

Teachers' Perception about Female Education and their Social Life

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Abstract

Many researches elaborated that female education is such substantial for families and for girls themselves that some economists have stated that educating girls may be the single highest return investment available in the developing countries. The researchers revealed the fact that to educate the girls not only improve their personality and enhance their prestige within the society but also benefit the economic growth of the country. So it was very important to find out the reasons for the importance of female education and its impact on their lives. The proposed study was intended to explore the teachers' perception about the effects of female's education on their social life. The sample comprised of eight women; all of them were senior teachers and working at different positions for more than 4 years in the Education Department, International Islamic University Islamabad. The study was a phenomenological design of qualitative research. As a phenomenology study explores the personal experiences of the participants about any phenomenon. To collect the data a semi-structured interview was conducted to obtain the relevant information from the respondents. The interview guide was constructed keeping in view the main variables of the study i.e. female education, social life, health, economic status, home environment. The results of the study portrayed that education enables female to handle their home issues successfully and trains them in the way that they get confidence to find solution for different problems. Almost all participants were in favor that educated females are more courageous, confident and have potential to make their own decisions whether they are in job or not. They started to realize their rights and responsibilities. This study revealed some important themes such as education brings a dramatic change in the women's life as it lifts up their living standard not only within the family but also within the societies, enhancing their confidence, making them aware of their family's health, enhancing their self-esteem and self-efficacy, increasing their awareness about the behaviors of people, better upbringing of their children and boosting their management skills. It would not be wrong to say that through women education we can achieve sophistication of civilization, companionate behaviors and sociable living and transmit it to upcoming generations.

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1. Introduction

Diverse approaches related to the need of women empowerment for the development programs were appeared from the 1970s onwards, when it was realized that social development and innovations influence differently on both male and females. The Women in Development Approach (WID) framework put emphasis on the fact that women development has strong association with the concept of liberal feminism. It emphasizes the fact that involvement of females in development projects and plans improves the overall efficiency of any program (Ghazala & Awan, 2011).

Fatima (2010) stated in one of her research article that every civilized society gives special consideration to the educational sector especially for the social and economic progress of the women's lives. No one can refute the importance of both male and female's part in the progressive activities and it is essential for the human societies to utilize all human assets to get economic, social and cultural progress. Without paying the attention to female education no society could get any type of development or prosperity. Certainly no one can expect complete progress or prosperity without recognizing the role of women's potential (Fatima, 2010).

A lot of research work is seen related to the socio-economic impact of female education within the international development. Increase in women education highly correlate with the high level of progress in developing countries especially some effects are seen related to the economic developments. Efforts made for female education not only raise the income of women but also leads to GDP growth of the country. Some other effects of women education related to social development are seen in many researches. Women education offers many social benefits which are mostly related to the empowerment of women.

Factors Influencing Girl's Education

Cammish (1997) stated in the educational research report about the factors affecting girl's education are delineated below.

Physical Facilities

The considerable spatial disparity is seen in many researches that are related to the provision of institutions even at primary level that shows difficulty in access of physical facilities more for women than the males. Disparity is observed related to the facilities for secondary education especially for girls in urban areas. Furthermore, the insufficiency in transportation facilities for women is observed which extremely correlated with the women education.

Socio-cultural Factors

Numerous research results illustrate the fact that a major hindrance to get educational facilities for women, even when these are available, is the fundamental cultural bias in the favor of boys. There are many other socio-cultural factors which highly influence the participation of females in getting formal education such as family systems that compel their young girls for early marriages, incident of early pregnancies, heavier household and subsistence duties of girls and most importantly low respect and regard for female's needs, requirements and whole life. Above mentioned all factors profoundly affect the women education.

Wellbeing and Health related Factors

The effects of malnutrition and poverty are observed on the school going children particularly more in girls as compared to boys. Especially, in most of Asian countries parents seem more concerned about the health of boys and their food habits as compared to girls whereas females have to do heavier domestic duties and more likely remain under nourished. And even if girls are provided educational facilities, this inequality badly affects their performance during school tasks. Furthermore, problems related to health directly correlate with pregnancy in young girls as well. Family planning and family size is also considered as a critical factor that affects the girls' health and their participation in education. It is obvious that health factors directly or indirectly affect the females for getting education, so these must be kept under consideration while planning for women's education.

Financial Factors

The biasness of parents, as seemed in socio-cultural factor, related to female education is more obvious especially in rural areas when we discuss about the economic factors. Most of parents consider it wastage of resources and money when it is spent on girl's education especially in terms of the provision of uniform, fee, books and other educational necessities. They also consider that due to education of girls they loss their help for household tasks. Mostly the contribution of females is voluntary and they do not have practice of money handling which further decreases the status and power of parents and leads their vulnerability. They think that expenditure on girl's education is just wastage because their education could be beneficial for the family where the girl marries rather than their parent's home. For some people investment in girl's education could be fruitful for marrying them well and to attract good match for the girl. Whereas for some people girls can get vocational education only, that is considered as weak and underrated everywhere but suitable for women.

Religious Factors

Generally religions do not directly act as a factor that gets in the way of females education and often overcome by the fundamental socio-cultural biasness for the males. Sometimes it seems that religious practitioner and followers are male and make a powerful image in the favor of this gender. In Islamic and Christianity religions, this factor has a positive effect on female education but in Hinduism the religious significance of sons seems against the daughter's education because here girls are considered as lower creature as compared to man.

Legal Rights

According to Ghazala & Awan, (2011), the factor 'legal' also does not act against the female education directly but there are many areas where reforms regarding this gender are required encouraging respect for the females. Although many countries have legislated for the equal rights for both genders "male and female" but still many efforts are mandatory to further promote compliance and strengthen the justice to ensure that this is actually happening in the societies. Especially in developing countries, it is often observed that the rights of women are still constrained as most of women are kept deprived from their inheritance of the property; some are engaged in early marriages without asking their consent.

Political / Administrative Factors

Many policies are formed related to developments such as universal primary education, provision of equal opportunities for enjoying all educational resources and facilities, and omission of materials and texts illustrating the biasness against female gender etc. but most of such policies could not get the status of implementation status due to various reasons. Political and administrative staff has to carry these through but they seem helpless due to rigorous economic restrains. Specifically in under-developing countries poor administrative staff and allocation of unsatisfactory resources by the government are insufficient and ineffective. In places where such political and administrative dichotomy exists even elite women are deprived from their basic rights and their possible participation in the national progress may be lost.

Educational Factors

This factor sometimes becomes a hindrance itself for the participation of females in getting education such as lack of proper educational facilities, resources and female trained teachers etc. Most of parents especially in rural areas are reluctant to send their girls to educational institutions particularly if schools are far away or there is co-educational system in the schools. Due to lacking of female teaching staff and poor accommodation facilities, parents feel reluctant to send their daughters for education. This situation becomes severe

when secondary education starts as for secondary education parents insist for separate female schools, proper place with high security measures, less fee and more scholarships. Females must be offered vocational education to be equipped with skills. One other key issue that is a major obstruct for female education is the gender bias books and materials specifically beneficial only for males (Ghazala & Awan, 2011).

Necessity for Female Education

Many researches illustrated through their results the importance of female education especially for the progress and prosperity of families, societies and even nations. Some of the benefits are discussed below showing the importance of female education:

Increase in Incomes

Herz (2011) stated in one of her article that results of the World Bank studies demonstrate the fact that a person's basic income can be increased till 5% to 10% if one more year beyond the primary education is obtained and it is considered as higher returns for girls than the boys. And one more year of secondary education can boot the income till 15% to 25%.

Faster Economic Growth

Education of males and females generally results in the increase of the economic growth of a family. Many studies supported that increase in secondary education of females cause a boost in per capita income growth of any country especially developing countries like Pakistan.

Food Protection

It is seemed in the results of International Food Policy Research Institute that educated women are better farmers and cultivators that indulge in better ways of farming and contributes 40% of decrease in malnutrition from 1970 to 1995 (Herz, 2011).

Family-welfare

For healthier and prosperous families it is crucial to get our girls to be educated. It is obvious that females have more responsibility for caring and rearing the children as compared to males in our societies. Many studies demonstrate the fact that educated women manage the resources more efficiently as compared to the men and more educated women are more likely to increase income that in turn benefits the whole family. Furthermore, the educated woman and her educated husband are more likely to have smaller family and try to spend more income on the health and education of their children that in turn causes the well-being of the whole family.

Many studies revealed that:

- Educated women especially who have at least secondary education are more likely to have small families with two or three kids. As the family income increases, the mortality rate decreases and it ensures the whole family health and well-being. Other than this all the children likely to attend the school.
- Many studies revealed that one more year education beyond the average for women decrease the infant mortality till 5% to 10%.
- The children of educated mothers attend the school more regularly and for longer time. It is revealed through many studies that mother's education is more important as compared to father's education especially for the children's schooling because educated mother can realize the importance of education for the complete development of her children.
- Girls having at least secondary education are more conscious about the risky situations and can avoid HIV/AIDS related problems because they can obtain more relevant information and take control of their lives.

The women who are educated are more likely to have smaller, healthier and educated families that in turn help in the increase of financial conditions and train children to face challenging situations and solve their problems efficiently (Gupta & Srivastava, 2012).

Female's own Well-being

Educated females have power to convey their thoughts and ideas freely using convincing arguments. These women can get more financial opportunities; can be encouraged to participate in political activities and can bring betterment in the society. Providing the girls best opportunities to get education till higher secondary level enable them to bring positive changes in their lives such as do not get marry in early age, get equipped with new skills, assist their families, and avail better chances and opportunities from social and economic changing environments.

The fruits of the girl's education can be seen as it starts from primary education but enhanced flavor is obtained if they are given opportunities for secondary education. Many countries are striving for universal primary education, which is one of the key goals of millennium developmental goal with ensuring the gender equity. While providing equal opportunities of education for both males and females will help to achieve universal primary education and further offering secondary education especially to girls will help them to achieve economic stability, get confidence to handle managerial tasks and ensuring prosperity of their family. So the proposed study was very significant to recognize the fact that how educating the large number of girls will help in constructing enlightened society with prosperous generations. The present study

was designed to understand the importance of education in the life of women and the effects of their jobs for the development of their social relations.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Many research studies have illustrated the socio-economic impact of education on the female's life. A woman education and high level of socio-economic development is positively correlated especially in under developing countries. Impact of women education not only increases the economic status of their families but also improve the social and national progress respectively. Women education also offers many social benefits which are mostly related to the empowerment of women (Malhotra, 2004). The key purpose of the study was to comprehend the importance of female's education for their social life and the influence of their jobs on their social relationships specifically in Pakistani context. Furthermore, it was inspected that what are the major impact of being educated especially for female teachers on their social life and home environment. The proposed study was intended to explore the teacher's perception about the effects of female's education on their social life.

1.2 Research Questions

Following were the main research questions of the study:-

1. What do female teachers of International Islamic University, Islamabad feel about the effects of education on their social life?
2. How do they see the effects of their job on their personal and social life?

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

Design of this research was based on phenomenological design of qualitative research. A phenomenology study explores the personal experiences of the participants about any phenomenon. Hence the researcher tried to explore the impact of participants' formal education and their job on the development of their social relations and home environment.

2.2 Participants

The participants of the proposed study were females working in various administrative and teaching posts at the International Islamic University, Islamabad. Main focal point of this study was to investigate how education brings changes in the female's life. These participants (females) were selected because they all were enjoying the same organizational culture and working environment, only their home and social background determined the effects of their education on their social life and relationships. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants for the study. These were eight female senior teachers working at different positions since more than four years

in the Department of Education, International Islamic University Islamabad. Three participants were PhD degree holders and had done their post doctorate from foreign universities. Two of the participants were enrolled in PhD program. Two had done their M.S degree from the same university (IIUI) and one had done M.A. The age of the all females were within the range 30-55 and almost all belonged to middle and upper middle social class. Fathers of more of the participants were graduate and masters and worked in good organizations but most of mothers were not well educated and were just household women. All of participants were married except one. Three of them had children and four didn't have kids. Details are given below:-

1. Participant A: She was working as Assistant Professor and married but did not have any kid.
2. Participant B: She was working as Assistant Professor and married having 2 children.
3. Participant C: She was working as Assistant Professor and married having one child.
4. Participant D: She was working as Teaching and Research Associate and married but did not have any child.
5. Participant E: She was working as Teaching and Research Associate and married having one child.
6. Participant F: She was working as Teaching and Research Associate and married but did not have any child
7. Participant G: She was working as Program Coordinator and married but did not have any child.
8. Participant H: She was working as Lecturer and not married.

2.3 Research Instrument and Data Collection

A semi structure interview was conducted to obtain data from the participants. It was based on 5 introductory questions concerning about the demographic information and 20 informal open ended questions related to the research problem, constructed by the researcher keeping in view the main variables of the proposed study i.e. Female education, Social life, health, economic status, home environment. The informal interview was conducted by the researcher at various times schedule given by the participants. Approximately 2 to 3 interviews were conducted in informal setting (in the teachers' offices) per a day, having all discussion or interview in very light mode and comfortable environment. All participants gave their responses in very pleasant and relaxed mode enjoying the questions related to their life experiences and their feelings.

2.4 Data Analysis

The researcher personally visited the teachers and requested them to give their response for the interview questions. It was made sure that data will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purpose. It took almost an hour to take detailed responses of the teacher. Some probing questions were asked to obtain their in-depth views and clarifying vague comments. Qualitative data were analyzed using different steps, before proper coding and analysis it is necessary to transcribe interview data accurately so that meanings, feelings and ideas of participants can be reported truthfully. Interview data collected from teachers were analyzed through manual procedure by the researcher and different codes and themes were identified. Certain steps were followed to precede the qualitative data analysis. Firstly the initial coding was made by highlighting the meaningful text and memos were created. Secondly associations and relationships among the various initial coding were identified. Next some new concepts and ideas formed as they appeared and these concepts were grouped to create categories. Finally the themes were identified based on the concepts and categories.

3. Interpretation of the Data

The system of formal education in any community is very important especially in life of women and for the well-being of the family and in turn development of the whole society. This study provided some evidence that education both in form of formal and informal is the key factor for empowering the women in society creating a strong bond in the family which leads towards a prosperous society.

Theme 1: Impacts of Education on Social Relationship Development

Many studies are come up with this conclusion that education has countless positive impacts on the social development of people especially for female's life. In this study many participants were in the favor of this fact as said by some of participants;

“Educated people are better in social interaction thus developing their relations” (P2)

“Good impact on my relations because most of the time I take burden on my shoulders” (P5)

“Females learn a lot through education how to be socialized and how to move in the society.”(P8)

“Through education we are able to mix up with others, we learn how to socialize and how to get adjusted in the society” (P6)

But some of participants felt their education and job sometimes caused the intervention in the development of their social relations. As some families were not well educated and they were against the female’s education and created problems for them, so that’s why they stopped to meet them. Some of them were in the view that they could not find time to meet their close relatives frequently because of their busy schedule as stated;

“We couldn’t get much time to visit our relatives very often” (P7)

“If you are talking about the socialization with my friends and colleagues at job, yes education helps me a lot in developing and maintaining these relations. But if we link it with family socialization it causes some restrictions and has some negative impacts because most of my cousins were getting married after graduation and only one did master. My mother side relatives are not well educated even some of them were very against to my masters and PhD” (P3)

“I am very keen to have relationships with few people but not with everyone” (P1)

“I couldn’t get much time to spend with my family” (P4)

Almost all of the participants have very good relations with their mothers, and for them their mothers are very good in relations, managing different tasks and even understand every child’s psychology while treating them instead of this fact that they are not well educated.

“She is not a highly educated lady but she knows how to deal with kids even she knows that every child has a different psyche and she handles accordingly” (P5)

“She is not a working woman but she is used to do all type of tasks which are usually done by men. Picking and dropping us from the colleges and schools, parties and friend’s homes. She is used to pay bills, doing grocery and from morning till night she is on duty.” (P4)

Now the question is; what is the key with those ladies who are not well educated but respond like highly educated and well-mannered women, even considered as all round personalities. When asked to the participant, some said it may be their family values imparted from generations to generations, according

to some it can be due to their personal characteristics or personality traits but some were in the opinion that it is the matter of both informal and formal education;

“I think both education and their family values are the cause. It is because they have very strong family values and informal education which enriched them with such qualities” (P2)

“I don’t know about rest but it’s my personal thinking that maybe it is because of her early marriage. She is the favorite among all youngsters, old ones and even small kids like her a lot”(P4)

“In fact they are educated not formally but informally so we can’t say that they are not educated. I think that every person who has born in this world has some education. We have limitized the term education to schools, colleges and degrees but education has a broader perspective.”(P6)

So it became obvious that for the social development of females it is very significant to educate them through providing quality education. Furthermore, family values and family culture are critical factors which enhance social development of the females, hence it would not be wrong to say that education must comprises of *“taleem-u-tarbiat”* instead of only awarding degrees.

Theme 2: Educated Women are more conscious about the Health of their Family

Herz (2011) explained in one of her articles that the International Food Policy Research Institute illustrated through its research work that educated females contributed very productively in farming practices that helped in decreasing malnutrition about 40% from 1970 to 1995 (Herz, 2011). In this study almost every participant showed their concern for the health of their families and for this they made their best efforts to keep their home clean, cook food by themselves and furthermore tried their best to create a pleasant and comfortable home environment to keep their family healthier. As stated by participants;

“I do care of my family and make them healthy in form of cleanliness of home, hygienic food, talking to their issues and resolving them”(P1)

“I am conscious about the health of my family. I always try to cook healthy food which my family members like most. And I think that is nutritious and healthy food.”(P7)

“I avoid teasing others. Actually I am not much demanding. There is calm environment in our home. There are fewer issues” (P6)

Education of women improves family wellbeing and their children’s health because it is well thought-out that mothers who are well educated have been more concerned about the significance of hygiene and cleanliness of their family.

Theme 3: Effects of Job on the Home Environment

In a web article the “Women, Work and Motherhood it was stated that most of females accounted that they feel high level of stress while managing their job and family. When it was asked how do they feel regarding their time management, most of mothers replied that they feel rushed (Women, Work and Motherhood, 2012). To some extent the picture is depicted in the same study. Most of participants feel job and home responsibilities are as double duty especially for the women in our society as said by some teachers;

“I think in our society it is double duty for females which is very difficult to manage. It ultimately affects the female’s health and even their whole life as their joys, their thinking, their pleasures and even their rest”. (P1)

“Sometimes it does negative effect on my home environment. Last night I spent 3 hrs on the checking of thesis and assignments of my students. So I feel sometimes my kids and husband are neglected due to my busy schedule” (P2)

“I think it is my job which may have some negative impact on my relations development” (P2)

“I think job has some adverse effects on my health because I have to do household tasks and even sometimes I feel I couldn’t give proper or enough time and attention to my daughter as my mother used to give me as she was a household lady”. (P3)

But this is not the whole scenario, for some participants to manage the home and job is not big issue and they feel that their job helps in creating positive home environment.

“It is very smooth running and pleasant. Otherwise I was very lazy lady and due to my job I am very active now and learn to manage in different situations”. (P7)

“I remain busy and can support to my family so I feel its influence is very good on home environment”.(P5)

These words are showing the importance of female job helping them in their personal grooming, enabling them to learn and managing different tasks within limited time. But in our society the women are supposed to do household tasks and it is considered their responsibility, so when they are doing full time job and have to take care of home, husband, children and other family members, then it causes over burden and stress in the life of women.

Theme 4: Effects of Education on their Lives

Many researchers concluded that efforts for increasing and improving the female’s education and their literacy rate in turns improves the socio-economic status of females and causes the well-being of the whole families. There is no haziness about the significance of education in the life of woman which not only influences the well-being of that particular lady but its fruit is enjoyed by all family members and even the society(Fatima, 2010). All participants of this study feel proud on being educated and express countless returns of this ornament in their lives as expressed by participant;

“Through education my behavior is molded, I have learnt a lot of manners, dealings with the people, and live in society through rules and regulations”.(P8)

“I never thought about it that not having education, but if it would be, I think there would be some economic problems, some emotional issues and less socialization. And a limited thought as well because education broadens someone’s vision and thought”.(P6)

“Education gave me a great strength; it has broadened my views, a sense of how a life should be how the child should be brought up. I couldn’t even think that I would be without education”.(P3)

“Especially my anger is under control due to education. It has influenced my power of planning; managing the things and it has a strong impact on my behavior”. (P2)

“Definitely, it helps in my grooming, knowledge and awareness. Secondly it develops me professionally and socially where ever I go I have a reputation and respect. It has an effect on my overall personality development”. (P4)

“Education has influenced my behavior and attitudes. It makes me aware how to handle the different situations and how to manage the things in time. Even it makes me able how to communicate with others about different matters”. (P5)

It is obvious that education has endless effects on the life of women and it should not be only for the sake of employment or economic purpose but for the whole personality grooming and complete development.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Education is the key to develop the whole individuality. No one can deny the importance and value of the education due to its wide spread effects not only for a single individual but for whole generations, societies and the nations. Education helps to widen the prospect of people experiences as providing them opportunities to directly interact with the realities of life. As Mishra (2005) stated in her work that if the mothers are well educated it is more likely that they will send their children to schools. Her work illustrates multiple benefits of education not only for themselves but also for their family and whole community. Education enables women to manage the work and home tasks more effectively and handle various critical situations positively. Throughout the world, education is considered as one of the key factors that help women to overcome all barriers facing in their life. Almost all participants are confident that educated females are more authorized and empowered. They can make their own decisions and can convince others with logics whether they are in job or not;

“It is not essential for female to do always a job even if she is qualified but some years ago I was in view that the females who are not intended to do a job should not go for professional or high education but now I feel if you are not planning for job even then a female should get education because it is not only for the financial benefit but it gives many other benefits which are not possible otherwise without education”.(P3)

Educated women are more renowned and practical national beings. They become aware of their rights and can analyze various things related to their life. The results of the study illustrated that education can bring some unique influences and effects in female’s life such as:

- ascend their status in family and community
- escalating their self-assurance and self-efficacy
- become conscious about the health of their family
- boost their confidence and self esteem

- make them aware about the behavior of people
- Better upbringing of their children
- Enhancing their management skills

In nut a shell, it can be said that only with the educated females we can transmit empathetic behavior to succeeding generations, developing economic and socially stable beings and bringing the sophistication of civilizations in Pakistan. As only a quality education can endow females with a special power to express their feelings and ideas freely by convincing arguments and can get more opportunities; as being encouraged to participate in social and political activities and can bring betterment in the society. Providing the girls best opportunities to get education at least till higher secondary level could enable them to bring positive changes in their lives such as do not get marry in early age, get equipped with new skills, assist their families and avail better chances and opportunities from social and economic changing environments.

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