zhob.
2. Most of the respondents, as it was found, agreed that the financial issues were the major obstacle in the way of education of the girls of Zhob.
3. The results had also found that the lack of budget for education at the provincial level was also a serious matter of worry.
4. What also was found that the female was more prone to falling victim to the financial crises as compared to the male as the parents always prefer their male children to advance and leave their female kids to stay at homes.

To make it concise and plain, the above mentioned data and facts draw to the emphasized conclusion that the female students' dropout in the district of Zhob is a very serious matter that is ultimately affecting the cause of women empowerment and leaving deep impact on the literacy rate. To add some other points, the financial crunch and the poverty of the people have added to their miseries worsening the cause of female education. The aftermath of the dropout is appalling. Creativity is ceasing to exist and the moral cause is also decaying. The government has to take notice of the aggravating standards of living and the deteriorating standards of education in Zhob before the damage goes beyond repair. The backdrop of the female illiteracy is awfully dangerous for the entire society.

Recommendations:

In the light of above findings and conclusions, some suggestions in the shape of recommendations are explained below which can be put to light for making policies pertinent to education.

1. The government has to ensure the implementation of the millennium development goals and make sure that all the children across the country attain education and get enrolled in the schools.
2. The results have frequently shown that the people are for most of the cases not sending their children to the schools on account of their financial issues as grinding poverty has overcome their confidence and efforts. Therefore, the government ought to make some sense of its accountability and provide the people with greater economic opportunities so the people get to live stabilized lives, thus, enabling them to afford educating their girls.
3. New institutions are required. The public is in dire need of new schools and the old buildings either need to be renovated or expanded as the population has increase by leaps and bounds, the people are in need of more institutions. The old schools cannot accommodate the growing number of enrolments, given the very reason; the girls at last get compelled and quit the schools. Hence, the coming budget of the ministry of education should contain a portion for making new schools and renovating the old ones.
4. Unless efforts are made from all the corners, certain issues of reducing the gender gap cannot be achieved. What needs to be done is to put the female dropout on the check as it has not only intensified the apprehensions of the human rights as well as the women rights activists, but it has also driven a very wide wedge between male and female equality. The growing numbers of dropouts need to be stooped in order to establish equilibrium in the society.
5. The current number of faculty in the area of Zhob is way too small; hence, it needs to be increased. New recruitments must be made based on pure merit meeting the international standards of enough students per teacher.
6. The number of teachers is too less, besides that, they are not fully trained and not well experienced. The first measure the government must take is to properly train the teachers and appoint well qualified teachers so they can impart a genuine sense and love for education among the masses.
7. Transportation is a serious obstacle. New buses and vans should be given the girls' schools, especially, in the rural areas so the girls do not get to come to school on foot.
8. The government has to implement the 2025 vision of which the educational policy of enrolling all the children by 2025 is an integral part.

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