

## Barriers to Female Education in Rural Areas: A Case Study of District Gujranwala, Punjab, Pakistan.

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### **Abstract**

Education of females is pivotal and considered as fundamental to achieving sustainable development in the society and nations. No nation can rise to the height of glory unless equal participation of female is ensured in all sphere of life. Continues gender discrimination, along with unequal distributions of basic rights, resources and opportunities for female have observed across the words (Esther et al., 2020).In most developing countries especially in South Asian region, the opportunities for female education are not satisfactory, and numerous social, cultural, religious, and family barriers create obstacles. These intersecting barriers created by patriarchal mind-set play a vital role, and have considerable negative impacts on the life and achievement of education by females (UNICEF, 2020). However, in recent decades a substantial progress has been observed in female education. The females prove themselves as high achiever in education and assumed great responsibility in various fields. But unfortunately this number is very limited, and the gender discrimination in families and society slow down this process. To understand the basic reasons and barriers to female education, this primary study was conducted, in district Gujranwala, Punjab, Pakistan. The data for the study was collected from 324 respondents (female students) from various female degree colleges of Gujranwala, through structured questionnaire. Descriptive and statistical tests were applied to find out the result of the study.

**Keywords:** *Fundamental, Sustainable Development, Gender Discrimination, Intersecting Barriers, Structured Questionnaire.*

### Introduction:

No nation can rise to the height of glory unless equal participation of females is ensured in all sphere of life. Female education is the fundamental to achieving sustainable development in any society and nation. However, continuous gender discrimination, along with unequal distributions of basic rights and opportunities for female have been observed across the words. (Esther et al., 2020). In recent decades most of the developed countries have made significant improvement in female literacy rate, and in these countries, female take part in every field of life, side by side with males. This contribution in productive work by females provides huge contribution in socio-economic development of the nations. The situation in developing countries especially South Asian region, is different, and the gender discrimination is a widespread issue that

is badly affecting huge proportion of women (Aradhana, 2020). In most developing countries especially in South Asian region, the female education position is unequal, as compared to male. There are number of family, social, cultural and regional barriers among others, faced by the females with regard to their education. These intersecting barriers play a vital role, and have considerable negative impacts on the life and education of female. Patriarchy approaches among communities and discrimination among daughters and sons by parents have become one of the largest hindrances for female education (UNICEF, 2020). In developing countries the female education position is strikingly poor, as one in four girls do not join the school or complete their basic primary education. One in every five girls got married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and got pregnant within fifteen months of marriage. Poor mental and physical health, under nutrition and excessive domestic burden affect the female themselves and also their coming generation (UNFPA, 2020). The worst situation has multidimensional reasons and impacts, not only on the lives of individual female and their families but also on the overall national development (UNICEF, 2017).

Pakistan is a developing country and faces complex social, economic, political and religious issues. The situation of education is not satisfactory especially for female, as there are about 22.5 million children are out of schools even today, and the large portion of this is females (UNICEF, 2019). Overall out of school children number is very high in the country but there is significance rural urban variations and regional disparities. Out of total females in the country, seventy five percent had never attend any school at all (Rebea, 2018). In recent decades there is a considerable progress in female education in this country. The females prove themselves as high achievers in education and assumed countless responsibilities in various fields at all levels. They get their own recognition and reached in all fields which were once considered only for boys. But unfortunately this number is very limited, and the gender discrimination in families and society slows down this improvement process. Most of the families and community members think that it is better for them to get married and settled down instead of getting education (Zain-ul-abiden et al., 2016). A lot of societal pressure, expectations and prospects attached with female role and the concept of care is traditionally attached with the role of female in our societies. Most of the times they are performing their role in domestic work (cleaning, cooking and take care of families) and also facing discrimination in facilities they need. Male dominating approach and practices in the society create hurdles and barriers to female, and their education is the first step where she can face this obstacle situation (Bandiera et al., 2019).

#### **Barrier to female education by family and society:**

A large number of multidimensional barriers are faced by female with regard to their education by their family and society in developing countries like Pakistan. The basic and fundamental barriers is poverty, and even low cost schooling system is not afforded by poor families. They preferred, their children worked with them to fulfill basic need of the family, instead of going to school. Government of Pakistan highlighted in 2018, that out of 60 million Pakistani families almost 7.6 million families are living below the poverty line (Pakistan bureau of statistic, 2019). Many schools-going age girls are out of school, because they are working with their families, at their work places, or at homes. Beside the poverty issue, there are rigid attitudes and myths attached with the female education. This type of mind-set think that educated female can violate their traditional cultural, social and family norms, and create harmful consequences for themselves and their families (Rafaeli, 2020). Sometimes the girls are removed from their schools or cut off their education when they reach at the age of puberty, due to the fear of insecurity and harassment. Most of the parents endorsed that women should learn domestic skills as early as possible, for easy survival with husband and children in future (Bandiera, 2019). Female early marriages have dual consequences, as on one hand it is the cause of not attending school and cut off the education in yearly years. On the other hand it contributes to child marriages with serious health consequences. According to UNICEF there are 21% females got marriage in Pakistan, before the age of 18 years.

In Pakistan society's religious element has an important impact on female education, and most of the people think that the school education is not necessary for female. They only make able to read Quran or

learn Islamic knowledge, and remain in the four walls of their homes (Mubarak, 2019). They do not send their girls to schools because of *parada* approach, and the situation is more critical where a separate female school is not available. The concept of honor and pride attached the role of females and it makes people more sensitive (Nadia, 2017). The insecurity, harassment, travel away from home place and insufficient educational facilities are also have their role with regard to poor female education (Chuang et al., 2019). Violence outside and inside the schools against female students have long term consequences on female education. Lack of working opportunities for female after education is another important barrier for female education. Females or their families do not give importance to their education as compared to male, because they think that it is difficult to get an appropriate job or work in the society (Rebea, 2018).

#### ***Barrier to female education by institutions:***

After facing the huge burden of family and society, there are some major institutional barriers faced to female in Pakistan. Lack of educational institute, poor infrastructure and basic facilities in the school is also creating barrier to female education. For away or long distance to educational institute and not proper transportation system does not allow parents to take risk for their daughters. At this stage, female growing age required specific facilities (Wash room, rest area etc.) and gender segregated practices. Poor teaching quality and methods are also the important factor that increased or decreased interest in education (World Bank, 2018). Due to less institution the issue of overcrowding and poor facilities is facing almost in all over the nation. Poor management, favoritism, bias and least interest by government teacher decreased the quality and quantity of female education especially in rural or faraway of the country (Somani, 2017). Under investment in female education by government, prohibitive fees and other education related costs, and the failure to enforce compulsory female education policy is another basic reasons and barriers to improved female education in the country.

Education without any discrimination of gender, cast and color is the basic human right and imperative for every individual in the world. Females are almost half portion of world's population and without their equal role and participation, the basic problems of communities could not be addressed. Educating female in developing countries is the only cost-effective way to overcome their socio-economic problems and ensure sustainability in the country. Government, private organizations, business and policy makers spend huge amount of time, skills, funds and resources to improve the female education in Pakistan. In spite of this enormous investment to improve the situation of female education, the required result is not found (PDHS, 2017-18). Complex range of family, socio-economic, and religious factor among others, have strong affects on female education in Pakistan. To ensure the female personal development, participation in work force, and a successful family life it is essential to improve female education. Without dealing the basic barrier to female education by family of the society it is difficult or even impossible. Keeping in mind the importance of more than half of population (53%) in the country, the study in hand tried to highlighted the primary barriers to female education. For the said purpose the researcher conducted the present study in district Gujranwala, Punjab, Pakistan. Study reveals the basic barriers faced by females in the areas and suggest suitable recommendation, keeping in mind the specific socio-cultural and religious situation.

#### **Objectives of the study:**

- To explore the socio-cultural barriers faced by female with regard to their education.
- To examine the barriers faced by female within education institutions.
- To understand the family attitude towards female education in rural areas.
- To suggest suitable measures to deal with barriers for improving female education.

#### ***Hypothesis of the study:***

- *Higher the level of conducive family environment leads towards higher the level of female education.*

- Higher the level of conducive community environment leads towards higher the level of female education.
- Higher the level of conducive environment within leads towards higher the level of female education.

#### Material and Methods:

##### **Research design, sampling procedure and data collection:**

The present study aimed to investigate the barriers to female education, for which multistage simple random sampling technique was adopted. The data and empirical information regarding the issue was gathered through questionnaire that comprises on three sections about barriers to female education. The first section provides the background information about family attitude and practices regarding female education. The second section is about the socio-cultural barriers of the community and societies. And the last section explores the situation with in the education instructions. The universe of the study is district Gujranwala, Punjab, Pakistan, and the population is divided into four tehsils of said district. The target population was the female student from government degree colleagues (11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>), and the respondents for the study were selected through proportional sampling from each Tehsil. This study selected 324 respondents which were approached for collection of primary data.

The data on perceptions about sociocultural and economic barriers faced by students and their parents was collected on 3 point Likert scale in terms of agree, neutral and disagree. The data and information was handled and analyzed by using advance software, SSPS.

##### **Result and Discussion:**

The below table presenting the responses of students regarding the barriers in their education

Sr. No	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	Positive parents attitude to their daughter education	70.33%	4.33%	25.33%
2	Facing economic barriers	60%	13.3%	25.99%
3	Afford educational expenditures	40.32%	25.33%	34.33%
4	Favorable society environment for female education	49.99%	19.33%	30.66%
5	Family environment for female education	36.32%	18%	45.66%
6	Girls education as violation of norms	36.93%	19.33%	43.66%
7	Typical traditions and customs are hurdle	48%	32%	19.99%
8	Educated female demand for more rights	65.99%	16.33%	17%
9	Culture allow just religious education	67.99%	12.33%	19%
10	Modern education brings moral degradation	44.99%	14%	40.99%
11	Within institution resistance female education	12.93%	12.33%	74.66%
12	Girls mobility for education thought as sin	33.6%	13%	53.32%
13	School going girl follow religious teachings	22.99%	9.6%	66.9%
14	Religion confined female within houses	12.99%	24%	63%
15	Intuitions (college) gives equal educational rights	88.99%	5.6%	4.3%
16	Facility of school in area	76%	-----	24%

To know the mean score variation among arts and science and the student of 1<sup>st</sup> semester or 11<sup>th</sup> class and senior student's t-test was applied. Some other disparities also highlighted as social, cultural and community factors along with individual insecurity. The above table presents the percentage and general response of the respondents regarding various aspect of their situation.

**Table No.01:**

To check the comparison of families, societies, and cultural insecurities T-test was applied as mention in below table.

Personal insecurity	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	Effect size
Arts	3.54	(0.73)	2.13*	181	.03	0.04 n
Science	3.47	(0.73)				
Socio-cultural challenge	3.31	(0.76)	5.13***	181	.00	.22 s
Arts						
Science	3.13	(0.83)				

\*\*P<1%, \*P<5%, s small effect size, n negligible effect size

The students of arts class are more social and participate in community events as the results shows in the above table that there is a significant higher insecurity level in these students. They also face more culture challenge than the students of science class.

**Table no.02:**

To check the comparison of families, societies, and cultural insecurities T-test was applied as mention in below table

Family and socio-culture insecurity	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	Effect size
First class	3.13	(0.85)	4.10***	151	.001	0.54 n
Other	3.52	(0.73)				
Socio-cultural challenge						
First	3.10	(0.69)	1.24	151	.28	
Others	3.23	(0.82)				

\*\*P<1%, \*P<5%, s small effect size, n negligible effect size

The above table highlighted that the junior student in colleges as class 11<sup>th</sup> or from the 1<sup>st</sup> semester face less issues of securities as compare to senior female students in the college. The issue arises inside the institution and outside the institution are both having impact and serious barrier to female education in the target communities.

**Table no. 03:**

The below table present the nature and trends of the respondents that are related to the family and socio-cultural patterns.

Variable	Respondents								F	P	$\eta^2$
	11 <sup>th</sup> students	class	12 <sup>th</sup> students	class	13 students	year	14 students	year			
	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>			
Family	3.58	(0.75)	3.50	(0.72)	3.51	(0.68)	3.36	(0.73)	2.69*	.03	0.001
Socio-cultural	3.30	(0.72)	3.22	(0.81)	3.45	(0.79)	3.22	(0.84)	3.76*	.01	0.05

\*\*P<0.000, \*P<0.05%, negligible effect size

Specific norms, values and customs of family, society and communities have a significant association with the nature of every individual and aspect is more sensitive with the role of female. Community and various sub-groups in the society have their specific characteristics according to their religious belief, education and economic condition among many others. Scheffe's test was applied, and this test applied because the number of respondents in subgroups is unequal. This type of analysis provide more realistic estimate to understand the difference in subgroups. The college students have strong relationships with their learning from the family and community and higher culture participation is observed. Specific family issues regarding female have long lasting impact on their learning and development, and play a vital role in future

**Table no. 04:**

Social and cultural challenges from demographic variables were analyzes by applying the multiple regressions test, as presented in table below.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Un-standardized coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>R2</i>	<i>F</i>
<b>(constant)</b>	3.099**	.056		19.57***
<b>11<sup>TH</sup> class (score, 1)</b>	-.333**	.046	2.1	
<b>12<sup>TH</sup> class (score, 2)</b>	.180**	.036	1.4	
<b>13 Year, class (score, 3)</b>	.105**	.042	0.2	
<b>14Year, class (score, 3)</b>	.097**	.048	0.1	

Multiple r = 0.215, medium effect size, N = 218

The above statistical analysis presents that the importance of social environment and the culture bonding have relation and contribution in all related aspect of female education. This may differ at every stage with the passage of time and age the students. Number of community challenges has the high score to female education, as compare to boy education. The older female students have to face more barrier and hurdles by their family, society and community.

**Table no. 05:**

Multiple regressions analysis predicting family attitudes and practice from demographic and community variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Un-standardized coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>R2</i>	<i>F</i>
<b>(constant)</b>	3.635**	.026		19.57***
<b>11<sup>TH</sup> class (score, 1)</b>	-.262**	.036	1.8	
<b>12<sup>TH</sup> class (score, 2)</b>	.161**	.044	0.7	
<b>13 Year, class (score, 3)</b>	-.379**	.092	0.7	
<b>14Year, class (score, 3)</b>	-.165**	.043	0.7	

Multiple r = 0.201, medium effect size, N = 218

The above table discuss the trends and patterns regarding family attitude and practices related to female education. Demographic and community aspect have strong affects on the respondents of the study and their decision making with regard to their female education. Female of young age or at the lower class may have comparatively less issues and hurdles by the family and community. Their movement, inside and outside the institution is much easier as compare to older students.

#### Conclusions:

Number of national and international, government and non-governmental organization spend a huge amount of funds, skills, and time to improve the gender equality and female education situation, especially in developing countries like Pakistan. Inspite of all this required result are not available, and meet the targets.



To understand the actual reason behind this the contextual data is the basic requirement. In developing nation to promote the female education is a challenge and faced numerous barriers by the traditions, economic conditions and personal interest of the individual. It is a well known fact that without equal participation of male and female in all sphere of life no nation can rise at the height of glory. Female education is the need of time in our countries to attain their basic human and fundamental rights, for their self awareness and personal development. Only qualified women have the power to change herself and future life along with her families and children. But there are numerous hurdle and barriers stand in her way as to achieve the stats as qualified women in our society. Barriers from family, society and community spoiled millions of female students every years unfortunately. In the past decades there are some progress observed in the situation but the situation is still harm full. Economic conditions, life patterns, insufficient facilities from government and patriarchy approach among others stand like stumbling block in the way of female education.

Among the several barriers faced by female with regard to their education is the poverty. The female belongs to the families under the poverty line more suffered and exploited in almost all aspect of life. Female education is the least priority among these families. Gender basis is another barrier faced in our societies. Most of the families and parents focus more on their male or boys education than their females. Number of myths attached with this behaviour and gender discriminations. Less institutional facilities is another important barrier to female education. Due to unavailability of school or college most of the females stop their education because parents can't afford to send their daughters to far away for education. Religious aspect of families and society is another strong element to female education. A general mindset for female is to sit in the four walls of their home and avoid interaction outside their homes. Due to specific religious approaches most of the parents are reluctant or hesitated to send their girls in the schools or away from their homes. There are also some interpersonal and misinterpretations prevail in our societies with regard to female education. The trend of early marriages and child birth among female is another obstacle to their education. Rigid social norms, values and traditions define specific gender role and enforced especially on female. This social behaviour shapes the lives of female and has great impact on their education and carrier. There are also some barrier which are adopted by female themselves, as they feel that she has a inferior position and surrender her opportunities to their male siblings and other males of family. The concept of honor and pride attached with the role and behaviour of females in the family. Mother as a female always teach her daughter to take care her brother and father daily activities as prepared food for them, cleaning and washing of hose. Male child of the house treated some other way in the same circumstances. This kind of behaviour by parents especially mother is another issue to their girl educations. There is need integrated interventions to tackle the situation and policy makers priorities this issue, with regard to the regional/local needs and variations. To involve the almost half portion (female) of population in productive work it the basic need to improve their education. Remove the barriers and hurdles to their personal growth and development and provide them conducive environment in families, societies and communities.

#### Recommendations:

After the completion of this empirical study there are some recommendations made by the researcher to improve the female education in the target areas and remove the barriers for their development and better future of them, their families, communities and the nation. First of all government must play its role more comprehensively at ground level and make possible and easy access to female in institution. Female education makes the priority in the division of budget, skills and trainings. Qualified teaching staff with improved infrastructure is the necessary and basic requirement. Specific courses, diplomas and degrees introduces specifically for female to enhance their skills, knowledge and capabilities and make them a productive part of the family. Comprehensive awareness intervention carried out for parents and other segment of society that can create hurdle to female education. The system of monitoring and evaluation must be strengthened not only in governmental institutions but the private institute must be covered. Immediate

administrative action should be taken in case of any complaint by the female students or their parent's regarding inside or outside the education related issue.

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