

## ATTITUDE AND ASPIRATIONS OF RURAL MOTHERS TOWARDS FEMALE EDUCATION

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*This study was an attempt to determine the attitude of rural mothers regarding the pursuit of education concerning their daughters. Data were collected through an interviewing schedule from 150 mothers in three villages in District Faisalabad. It was found that the females generally had a positive attitude towards educating their girls. There were definitely constraints which impeded the aspirations of the rural females. Social values, poverty, preference to the male members of the family were some of the major factors that inhibited the women's educational aspirations.*

### INTRODUCTION

Parental encouragement has been seen as an important factor in the promotion of education for children, more so of mothers, who play a key role in the socialization of a child. Their attitude about a certain aspect definitely moulds a child's behaviour. It means that the attitude of the mothers towards their daughters' education affects and influences the aspirational level and achievements of the girls. Bajwa (1977) while studying the educational aspirations of rural women about their children found that socio-economic status of parents positively affected the educational achievements of their children. Azmat (1979) found a non-significant association between educational aspirations of students and educational level of their parents from rural or urban areas.

The present study is an attempt to determine the attitude and aspi-

rations of rural mothers regarding their daughters' education. It would also identify the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the prevailing constraints.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data were collected from three villages of Faisalabad District. The sample consisted of 150 rural mothers. Fifty mothers were randomly selected from each village. Age grouping of the respondents was done in three categories i.e., 20-35 years, 36-50 years, and 51 years and above. The information was collected through an interviewing schedule.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**1. Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents:** The respondents were categorized into age groups of 20-35 years, 36-50 years and 51 years and above. The data re-

vealed that 25% of the mothers were in the first age group, 64% fell in 36-50 years group, while only 11% were in age group of 51 years and above. Of these, 3% were widows. The family set up of the respondents revealed that 49% of the females were living in a joint family system, whereas 51% lived in nuclear families. This gives a fair indication of the independence of half of the respondents.

Distribution of the respondents according to education showed that majority of them i.e., 85% were illiterates, 11% had received education upto primary level, 3% upto middle level and only one percent had done matric. None of them had ever gone to college. Considering the educational level of the husbands of the respondents, 45% of them were illiterates, 16% had upto primary education, 8% attained middle level, 23% had finished matric and 8% had been to college. At all levels one could compare that at all levels the difference between the respondents and their spouses education was quite obvious. Classification by economic status of respondents families showed that 66% of them were landholders, whereas 34% were landless.

**2. The impact of the socio-economic background on the respondents attitude:** The landless women due to lack of means felt helpless but their spirit regarding their daughters' education was quite appreciable. They aspired high but with reservations. Females from a sounder economic background showed a more positive attitude towards the education of

their daughters. This meant that more financial strength had a significant effect on their aspirations. It was higher in land-owning families. This finding is in line with Pavallo and Bishop (1966) who proved that higher the socio-economic status of the family better the plans for further education.

On overall basis 80% of the sampled respondents revealed a positive attitude for their daughters to pursue education. This is contrary to the finding of Khan (1971) who found that majority of the illiterate parents did not take interest in educating their children. In such a situation children were left to decide their own fate. They were rather discouraged to continue their studies.

According to the rural mothers 93% were of the mind that education enhanced the position of women in the family and society. Of the respondents, 70% believed that they shared economic burden and were a helping hand financially. An educated woman is thus an economic asset.

About 90% rural mothers did not share the view that educated women were not religious; neither did they (77%) avoid providing help in farm work nor they (63%) showed disinterest in solving family problems. A significant majority of rural mothers opined that education in females made them to have a better understanding and a saner view about handling the complications and intricacies of family and social problems. The women wished that their daughters got higher education so that they could get good jobs.

**3. Constraints:** Among others lack

of money, transportation means and social values are the important impeding factors for continuation of female education. It was seen that some very enthusiastic mothers could not let their daughters continue their studies because of being poor and unable to pay fees, charges for books, etc. In most of the cases the girls were restrained from going to school because the school building was far away. It was not possible for the family to take risks. Therefore they decided to keep them back and encouraged their sons on the other hand to go to school. According to their thinking the male members in any case have to be given priority. Another major constraint is the social values of the villages. And when we talk of values, it is obvious that these encompass the whole family system in rural areas. The data revealed that 49% of the respondents lived in a joint family system, thus indicating that though half of the sample of the rural married females is independent to take decisions yet they are not fully so even if they have positive feelings about women education. This finding conforms to that of Siddique (1959) who studied factors leading to opposition to female education in a Pakistani village. He showed that rurality was positively related with opposition to female education. Of course, the situation has improved quite a bit by now.

**4. Suggestions:** To make conditions more conducive for female education, adequate facilities should be provided in rural areas. Number of

institutions be necessarily increased, with the teaching staff sufficiently trained and more in number to meet the demands and improve the standards. Also the schools should be so located that these are well in reach of the female students in various villages so as to enable them to reach unescorted. Besides, the government programmes for better education with a stress on female education be properly implemented.

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