

# Parental Awareness Towards Female Education in Union Council Sheikh Umar, Muzaffargarh (Pakistan)

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## Abstract

*Education is the tool for the development and prosperity of any nation. It tells us the art of living successfully. To strengthen a country's economy, it is inevitable to educate every child in the country. Educating females in the country makes the economy faster on the development track, as observed in other developed countries. Developed countries believed in "Education for all" regardless of gender discrimination. Furthermore, educated women can contribute to the family and national income. In the research area (Sheikh Umar), most people need to be made aware. They must be made aware of the importance of education, especially female education. During research, the researcher felt a dire need for government assistance in providing facilities and infrastructure for educating women. The study was conducted in Sheikh Umar, District Muzaffargarh, Pakistan. In Sheikh Umar, most people need to be more focused on the importance of education, especially on female education. They are badly jumbled in old norms and values of the culture, which all are against their education and status of women. Male dominancy prevails in the research area where only males are decision maker and oppresses women under pressure. There are many barriers regarding the education of females in research areas and other rural areas of Pakistan. In Sheikh Umar, most people are loyal to old traditions and norms. However, the results also explain that educated parents have a significant role in female participation in education.*

**Keywords:** Sheikh Umar, Education, Parental Awareness, Female Role, SPSS.

## Introduction

According to Miller et al. (2009) education is a reformation, re-orientation and renovation of knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and actions. Education and learning develop the experience of a person. Education is a learning process that makes a person serve his/her society/country best (Chazan et al., 2022). The primary aim of education is to provide tools and techniques to deal with the needs of daily life.

According to Buzdar and Ali (2011) when it comes to economic crises, families prefer to educate their sons instead of their daughters. They fear that by educating their daughters, they will get hold of women's fundamental rights and demand to fulfil their rights, which will not be in favor of their

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sons, thus proving the importance of sons over daughters. There is a gender gap in many disciplines (Zubair et al., 2022).

As history tells us, Pakistan's education system has yet to grow compared to the rest of the world. Our founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah, made his utmost efforts to promote and improvise the crippled education system (Siddiqui, 2023). He foresaw the importance of education in the development of any nation and felt the dire need to promote education to a newly born Pakistan. He knew that India was doing much better in the education system. However, with time, the standard of education started to decrease. Especially from a female perspective, the standard of education is becoming low (Reddy et al., 2009).

Many female students in rural areas still need to complete their primary-level education. The mindset of the parents of these female students is that they prefer their daughters to stay at home and do household work (Ahmad, 2022). This attitude leads to gender disparity and discrimination by not providing due education to females. Gender discrimination in education not only has an impact on women who are not offered education by limiting their options but also on coming generations. Similarly, the economic consequences of the problem must be addressed. Power and control over the resources are associated with a higher level of education.

Pakistan is currently dealing with several issues, including terrorism, sectarianism, poverty, and instability. Lack of tolerance, a general lack of awareness, and illiteracy fostered by a failing educational system are the causes of these issues. Pakistan has a downward tendency regarding the quality of primary and secondary education. It is acknowledged that, in particular, science education is at its lowest point and urgently needs to be improved (Ahmad, 2014).

Pakistan's education sector has several challenges, including inadequate funding, ineffective programme execution, and poor administration, oversight, and instruction (Zafar & Ali, 2018). Pakistan has the lowest literacy rates among nations with comparable resources and social/economic circumstances and among the lowest rates worldwide (Memon et al., 2010).

In such a sociocultural context, parent's commitment to their children's education becomes paramount. In keeping with this, the current study sought to determine how parental involvement affected their daughters' levels of educational achievement in the socio-cultural milieu of Punjab's rural areas. Education is a fundamental human right that everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or geographic location, should have an equal right to get the desired education (Hashmi et al., 2019).

A solid basis for poverty reduction and promoting societal growth is provided by education. One of the main reasons developing countries do not prosper could be a lousy education system and inadequate quality of instruction (Murtaza, 2013).

Education is essential to living a decent and everyday life. Therefore, education is necessary for everyone in life, male or female, as it develops thinking, working, and creative potential using humanistic ways. The dissemination of a society's standards and values is guaranteed by education. (Shafi, 2015). It has also been stated that Pakistani female students perform better academically than their male counterparts. In many types of research, it has been recognized that the cultural difference in boys' and girls' study-oriented behavior accounts for the educational attainment gap (Hashmi et al., 2019).

### **Problem Statement**

In rural Pakistan, most of the population is passing their lives in unawareness, mainly due to a lack of education. This not only affects the person who is uneducated but also the whole society in which they live. There needs to be awareness among the people regarding the benefits and

importance of education and its role in a society's social well-being. Neither education is given priority nor equality in education among males and females being followed. The norms and values prevailing in the culture of rural areas of Pakistan are so conservative that a female cannot go out of her home to seek basic knowledge.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is essential to dig out the main issues prevailing in the areas where female education is unimportant and neglected in every field of life. The study introduced those problems which should have been discussed in the previous research. Previous research was conducted on different issues like lack of facilities, lack of female schools, financial issues, geographical locations, backwardness, etc. However, this study is unique as it has explored the parental perception towards female education.

### **Review of the Literature**

Women are significant to the growth of any society. The combined efforts of men and women in various development domains significantly impact the progress rates. Education is one of the critical areas of development where women can contribute and use their energies to make society more prosperous. It is clear today how vital education is, especially for women. Education is a critical factor in human capital development in various civilizations. It may mark the start of a comprehensive plan for growth and transformation and the acquisition of personal knowledge, awareness, and information (Alam, 2017).

In most communities, women are the Centre of attention. Mothers, whether employed or not, have a significant impact on the lives of their children. The most significant investment a nation can make in its future is in girls' education (Musaddiq & Said, 2023).

Education is, therefore, a crucial tactic for lowering poverty. Additionally, educated women support their families financially. In general, education increases production and income for both individuals and countries. Numerous studies demonstrate that teaching females has an equal or more significant impact on the growth of the national economy than educating boys and that educating girls typically results in higher productivity and revenue (Murtaza, 2013).

An increasing amount of evidence indicates that education empowers women to advocate for their own needs and those of their children. In addition to helping women and their kids, it can benefit society and the community by promoting a more representative and efficient government (Musaddiq & Said, 2023). Research from various nations affirms that parental and maternal education influences children's educational achievements; nevertheless, generally speaking, data indicates that children with an educated mother are more likely to attend school full-time and engage in more academic pursuits (Murtaza, 2013).

Another traditional issue is the pressure from families and society on women's mobility, which significantly impacts women's decision to send their daughters to college. In a similar vein, early marriage customs have an impact on women's education. Another reason for not attending university is the educational facilities far away from their homes, so many families hesitate to send their daughters or sisters there. In contrast, girls' access to educational institutions in many locations is also correlated with feudalism and class systems (Alam, 2017).

As Moghissi (2005) presumed, in Pakistan, low-income families want to teach their girls, but somehow financial crises and lack of educational facilities in their hometown, they prefer to send their sons to school for education. There are also some social issues, which is why they keep their girls at home. Lack of public policies and not having the rule of law are also factors responsible

for not sending girls to schools. Few families in rural areas know that educating their daughters means educating them for the rest of their lives. However, they cannot do this because of resources and social and economic issues (Breen & Jonsson, 2005; Afridi, 2023).

As Memon (2007) stated Pakistani society is associated with some conventional standards and traditions. Provincial and inborn territories of Pakistan are considerably more connected with social and customary practices in light of male predominance and ladies' accommodation. Brutality against young ladies and ladies exists in physical, sexual and sparing structures and generally occurs inside household circles. In Pakistani male-centric culture, these practices happen in the state of beating young ladies and ladies, and so forth. The same circumstance exists in the examination-found territory where they have no significance to the general public.

As Chaudhry and Rahman (2009) stated male-centric structure of society works to position ladies in bring down position than men. Centric philosophy and methodical sexual orientation have denied ladies not just equivalent instructive and work openings and treatment under the watchful eye of the law but also break even with access to and control over assets, satisfactory wellbeing administrations, lodging, social welfare and support. These vital social pointers have an immediate bearing on the episodes of female destitution and reflect distinctive levels at which social prohibition is created (Khan et al., 2022).

As expressed by Breen and Jonsson (2005) the profound established man-centric framework, universal convictions and innate estimations of Pakistani society have been the real obstacle in the instructive strengthening of ladies in the nation. Females were denied instructive offices aside from religious training at homes and in the area.

As stated Purewal and Hashmi (2015) most rural families do not allow their daughters to go to school to participate in household chores. In male-dominated societies, families give priority to boys for education only. Some parents send their daughters to nearby schools but hesitate to send them to distant schools. As Moghissi (2005) stated, "Mothers' need for the help of girls in 'housework' also reflects a cultural division of labour. Caring for younger siblings, fetching water, collecting wood, cleaning the animals' quarters, sweeping the house, and washing dishes are major housekeeping affairs considered the duties of girls (and not boys).

As Breen and Jonsson (2005) stated income of the parents plays a strong determinant of children's education. Regarding father's labour market position, we expect fathers in salaried employment to be more aware of the importance of education and invest more in their children's education.

As discussed by Lloyd et al. (2005) the results of the government's low outlays on education lead to poor quality schools.

Low outcomes in primary education in Pakistan have been due to the inadequate supply of separate schools for females and the insufficient supply and distribution of schools, particularly in rural areas. According to Unterhalter (2012) some scholars have argued that the high incidence of sexual harassment at the secondary level partly accounts for girls' failure to proceed to higher education. Another reason behind this is the early marriage of females in the studies area.

## Research Methodology

In this examination, the analyst picked quantitative research and gathered information similarly. The universe of research study is the district Muzaffargarh, in southern Punjab of Pakistan. The study was drawn from the primary data source. In District Muzaffargarh, Sheik Umar was selected for research. For research purposes, the sample was chosen through the Purposive Sampling Technique; only the parents were interviewed. According to the nature of the research, the researcher used the non-probability sampling techniques. Two types of non-probability sampling

were used: convenient and purposive sampling. This sampling technique was adopted. The researcher observed that most parents did not send their children, especially females, to schools because, in *Sheikh Umar*, people were mostly conservative and narrow-minded. The questionnaire was set up with the end goal of data gathering, keeping the variables and indicators in view. So, in the present research, 150 close-ended interviewing schedules were conducted with parents. The interviewing schedule method was used as a tool for data collection. After accumulating information, the scholar utilized SPSS computer software for data examination.

## Results and Discussions

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Gender**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	100	66.66
Female	50	33.34
Total	150	100.0

Field Survey, 2023.

The above table describes the percentage of respondents according to gender. Out total target population, 66.66% of the respondents were males and 33.34% of the respondents were females. Government and non-government organizations (NGOs) are trying their best to provide basic facilities for education like free books, free tuition, food items, and monthly financial aid but still female enrolment in the educational institutions is low. Along all of these things seminars and workshops regarding educational awareness have been started by different organizations as well.

### Hypothesis

Hi: There is significant relation between female education and male dominancy.

Ho: There is not significant relation between female education and male dominancy.

### Hypothesis Testing

**Table 2: Relation between Female Education and Male Dominancy**

Crosstab		Do you think that male dominancy is an obstacle to female education?					Total
		strongly agree	Agree	strongly disagree	Disagree	do not know	
Are you in favor female education?	Yes	9	22	9	16	0	56
	No	18	38	15	9	14	94
Total		27	60	24	25	14	150

Field Survey, 2023

This cross tabulation shows the relation between male dominancy and female education. As per table above, 9 respondents were in favor of female education with a view that they strongly agree that male dominancy is a major hindrance of female education.

**Table 3: Chi Square Value, Degrees of freedom and Sig.**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.136 <sup>a</sup>	4	.003
Likelihood Ratio	20.555	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.028	1	.866
N 4.2of Valid Cases	150		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .77.

This table shows the value of chi-square, degree of freedom and level of significance. The chi-square value is 16.136, is 4, and the significance level is .003, which is less than 0.05, representing that the alternative hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected.

## Discussion

First, the researcher discussed education, its importance and its benefits. In order to promote gender equality in an environment where gender discrimination is at its peak, education could play a significant role in eradicating such discrimination. There are many barriers regarding the education of females in research areas and other rural areas of Pakistan. In *Sheikh Umar*, most people are loyal to old traditions and norms. According to them, there is no need to educate females because they have to get married and move on to other homes and educating them is a useless investment. They strongly endorse females to do household activities.

Primarily, rural areas of Pakistan run in a patriarchal culture which does not allow the education of females. Similarly, the caste factor is also a hurdle against female education because some castes restrict their women to their homes, and they do not give importance to the education of females. The veiling (*Purdah*) factor in *Sheikh Umar* is one of the major hindrances in female education. Their women do not roam and stay home to do household work or work in fields with their husbands under proper veils.

As Renold (2002) some scholars have argued that the high incidence of sexual harassment at the secondary level partly accounts for girls' failure to proceed to higher education. Unfortunately, many incidences of sexual abuse or harassment are reported in the media, which injects fear into the minds of the parents. Consequently, they are reluctant to send their daughters to educational institutions. They strongly fear that if their daughter is sexually abused or even harassed, this will disrespect them in society, their image will be ruined, and no one will marry their daughters.

According to Shah and Shah (2012) despite the potential benefits of female education, it is widely documented that there is a substantial gap in male and female education; the common expression is "the educational gender gap". In the research area, there is a gender gap in education. Females are not allowed to go to school due to constraints set by patriarchal culture. Lack of infrastructure, transportation, and separate schools for females are significant causes of the decline in female literacy. Archer found only one girls' school, far from *Shah Jamal*. Students need help to afford to go there. Therefore, the lack of transportation facilities aggravates the low enrolment of female students. The researcher also saw that educational institutions need walls, security, and staff in the schools. All these factors contribute enough to lower the rate of female enrollment in schools.

Family heads do not plan their families. Consequently, they keep giving birth and increasing family sizes. This deprives their children of the provision of basic living needs and educational rights. In the research area, the dependency rate is high. Only one family member is responsible for earning and managing the whole family's expenses. No government assistance is in action to overcome and counter the grave issues mentioned above.

In *Sheikh Umar*, people are ignorant in treating a woman. They misinterpret the teachings of Islam and mold them according to their own needs. The role of women is only limited to their homes; they have to perform all domestic activities like caring for their younger brothers, fetching water from distant wells, etc. The society of *Shah Jamal* is based on patriarchy, where males have decision powers, and women have to follow their decisions. Women are bound to obey because culture demands them. Women are one of the pillars of any nation. If they are educated, then the whole economic structure will be safe to stand on. Educated women can serve their nation in the best manner. They can be the source of development for all the country's sectors.

## Conclusion

In concluding the study, the researcher observed grave issues in Sheikh Umar that are walled against female education. Sheikh Umar is similar to other rural areas of Pakistan. Lack of education is not letting people of rural areas of Pakistan socially evolve. They still reflect the glimpses of the dark ages in their daily life. The status of women and treatment with them is like an animal. Immediate steps are needed to be taken to sort out issues. Moreover, parents and heads of patriarchal culture should also be taught about modernization and the present needs of the era. Furthermore, people's low economic status is a significant hurdle against female education. In Sheikh Umar, people live below the poverty line, which means they can hardly afford three times daily meals. They cannot afford their daughters' educational expenses. Education demands sound financial status in order to pursue courses. As mentioned earlier, people cannot even manage their daily living, so no question arises to bear costly educational institutions.

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