

گورنمنٹ ہائر سیکنڈری سکول

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE GIRL-CHILD PARTICIPATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION:

A DISTRICT LEVEL STUDY OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA



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We are hopeful that the findings of this report and the corresponding recommendations will inform the design of appropriate future interventions that will help to remove barriers to girl child education as well as improve secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Executive summary

Education has a key role to play in social, economic and political development of country. It is through the use of education that the environment can be transformed into a better place to live in. Education has therefore become a basic human need and fundamental right. Access to quality education remained high in the global agenda for education. Its importance in economic and social development makes it a basic right for every child.

In Pakistan, “Right to Education” is a fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution of Pakistan 1973. It is mandated in the Constitution under Article (25 A) to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5-16 years and enhance adult literacy. With the 18th constitutional amendment the subject of education along with other 41 subjects, was transferred to provinces as a move towards provincial autonomy.

Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to provide legal mechanism for free compulsory primary and secondary education to all children from age 5 to 16, enacted the first ever provincial legislation in 2017 “The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act 2017”. The provincial government is taking reformative initiatives to improve the state of education for both girls and boys but the available data by the state and non-state actors shows that there is still huge disparity between girls and boys education, especially when it comes to secondary school education.

Girls’ secondary education in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faces complex socio-economic challenges. This study explores factors contributing towards girls’ school dropout at the secondary level and assesses the available policy options with the decision-makers to promote female students’ participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The research investigated the underlying causes of the girl’s secondary school less participation in five districts including Peshawar, Karak, Mardan, Charsadda, and Kohat of the Province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study collected data from 104 samples of parents, teachers, students, district education administrators, and social activists/researchers, consisting of 29, 29, 28, 13, and 5 sample size respectively. The study conducted six focus group discussions, one in each district and two in Mardan to validate the findings and get insight from the discussions. The study adopted qualitative approach to explore the challenges and factors contributing to girls’ school dropouts in the selected districts. The data were thematically analyzed using Miles and Huberman (1994) approach. Themes and categories were identified using concept-mapping method. The study identifies main issues related to girls’ dropout as unavailability of secondary schools, missing facilities, poverty, long distances, overcrowded classrooms and labs at government schools, lack of proper counseling of girls at secondary level, long school distances, unavailability of schools and missing facilities, poor menstrual hygiene management, early and child marriages, family education pattern, lack of girls’ role models, bad security situation and social disharmony, rural-urban differences among other factors.

The study indicates that parents invests more on male child expecting a high return considering it an investment with a return, while female’s education is counted as an expense and less preferred option. Low spending on girls’ education leads to a high dropout ratio at the secondary level. The study identifies that low spending is not only restricted to the society but

also government spending is low in the form of less number of secondary schools for girls than male students. According to the Annual Statistical Report 2017-2018 by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary and Secondary Education Department there are total 5, 538 secondary schools in province out which 39% are of girls. There are other numerous reasons behind the school dropout, for instance, improper menstrual hygiene management at schools, poor infrastructure in girls' schools, such as absence of washrooms, electricity, and poor ventilation. Parents don't prefer to send their daughters to schools with insufficient facilities required for better academic environment. Besides, due to the challenging social and emotional circumstances for a girl at the puberty the absence of psychosocial support and credible information on menstrual hygiene management the drop out is high.

Another contributing factor towards girls' dropout is the lack of proper societal *role model*. Role model motivates parents, teachers, and students to educate the schoolgirls beyond primary level. The study identifies gender discrimination towards girls' education mainly in rural areas, which has many social and economic factors. The study suggests that teachers' capacity should be improved providing them special training, participation of the community and religious leaders in policy recommendations, engagement of female psychologists in schools, improving school's infrastructure with clean water, washrooms, space for students, and ventilated rooms etc. The study also suggests that change in uniform in girls' schools could reduce absenteeism and school dropouts, the embarrassment the female students face due to the fear of staining white trousers during the menstrual periods. The study also suggests that government should offer scholarships, financial aid, and transport facility to female students to control dropout in schools. The study suggests further bottom-up policy studies to understand and address the issues related to girl's dropout at secondary level school.

Keywords: Secondary education, Girls Education, School dropout, Gender Discrimination, School Infrastructure, Menstrual Hygiene, Psychological Complications

Definitions of Terms

Drop out - Early withdrawal of students/pupils from school without completing the required school years with the concerned students failing to enroll back to school.

Dropout rates - The percentage of students/pupils who withdraw from school eminently before completing the primary school cycle against those who are enrolled in class one.

Gender – Social and cultural distinctions between men, women and gender variant population. The distinctions refer to roles, relations and identities that people associate with sex. Those associated with females are called feminine and those associated with males are called masculine.

Gender discrimination – Refers to unequal or preferential treatment to individuals of groups based on their gender which result in reduced access to or control of resources and opportunities.

Gender equity – Refers to equal treatment of women and men boys and girls so that they can enjoy the benefits of development including equal access to and control of opportunities and resources.

Gender disparity – Refers to differences or unequal or unfair treatment of the males and females.

Parental involvement – This refers to the active participation of parents in matters pertaining to the education of their children such as checking of their books, provision of basic learning materials and equipment and the prompt payment of school fees.

Sexual harassment – Unwelcome acts of sexual nature that cause discomfort to the targeted persons. These include words, persistent requests for sexual favors, gestures, touching, suggestions, and coerced sexual intercourse.

Transition – This is the advancement of pupils from one level of education to another. It means that the students who enrolled to school in standard one are able to go through the 12 year course of both primary and secondary education. The students are able to graduate or proceed to the next stage or class.



Message by Chairperson WPC

For our government, Girls education does not mean only getting girls enrolled into schools but ensuring that girls complete all levels of education including primary, secondary and higher education with quality education as per the international standards and commitments. We aim to empower our girls with education which provides them life skills necessary to change and contribute to their communities and the world.

Girls education is one the key development priority for our government and we, being an overseeing women representative body of legislative house, are very much committed beyond party lines to advocate for policy reforms and legislations that takes girls education as a priority consideration and make recommendations directed to guarantee an adequate provision of resources and access to quality education for all girls of the province.

I believe that researches like these could be significantly important in streamlining the challenges faced by the girl-child education hence prepare all the stakeholders to face the challenge head on and formulate an action plan and strategies to cope up with these challenges.”

Maliha Ali Asghar
Chairperson Women Parliamentary Caucus
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the study

Enhancing girl-child participation in secondary education is majorly based on socio-economic and socio-cultural factors. Secondary education is an important sub-sector of the entire education system. On the one hand, it provides middle level workers of the economy and on the other it acts as a feeder for the higher levels of education. The quality of higher education, which is expected to produce high quality professionals in different fields of social, economic and political life of the country, depends upon the quality of secondary education. This level of education, therefore, needs to be organized in such a way that it should prepare everyone for the pursuit of higher education, as well as make them able to adjust with their practical lives meaningfully and productivity.

Secondary education is a stage where a student enters adolescence. This is the most crucial stage of life. The basic perceptions and modes of behavior start taking shape, and problems of adjustment with the new roles in life assume critical significance. Four years of secondary education, therefore, provide an excellent opportunity for the educators and educationists to conceive and launch programs which initiate the learners into proper forms of behaviors and attitudes, which lead to decent productive and peaceful life in future .

World Bank report shows girls not completing secondary education lose \$15-30 trillion in their lifetime earnings, while women with secondary education get twice from women with no education (Wodon, 2018). Secondary education offers many benefits to women, such as reduction of early marriage occurrences, poverty alleviation in the community, personal economic well-being, and low fertility for countries with high population growth. Non-attending secondary education among youngsters is quite high in low-income African and South Asian countries such as 92% in Sub-Saharan African, and 70% in South Asian nations. Achieving equal and universal access to those twelve years of education is both a matter of human rights and a huge investment in the overall development and economic growth of the world. Unlocking the potential of millions of girls by providing them access to quality secondary education can have a wider impact on development of the world.

Out of school children could be either *never enrolled* or *dropouts*. In Pakistan dropout is mostly in rural areas and those are mainly female students due to poverty and the conservative societal norms. The *Academy of Education Planning and Management* 2013 report reveals that only 63% of total enrolled students' progress through primary stages of class 1 to 5, 40% through elementary school classes, and only 27% through the secondary level in Pakistan (AEPAM, 2013). The ratio is quite alarming, it shows total 73% of children dropout aged 5-16 before passing their secondary school exam, the highest in the world, while the dropout ratio is highest (among other stages of school dropouts) at secondary school level (ASER- Pakistan 2017). It reflects that only 33.2% of Pakistani population qualifies secondary education (UNDP, 2014). Various perspectives of teachers, principals, school councils, parents, and students identify *pull* and *push* factors towards the drop out at the secondary school level (Mughal,

Aldridge, and Monaghan, 2019). This huge deficit of school dropout is worrying, while the ratio for female students is much higher than male. This needs to explore the factors associated to such a massive dropout of female students at secondary level.

Internationally four in ten girls complete their lower secondary education, while in low-income countries, the ratio is three in ten. The financial and human losses grow much with time, such as, the World Bank report shows girls who couldn't complete their secondary education lose \$15-30 trillion in their lifetime earnings. It implies that secondary education doubles a woman income from a woman with no education (Wodon, 2018). An additional school year contributes 10-20% increase in a woman's earnings (World Bank, 2002). Among 132 million out of school girls worldwide, 34.3 million are at primary school, 30 million girls at lower secondary, and 67.4 million girls are at upper secondary school level in which 32.9 million students are in Southern Asia (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018).

Secondary education has great significance, as it is bridges the basic primary education and higher education. The efforts geared towards improvement in enrollment at primary level compels for expansion in opportunities for secondary (middle, secondary and higher secondary levels) education to benefit from investment in primary education. The importance of secondary stage has been multiplied many folds by two major legislations which have implicit bearings on this stage of education. First is the 18th amendment in the Constitution, hereby redefining the role of provincial and federal governments, in providing access, equity and quality of secondary education. Second is the inclusion of Article 25-A in the constitution, which obligates government to ensure free and compulsory quality education of children age five to sixteen years.

Insertion of article 25-A has called for even more concerted and consolidated efforts, to increase participation rate as well as to improve the scope and quality of the middle, secondary and higher secondary education in the country. After the promulgation of Article 25-A, government is committed to provide free and quality education till higher secondary school. The government has almost ensured free education in public schools but measures are needed to ensure secondary education in private schools at affordable rates.

If Pakistan is committed to achieving education for all, it is imperative that its education statistics are reliable, accessible and consistent. The institutions responsible for the collection, storage and analysis of education data at all levels, from schools to federal government, need to be equipped with the skills and technology to generate robust, up-to-date data. To promote girls' access to quality basic schooling, these data must be accurately and appropriately disaggregated to support efforts towards gender equality in education in Pakistan.

Problem statement

Girls' education is a human right and a responsibility of states. Educating girls contributes significantly to the development of a stable, prosperous and healthy nation state whose citizens are active, productive and empowered. Yet the available data and studies indicate that girls in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are lagging behind boys in education, and the problem reflects more at the secondary level where the transition from primary to secondary is low and the dropout ratio is high. While the Sustainable Development Goals 4 focus on enhancing girls' education and addressing the gender gap in the delivery of education, still there exists the problem of inequity and inequality in the education system particularly at secondary school and tertiary levels.

This inequality seems to have worsened. The transition from primary to secondary schools, which is one of the ways of measuring success and failure of education, is low in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and is seen as a challenging problem to the providers of education. The determination by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to increase access to education inspired the development of policies in the form of approaches and programs. In Pakistan, poverty and gender discrimination negatively affect opportunities for the female to get education shrinking her career orientation to become an active part of wealth creating activities. In the Province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the state of girls' secondary education is negatively impacted by different reasons. Despite the government efforts to improve access to education for all and making the resource allocation by adopting equity policy, there has been low access to and participation in secondary education by the girl child in the province. There is a general tendency of drop out at secondary level of education among young girls which has been hindered by certain socio-economic challenges. Enduring and persistent barriers to girls' education present enormous challenges to girls' enrolment and retention, particularly at secondary level. These barriers are denying girls' right to education, stymying their economic and political potential for the society, and increase their vulnerability to protection concerns.

There have been very less data available and researches conducted to investigate the underlying contributing factors which causes or results drop out of girl in province. The current research sought to find answers as to what are the influencing factors including from social level to structural level which causes drop out and effects girls' participation at secondary level of education and what can be the effective strategies and policy recommendations to improve the state of secondary education for girls in the province and maximize the impact of efforts government has been taking in this regard.

Research questions

Following two research questions have been formulated for the current study;

- What are the causes of girl's dropout at the secondary school level?
- What are the policy recommendations to promote female participation at the secondary school level?

Objectives and purpose of the study

The study was conducted to explore the key factors which hinders girl child from accessing and completing secondary education in the specific context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The available data shows that the number of the girl child participating in secondary education is lower than

the boys in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and their dropout rate is high despite the visionary initiatives taken by the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The purpose of this research is to investigate the underlying causes of girls' dropout at Secondary School in the five districts including Peshawar, Karak, Mardan, Charsadda and Kohat of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study also explores the policy options with the stakeholders to promote female participation at secondary school level. The study has the following core objectives.

- To identify the underlying issues, causes and factors which influences and hinders girl's participation in secondary education and causes drop out
- To present available policy options and recommendations to the government and other stakeholders to improve girls' access to and control dropout of female students in secondary schools.
- To suggest ways of improving girl child participation in secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Methodology

The research investigates the underlying causes of the girl's secondary school dropout using qualitative approach. This research study collected data from a sample of 104 respondents including parents, teachers, students, district education administrators, and social activists/researchers from districts Karak, Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan, and Charsadda in province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study conducted six focus group discussions to validate the study's findings. The data were thematically analyzed using Miles and Huberman (1994) approach. Themes and categories were identified using concept mapping method.

Significance of the study

This research explores the causes and challenges of female dropout and participation at the secondary school. The study offers policy options to policymakers, educationists, civil society organizations, donors, researchers, and academics to formulate such policies and plans to promote girls' education at secondary level.

The findings and recommendation of the study will be of great significance to various stakeholders in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa involved in the campaign for the promotion of girl-child access to secondary education. We anticipate that the study will be helpful to streamline challenges faced by the girl-child education hence prepare to face the challenge head on. We also hope that the findings of this study will benefit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Education planners, teachers, parents and the society in general. The research findings will provide reflection of the challenges, whether social, economic or cultural and possible policy actions and recommendations in order to make it possible to the girl child to access quality secondary education and reduce gender disparity through education for all.

Limitation of the study

A major inadequacy of the study is the limited access to data in selected districts. Majority of the respondents were female teachers and students. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa being a conservative society, the research team has approached only the accessible and available parents, teachers, students, educational managers. The study could be further broadened including more stakeholders in the process. Following are some key limitations to this study:

1. The study was conducted in 05 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar, Karak, Mardan, Charssada and Kohat and focused on girl secondary education in this specific district, therefore the results may not be easily generalized.
2. The findings of the study cover only girls' secondary education and not any other.
3. Limited number schools were sampled for this study.

Assumptions of the study

The researcher of this study made the following assumptions:

1. That the economic status of the parents, cultural values and traditional practices and the school environment have the most influence on access to secondary education among girls in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
2. That the girl child is an important part of the society and that everyone in society would desire / wish to eradicate all obstacles to her education so that she can participate adequately in the development of the country.
3. That all respondents gave their honest opinions on the questions asked.

Chapter 2. Review of literature

According to the study ‘Adolescent Girls and Education: Challenges, Evidence, and Gaps’ by Rebecca Calder and Karishma Huda conducted in November 2013, education and years of school attainment matter - those who complete secondary school are more likely to see the benefits as compared to those who drop out after primary. In the race to fulfill the MDGs, many countries have made great strides in promoting primary education among girls – yet there has not been enough of a push to get girls to continue on to secondary school. Domestic and societal burdens, expectations, and an inability or unwillingness of families to invest in higher education for girls (as compared to boys) have repercussions. Countries with educated, empowered women have stronger economic growth and higher gross national product (GNP). Despite this evidence, it remains a challenge to get adolescent girls on the policy agenda. The evidence is stark, and the strategies are clear, yet adolescent girls remain the missing generation in development.¹

A study conducted by Roshan Chitrakar ‘**Overcoming barriers to girls’ education in South Asia**’ says that factors responsible for barriers to girls’ education can be categorized according to how one perceives and defines barriers. Barriers take different forms – e.g. barriers to access, barriers to quality services and barriers to relevant curricula and/or pedagogy. Barriers to girls’ education can take differential forms across nations/societies depending upon the socio-economic, religious and cultural contexts. Furthermore, barriers can be perceived as either intrinsic or extrinsic to girls in relation to how they experience educational participation. As well, some barriers can be obvious while others are subtle and tacit. ²

In most of the South Asian countries, due to the high cost of private transportation and boarding, parents belonging to the low-income strata of the society hardly avail the free education facility (Lewin, 2011). The current rise in private schooling has created educational opportunities but the main challenge is its poor quality which is at par with the public schools (Harma, 2011). The pupils in those schools lack basic life skills to participate in the socio-economic spheres of life (Alcott and Rose, 2015; Ron-Balsera and Marphatia, 2012; UNESCO, 2017).

In most of the South Asian societies, studies show gender, caste, religions, location, and economic position as the dominant socioeconomic factors in the equitable attainment of secondary school education (UNESCO, 2017; Government of India, 2015). While the gender remains critical among these factors, and more prominent in rural areas. Spending patterns on sons and daughters also differ in some families; besides, household wealth and parent’s education also contribute to this differential (Bhaumik and Chakrabarty, 2013; Azam and

¹ <https://socialprotection-humanrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/13-PathwaysPerspectives-adolescent-girls-and-education-pp13-1.pdf>

² http://www.ungei.org/whole_book_b.pdf

Kingdon 2013; Drèze and Kingdon, 2001; Sabates et al., 2013 Chávez et al., 2000;). Similarly, in Brazil, Guatemala, India, Philippines, rural China, and South Africa lower birth weight, chronic low-nutrition, poor early post-natal growth were found link to high secondary school dropouts (Adair et al., 2013; Hannum and Hu's 2017). This also affects cognition and self-esteem at childhood; and in later stage upsets women's earning capacity and financial autonomy (Fink and Rockers, 2014; Hoddinott et al., 2011).

The dream of meeting the educational targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could only be achieved if male and female get equal, equitable, free primary, and secondary education (Mughal, Aldridge, and Monaghan, 2019). The main hurdle in this connection is high children dropout ratio mainly in poor and developing countries. Alarmingly, 73% of children aged between 5-16 (class 1 to 10) dropouts noted before attaining secondary education. While the dropout ratio of female students is much higher than male. It is important to understand the dynamics of dropout at secondary level mainly of female students.

Girls' education in Pakistan

UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report (2017) identifies the problem of the out of school children world over, which is much prominent among Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In Pakistan currently 5.6 million primary, 5.4 million lower secondary, and 9.8 million upper secondary school-age children are out of school, although in Pakistan, according to the 18th constitutional amendment act 2010, it is the state responsibly to provide free and compulsory education to all children aged five to sixteen. Pakistan holds the second largest number of out of school children at the primary level in the world after Nigeria (UIS, 2017). The SDG goals intend to address the dropout issue at primary and secondary education in developing countries, Pakistan, indeed is a huge challenge for meeting SDG goals to the country and world.

Since gaining independence more than half a century ago, Pakistan has struggled to solidify its political state long enough to implement sufficient nationalized education systems. Its schools remain encumbered by infrastructure problems, poverty, and gender inequality. As of 2017, Pakistan was one of the lowest-performing South Asian countries by education standards, and was ranked the second worst country in the world for gender equality.

One in ten of the world's school-aged children are Pakistani. 56% of male students—compared to 44% of their female counterparts—are attending school. 60% of the country's population over the age of 10 can read and write, with disparate literacy rates of 69% for males and 45% for females. Yet even the higher male statistic is desperately far behind the world male literacy rate of 90%, and Pakistan's female population reads and writes at a rate of just over half that of the world average.³

³ <https://centralasiainstitute.org/pakistan-facts-and-figures/>

Pakistan was described as “among the world’s worst performing countries in education,” at the 2015, Oslo Summit on Education and Development. Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf, states in their manifesto that nearly 22.5 million children are out of school. Girls are particularly affected. Thirty-two percent of primary school age girls are out of school in Pakistan, compared to 21 percent of boys. By grade six, 59 percent of girls are out of school, versus 49 percent of boys. Only 13 percent of girls are still in school by ninth grade. Both boys and girls are missing out on education in unacceptable numbers, but girls are worst affected.

There are high numbers of out-of-school children, and significant gender disparities in education, across the entire country, but some areas are much worse than others. In Baluchistan, the province with the lowest percentage of educated women, as of 2014-15, 81 percent of women had not completed primary school, compared to 52 percent of men. Seventy-five percent of women had never attended school at all, compared to 40 percent of men. According to this data, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had higher rates of education but similarly huge gender disparities. Sindh and Punjab had higher rates of education and somewhat lower gender disparities, but the gender disparities were still 14 to 21 percent.⁴

In Pakistan women constitute 53% of population, therefore it is imperative to educate woman as no development and progress is possible if half of the population is not educated. Illiterate and untrained females are incapable to involve in any kind of developmental process. That is why it is imperative to educate females as education is the root of all development. (Qaiser Suleman and Hassan Danial Aslam 2015).⁵

Girls’ Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government reports a high dropout ratio at primary and secondary levels despite massive spending of Rs 130 billion in the last six years (Ashfaq, 2018). Besides, district governments also spend billions on schools’ basic facilities. Regardless of such huge money, the 2017-18 education department annual statistical report shows the dismal state of affairs, it shows school dropout rate is 44 percent at primary and 40 percent at secondary levels. In 2012-13, 685000 students got admission in pre-classes while in 2017-18 the number of enrolled students dropped to 269163 showing a dropout of 315837; in secondary schools, the number of enrolled students was 298000 in 2013-14, while the students reached to 10th grade in 2017-18 were 169782 with the dropout of 128,218 students. In May 2018, education department report on school dropout identifies poverty, lack of interest, and absence of schools major reasons for school dropout.

In the last few years, the provincial government spent funds on buildings, provision of free textbooks to students, purchasing furniture, offering stipend to girls’ students, establishing IT labs, standardizing higher secondary schools, teachers training, paying hard areas allowance to

⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/11/12/shall-i-feed-my-daughter-or-educate-her/barriers-girls-education-pakistan>

⁵ <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1079529.pdf>

teachers, establishing community girls' schools, and monitoring system of schools. Another huge allocation is 70 percent of the district's Annual development program funds to the schools according to the guidelines of the planning and development department.

Contributing Factors of School Dropouts

Literature identifies many factors connected with the early dropout ratio in schools, where poverty stands the foremost (Ampiah and Adu-Yeboah, 2009; Hunt, 2008; Smits and Huisman, 2013). These studies show household wealth is the major contributor of the high school dropout ratio. The same findings also confirm by Yi et al (2012), other factors are gender bias, birth order within a family, and family size (Mukherjee and Das, 2008; Sathar and Lloyd, 1994; Sawada, 1997; Sawada and Lokshin, 2009). Sawada and Lokshin (2001) indicate that children with older sisters have a much higher chance of completion of primary schooling. It implies that elder sister in a family has little chances to complete her secondary education after the birth of a new sibling in the family.

Sawda (1997) reports that gender bias in Pakistan rural areas is much visible; while the same pattern could be noted in Sub-Saharan countries as well. Besides, family size, grade repetition, and retention in the same class also contribute to the school dropout at the secondary and primary levels (Jimerson et al., 2002; Motala et al., 2009). Parents' education also comes as a contributing factor toward children's schooling; while mother education is more related to girls education than boys in rural Pakistan (Gibbs and Heaton, 2014; Andrabi et al., 2008; Hazarika, 2001; Holmes, 2003; Mukherjee and Das, 2008). The transportation costs of home distance to school also cause pupil dropout, a study suggests more than 2 km distance affects girls' schooling especially in poor families (Ali et al., 2012; Bilquees and Saqib, 2004).

Early age dropouts have also individual and social consequences, Pakistan Demographics and Health Survey (DJS) 2012-13 shows that 3% of girls marry at the age of 15 or below, while 21% by the age of 18, the study indicates that 10-15% girls marry between 14-16 years of age in rural areas of Pakistani Punjab, resulting in early school dropouts at secondary level (Mughal and Aldridge 2017).

Budgetary allocation significantly contributes to education which also shows government socio-economic priorities. Currently, Pakistani government spends 2.37% of GDP on education (United Nations Development Programme, 2014). It is evident that with such a limited allocation on education, Pakistan could hardly prevent high dropouts or ensure that all out-of-school children return back to school. If the situation remains the same, Pakistan may not be able to achieve the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at primary and secondary level of education by 2030.

Secondary education is significantly important for the preparation and empowerment of the workforce with basic literacy. This stage is important in shaping an individual's personality as they enter in the puberty stage and shoulder broader responsibilities. Yasin and Aslam (2018)

show that gender discrimination and poverty appear as contributing factors towards girls' school dropout. Uneducated, untrained women become a burden on society as they have additional responsibilities towards rearing new generation.

In Pakistan, despite of strong international and national efforts dropout ratio is still quite significant, while education has a major role in human development (Gitonga, 2009). Human development cumulatively contributes to the socio-economic well-being of the society. Basic education always remains at the top of the global agenda and is considered a fundamental right of every child. Constitution of Pakistan endorses provision of education to its citizens without racial, and gender discrimination. Besides, internationally, the Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force on 2 September 1990, thirty days after the date of deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification, article 49. States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child have committed to respect and ensure the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of children by setting standards for health, education, legal, civil, and social services. The Rights of the Child article 28, 1979 mandates child primary education a state responsibility without any discrimination, whereas secondary level education strengthens students' capacity for the labor market, vital for a vibrant economy and poverty alleviation.

Chapter 3: Fieldwork Methodology and Techniques

This research explores the factors related to the girls' dropout at the secondary school level in the districts of Peshawar, Karak, Mardan, Charsadda, and Kohat in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews through purposive snowballing technique from different stakeholders including teachers, parents, students, Educational administrators, social activists. Secondary data has also been collected from books, journals, newspapers, annual reports, government websites etc. The study adopted Miles and Huberman (1994) approach for data collection. This approach is consisting of three steps: data reduction, data display, and verification and conclusion.

This research focuses on six main areas related to girls' education identified through secondary sources. They include dropout of girls' students at secondary level; early marriages; different roles of community members, parents, teachers; political, economic, and security factors; school infrastructure and students home distance from school; biological issues at puberty stage. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the core objective of the study is to explore issues, causes and factors which influence and hinder girl's participation at secondary level of education in the province. The study also explores the available policy options with different stakeholders for the promotion of girls' participation in educational activities. Figure 1, provides research thematic framework.

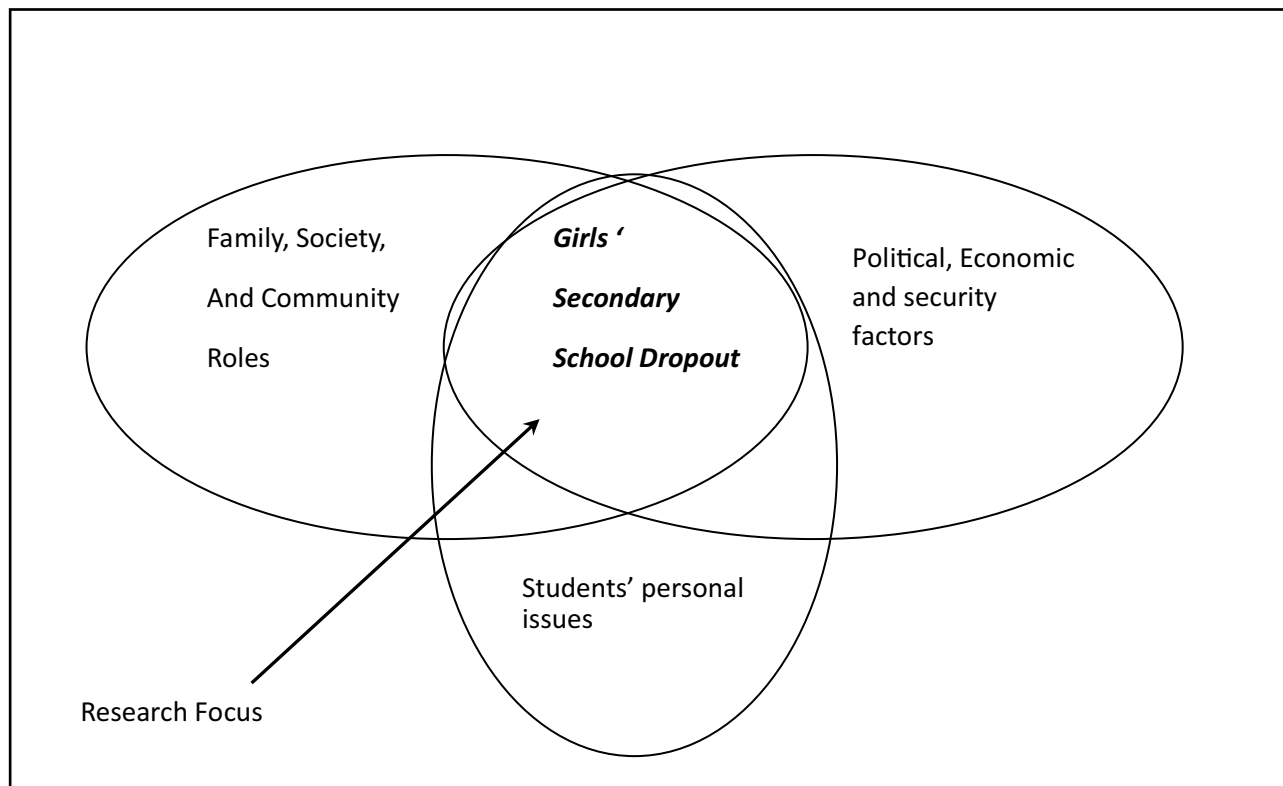


Figure 1. Thematic Framework of this Research Work

The study explores the following factors related to girls' dropout at the secondary education level from selected districts of Peshawar, Mardan, Kohat, Karak, and Charsadda.

- Girls' Dropout Ratio at Secondary schools
- Social, Political, Economic, Security, Factors' Role
- School Location and Infrastructure
- Female Students Biological Factors

The questionnaire for data collection is also developed based on these areas (Appendix A).

The Research and Context

The study used qualitative approach for data collection and analysis. The study reviewed literature related to the dynamics of girls' dropout at secondary school level from different sources such as newspapers, research articles retrieved through electronic digital library portals i.e. Emerald, Springer-link, Science Direct, and Wiley, etc. as well as search engines like Google Scholar, Yahoo, and Bing etc.

Why a Qualitative Approach?

The qualitative research provides an in-depth investigation and flexible inquiry of a complex situation; such results provide a real-life, solid, and diverse factual overview (Ko de Ruyter & Scholl, 1998). This study explores how different causes actually relate to secondary school girls' dropout.

Quantification of the social phenomenon provides a fixed and measurable view of an event, while qualitative study depicts the changes in reality over time. Quantitative data provides narrow and pre-defined information, while qualitative data covers diverse perspectives. Patton (1987) calls qualitative research as a naturalistic inquiry.

In selecting a paradigm for social inquiry, Tierney (1996) recommends a quantitative method for verification, and confirmation, while the qualitative approach discovers and generates theories based on available facts. Shank (2002) calls an objective approach *a window* with a purpose of simplification and standardization, while the qualitative approach is *a lantern*, which sheds light and discovers meaning. The quantitative objective inquiry is a *window* approach or logical positivism and post-positivism, while the 'lantern' inquiry reflects interpretive-ism (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Nuthmann (1994) asks, "Can psychological variables be treated with the same mathematics as physical variables?" (pp. 1-27). This research falls close to the Ritchie and Spencer (1994) applied policy research which they categorize as *contextual*, *diagnostic*, *evaluative*, and *strategic*. Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) define the approach as follows:

Identifying new theories, policies, plans or actions e.g. what type of services are required to meet needs? What actions are needed to make programmes or services more effective? How can system be improved? What strategies are required to overcome newly defined problems? (p.176)

The Research Design

Savenye and Robinson (2001) refer to the following recommendations for detailed criteria for the designing of a qualitative research:

“Is the problem clearly stated? Does it have theoretical value and currency? Does it have practical value?

Is the problem or topic situated in a theoretical framework? Is the framework clear and accessible? Does the document contain competing epistemologies or other basic assumptions that might invalidate claims?

Is the literature review a critique or simply a recapitulation? Is it relevant? Does it appear accurate and sufficiently comprehensive?

Are the theses stated in a clear and coherent fashion? Are they sufficiently demonstrated in an accessible manner? Are there credible warrants to claims made about the theses?

Does the method fit the problem, and is it an appropriate one given the theoretical framework?

Does the data collected adequately address the problem? Do they make explicit the researcher’s role and perspective? Do the data collection techniques have a ‘good fit’ with the method and the theory?

Were the data aggregation and analysis clearly reported? Do they make explicit the interpretive and reasoning process of the researcher?

Does the discussion provide meaningful, warranted interpretations and conclusions? (p.1065)”

Savenye and Robinson (1996) suggest that research quality could be ensured through: *Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, Triangulation, referential adequacy, peer debriefing, member checking, reflexive journal, thick description, purposive sampling, audit trail* (p.1064).

Qualitative study research question clarifies and evolves with the progress of study as it confronts multiple realities. Therefore Goetz and LeCompte (1984) suggest simplistic approaches for such inquiries, such as generative-verification, inductive-deductive, subjective-objective, and constructive-enumerative.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that the *naturalistic approach* is meant for an undisciplined, loudest bands and brightest lights to discover.

The Interview Method

A qualitative study needs a direct and open-ended approach to select an appropriate approach, for instance, participant observation, non-participant observation, questionnaire, or document analysis. The interview method is a suitable method for such a research due to the diversity of

respondents. Therefore, a semi-structured interview was adopted. Pelto and Pelto (1978) infer human investigation is the basic and primary instrument of such research i.e. either verbal or non-verbal techniques. Verbal techniques include participant observation, questionnaires, and some other forms of structured and unstructured interviews. While the non-verbal techniques include observations, content analysis, and records analysis. Such an experience could be either *emic* or *etic*. Emic is an insider's view as a participant view while Etic or outsider view as non-participant view. The interview method is a good example of a classic interactive emic approach.

Bernard (1988) suggest interviews as structured and non-structured methods. He points an informal interview, followed by a semi-unstructured interview led by structured interviews. Fontana and Frey (1994) added *oral histories, creative and postmodern interviews* as few more dimensions. Social phenomenon needs a deeper description; therefore, this study adopts semi-structured interviews with focus group studies to get insider information. Semi-structured interview triangulates the already known knowledge with the contrasting questions adding more density to the data. The following points were taken into account while conducting data collection:

- An interview is more like a conversation of the researcher with the respondent.
- For getting closer to reality, communication between the researcher and respondent has its own merits to listens to the respondents carefully and records what is expressed, improving the depth of data and examining any contradiction in the statements of the respondents. Such inquiries also simultaneously help in analysis and interpretation. Such a process further enriches data by linking with other data sources. The best way to keep the integrity of the raw data, using the respondents' quotes and words.
- Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of a daily, personal, and methodological log, to ensure the quality of research. They suggest that the researcher's bias and errors must be controlled. They recommend debriefing of the interviewee.
- Merton *et al* (1990) consider focused group interviews an important part of such research. The FGD provides rich data from the participants and validates or invalidate certain assumptions.

a. The Interview Process

The process includes interview schedule, sample selection, and sample size and are discussed below.

i. The Interview Schedule

It is difficult to pre-determine an interview schedule. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) called designing of naturalistic study a paradox, while qualitative study demands change in methods with the progress of the study to get in-depth information and validation of assumptions. Erlandson *et al* (1993) suggest to advance the design of *naturalistic* study, with a specific pre-determined research problem, selection of research site and working hypothesis. The wording and sequence of standardized open-ended interview sentences are kept contextual.

Standardized Open-Ended Interview (SOEI) improves the reliability of the result and reduces the variability of responses.

Table 1 shows the sample composition, Table 2 provides details of the focus group discussion held in different districts, and Table 3 provides the distribution of questions (Appendix A) in this research.

Table 1: Sample composition

District	Parents	Teachers	Students	Districts Educational Administrators	Social Activists/ researchers	Total
Peshawar	6	7	5	3	1	22
Mardan	8	8	8	3	1	32
Kohat	3	3	5	2	1	14
Karak	5	6	4	2	1	18
Charsadda	7	5	6	3	1	22
Total	29	29	28	13	5	104

Table 2: Focus Groups Studies

District	Focus Group Discussion
Peshawar	1
Mardan	2
Kohat	1
Karak	1
Charsadda	1
Total	6

Table 3. Distribution of Questions

S. No	Context of inquiry	No. of Questions
1	Social factors' role	8
1	Political, economic, security, factors	4
2	School location and infrastructure	3
3	Female students biological factors	1
	Total Enquiries	16

Sample Selection

The selection of appropriate sample is an important part of fieldwork, and for this research, the sample was selected by *Snowball sampling* a non-probability sampling technique in each district (Goodman, 1961; Heckathorn, 2002; Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004). Besides, focus group studies were conducted for the refinement of data. It also helped in identifying appropriate interview samples.

a. Justification of Sample Size

Pre-specified group selection was not possible at the start of research. Tesch (1990) and Patton (2002) suggest that since samples tend to emerge as the qualitative research progresses, in the first stage, a well-informed group could be selected and interviewed; and then after, an in-depth interview should be conducted to gather data, which then lead to a much bigger group of samples. As the accumulated knowledge increases in bulk, the samples become more progressive and relevant. Focus group discussions were also conducted in order to put the results in front of a group for confirmation and expert opinion. Besides, focus groups also help in the identification of more valid and relevant samples.

b. Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure adopted in this research had started from the research design and relevant literature survey, discussed in the initial chapters. The next step in the process was to approach samples, then data collection, data analysis, and subsequent display.

c. Contact with Respondent

Contact with the sample was made after an elaborate discussion with the referral group. The target group was informed that data confidentiality would be kept and data would be used only for the purpose of this research. Deriving from Carson et al (2000) and Dick (1990), the following steps were taken for carrying out the interview process:

1. Contacting the respondent
2. Explaining purpose of the research
3. Establishing rapport and showing neutrality
4. Setting time, date and other arrangements for the interview

Before starting the interview, the respondents were informed about the ethical and moral dimensions of confidentiality of the interview process. The interview was proceeded as:

1. Introductory sentences about research
2. Recording the response

3. Putting and introducing more questions and recording the responses
4. Probing questions with the help of documents obtained for analysis
5. Developing summary and showing it to the interviewee, and
6. Closing the interview session with acknowledgment

Data Collection

Interviews both semi-structured and structured should be conducted in a less-contrived and naturalistic environments. Fetterman (1989) asks for the use of verbatim quotations and taking thick descriptions. The ethnographic should describe the reality is still continues. Other forms of data such as field notes, documents refine the interview process. Field notes force the investigator to elucidate more the interview settings (Caelli, 2001; Miles and Huberman, 1994). In this research, the interviewee's voice was recorded and transliterated.

The Validity

Wolcott (1994) suggests to ensure the validity of qualitative data with certain activities:

Talk a little..., listen a lot..., begin writing early..., let readers 'see' for themselves... , report fully... , be candid... , seek feedback... , try to achieve balance..., and write accurately (pp. 384-356).

The actual words of the interviewees are very important to confirm validity (Patton 1990). Direct, sharp, and relevant questions must be made during interviews which increases data richness and quality of research. Patton (1987) recommends four principles for valid qualitative research, are as under:

1. The assessor must keep reliable personal contact with the respondent to know what is happening in detail
2. The evaluator must maintain an appropriate detail of respondent's understanding
3. The evaluator must assess the happening with the unfolding of activities and their interaction
4. The evaluator must report what actual language has been used by the group and its reporting

Besides, direct observation is important for a good data collection process.

The Reliability

Adler and Adler (1994) also argue the issue of reliability, for instance, in observational studies, they suggest conducting observations at different times and conditions and the occurrence of related results will confirm the reliability.

In the interview process, starting questions should be direct, open, and simple and the following questions should be more investigative. Questions must change to get more in-depth

evidence according to the contextual pattern. To ensure more reliable and valid data, the process should remain the same for all respondents.

Then the process of review was ensured to keep the information and data consistent and reliable. Patton (1987) mentions that the period after the interview is quite critical for expansion and reflection. Certainly, a review is the opening of the analysis part.

Framework for Data Analysis

The analytical approach is a link between the theoretical framework and the expected outcomes of the planned work. Both are linked by the methodological approach developed on the basis of a conceptual foundation.

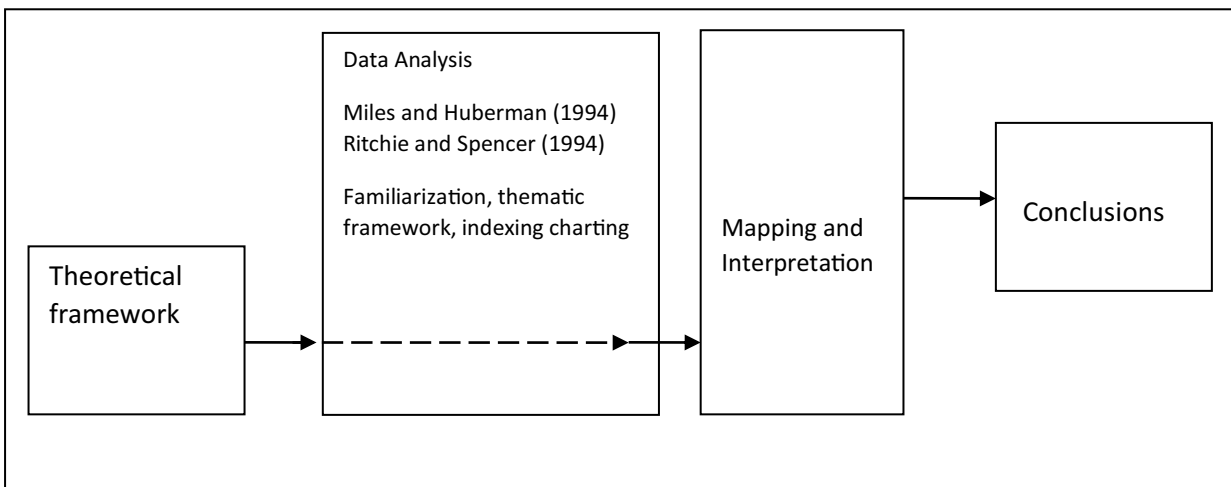


Figure 2. Analytical Framework for this Research Work

In the analysis, data is sifted, charted and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes using five steps: familiarization; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation.

Yin (2003) proposes five techniques for analysis:

1. Pattern matching
2. Linking data to propositions
3. Explanation building
4. Time series analysis
5. Logic models and cross-case synthesis

Stake (1995) describes two techniques for analysis i.e. categorical aggregation and direct interpretation. Abdullah (2000) reflects the use of metaphorical analysis for collaboration, for instance, in primary health care in Pakistan, he suggests three interim metaphorical images of the inter-agency collaboration:

- i) The inter-organizational field as a political-economy metaphor
- ii) The inter-organizational field as a culture metaphor
- iii) The inter-organizational field as an ecology metaphor

Framework Analysis

Ritchei and Spencer (1994) framework analysis states *policies and procedures* govern organizations whether they are private or public, for-profit or not-for-profit. A review of such policies and procedures is done periodically to ensure optimum efficiency within the organization. Framework analysis is a qualitative method that is aptly suited for applied policy research. Framework analysis is better adapted to research that has specific questions, a limited time frame, a pre-designed sample, and a-priori issues. In the analysis, data is sifted, charted and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes using five steps: familiarization; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation. Framework analysis provides an excellent tool to assess policies and procedures from the very people that they affect.

Miles and Huberman (1994) describe three interlinked steps in data analysis:

- Data reduction phase
- Data display phase and the
- Conclusion drawing and verification phase.

In this research, the Miles and Huberman model is used for data analysis.

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) describe the process of *analysis and writing* together and call it as analysis and interpretation.

Data Reduction Phase

In this phase, the data is coded, categorized, and the themes are drawn. Therefore, themes emerged from the sourced data.

Seidel and Kelle (1995) suggest three steps: "identifying relevant phenomena, collecting examples of those phenomena, and analysis of those identified phenomena in order to identify commonalities, differences, patterns, and structures (pp. 29-58)."

The theme is "a statement of meaning that runs through most of the data or in the data minority part, which carries, heavy or the factual impact (Ely *et al* 1997)." They recommend the following:

- Evaluate the raw data to construct detailed and intimate knowledge
- Identify and note the initial impression of the data
- List tentative categories
- Refine the categories of the above-mentioned steps and cyclical evaluation and re-studying the raw data

- If regrouping or re-categorization needed, perform; or keep the groups under the tentative categories
- Select the verbatim narrative in order to link the categories with the available raw data
- Examine the whole process i.e. the above-mentioned steps if needed and study the results
- Develop theme statements according to the participant point of view
- Integrate the findings of each person
- Compare the result of all participants and explore commonalities or patterns in the data (p.18).

Concept-mapping is a good methodical help to logically identify patterns and concepts. Relationships and linkages refine concepts linking each other [example see figure 3].

Data Display Phase

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that data display is, in fact, an organized assembly of information drawing and or taking action. Concept-maps are used for data display, as these help in the creation of categories or coding systems, and are available for order, interconnections, and emerging themes (Daley, 2004). These categorizations help at all levels during the analysis process.

Conclusion and Verification

Maxwell (1998) suggests that statistical inferences could be used in the quantitative, while the logical and analytical inferences are drawn during a qualitative approach. The former gives conclusions on the estimate of the entire population on the basis of a sample while the latter searches a logical conclusion. In this way, both approaches are important and complementary.

Researchers like Guba and Lincoln (1994), and Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest qualitative investigators *soft-nosed* logical positivists; they accept external reality but do not believe in predictive qualitative modeling. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) state that qualitative data could be considered as “rough materials researchers collect from the world they are studying; they are particulars that form the basis of analysis (p. 106).” The concept-mapping method is used as an analytical tool for data analysis.

Concept-mapping

Joseph Novak introduces the concept-mapping approach based on constructivism – that new knowledge can be based on some prior knowledge (Novak & Gowin, 1984). Ritchie and Spencer (1994) notes that “qualitative data analysis is essentially about detection, and the tasks of defining, categorizing, theorizing, explaining, exploring and mapping are fundamental to the analyst’s role (p.176).” Hence concept-mapping can be used to:

Develop an understanding of a body of knowledge. Explore new information and relationships. Access prior knowledge. Gather new knowledge and information. Share knowledge and information generated. Design structures or processes such as written

documents, constructions, web sites, web search, multimedia presentations. Problems solve options.⁶

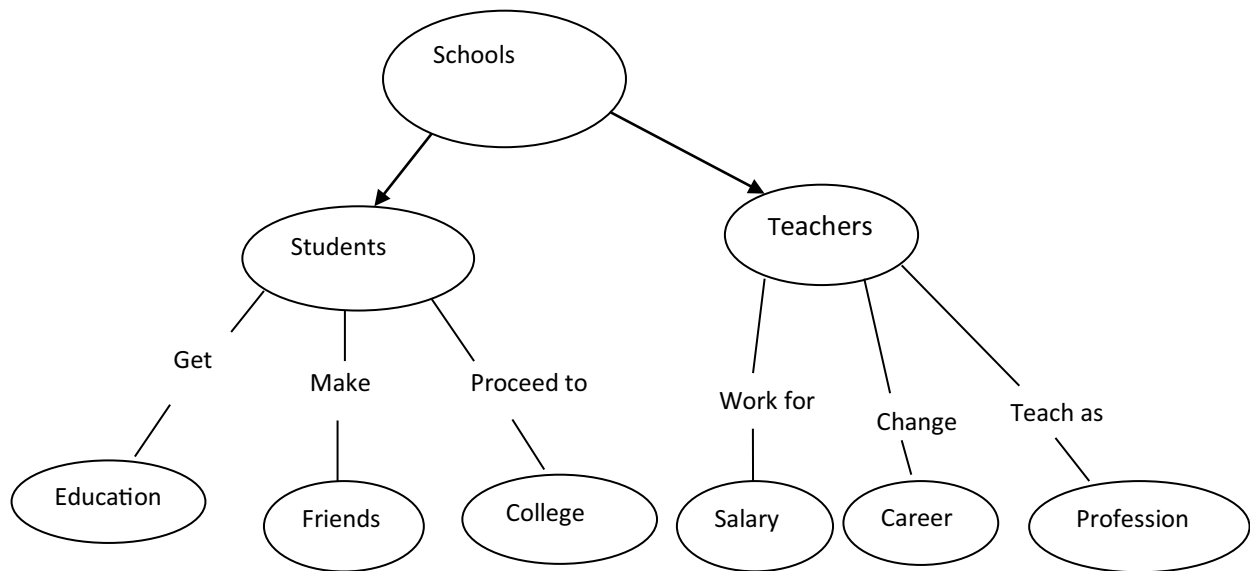


Figure 3. A Concept-map and its Key Features

Note: It tends to be read progressing from the top downward.

Novak elaborates it further that:

Concept-maps are graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge. They include concepts, usually enclosed in circles or boxes of some type, and relationships between concepts indicated by a connecting line linking two concepts. Words on the line, referred to as linking words or linking phrases, specify the relationship between the two concepts. We define concept as a perceived regularity in events or objects, or records of events or objects, designated by a label. The label for most concepts is a word, although sometimes we use symbols such as + or %, and sometimes more than one word is used. Propositions are statements about some object or event in the universe, either naturally occurring or constructed. Propositions contain two or more concepts connected using linking words or phrases to form a meaningful statement. Sometimes these are called semantic units, or units of meaning. (p. 1, emphasis added).

⁶ www.newburghschools.org/subpages/.../CRISSStrategies.pdf

Concept-map identifies themes and patterns sequencing data in a coherent manner to conclude logically. Concept-mapping interlinks such patterns and themes logically, constructs and identifies categories, and even refine such linkages (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

Chapter 4 Pakistan and Education

Legal framework around education in Pakistan

Pakistan faces significant education challenges in providing uniform and quality education for all children. It systematically performs lower than its South Asia neighbors and countries with similar per capita income. Pakistan is also amongst the E9 countries (**In “E9”, E stands for education and the “9” represents the following nine countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan, representing over half of the world's population and 70% of the world's illiterate adults**) that have the world's highest out-of-school population.

Pakistan has formalized its commitment to improving education sector outcomes through several actions in the recent past, including the insertion of Article 25-A in its Constitution which guarantees free and compulsory basic education for all children 5-16 years of age. After 18th Amendment, Government of Pakistan included Right to Education (RTE) in its constitution through Article 25A, whereby it states that ***“The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as determine by law”***. Prime Minister Imran Khan reiterated this commitment in his inaugural speech on 19th August 2018, he said *“We will raise the standard of Education in the schools and deal with the issue of 22.5 million out of school children”*.

After the 18th Amendment, education was devolved to provinces and it became the responsibility of parliament and provincial assemblies to legislate for the provision of compulsory education in their areas. At the federal level, law was enacted on December 24, 2012 for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). Similarly, in Sindh law was enacted on February 13, 2013 followed by in Baluchistan in 2014 and Punjab in 2014 and K-P in 2017. Following are the available legislations in Pakistan to provide free and compulsory education:

- Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2012 Islamabad Capital Territory
- Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2013 Sindh
- Baluchistan Compulsory Education Act 2014
- Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2014
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act 2017

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act 2017

The act in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was enacted in year 2017 with the purpose to provide free compulsory primary and secondary education in the province. Section 3 of the Act provides that government shall provide free compulsory primary and secondary education to all children from age 5 to 16 years in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It also important to note that no other province or region except Sindh and ICT has notified the rules of business. All the other provinces should enact rule of business of the law to strengthen effective implementation and get realized the true objective of law in letter and spirit.

National Education Policy 2017-2025 and Vision 2025

Pakistan has also developed National Education Policy 2017-2025 with the aim to achieve gender parity, equality in education and empower women and girls within shortest possible time. The policy defines Secondary Education (VI-XII) as one of the most important stages of education system and consists of three phases: Middle (V-VIII), High (IX-X) and Higher Secondary (XI-XII). Secondary Education is important for several reasons: such as it is continuity from the primary to higher level of education; preparation to the world of work; adoption of profession and most importantly the conceptual clearance of basic life skills.

The policy sets different targets of development for primary, secondary and higher education. The targets for development of secondary education (Chapter seven) include upgradation of 50% primary schools to middle; 40% middle school to secondary; and 20% existing secondary school to higher secondary level. Besides, increase the gross participation rate at middle education level to 85% and secondary up to 70%.

Pakistan Vision 2025

The Government of Pakistan introduced Vision 2025 with the aim of becoming a competitive, caring and collaborative society by the year 2025. Pakistan's Vision 2025 gives a visible direction to the people of Pakistan as they are struggling to achieve developed nation status. After the introduction of Vision 2025, all private and public societies, in their planning and development are being directed to line up their goals and objectives with those of the Vision in order to attain the desired outcome.

Meeting the basic needs of this growing population, including in particular their access to essential services—health, education, energy, water, and sanitation, is one the key priority area of Vision 2024. It focuses on to increase in Primary school enrollment and completion rate to 100% & literacy rate to 90% by 2025, and to Improve Primary and Secondary Gender Parity Index to 1, and increase female workforce participation rate from 24% to 45% by 2025.

Pakistan and international commitments

The right to education has been recognized in a number of international and regional legal instruments: treaties (conventions, covenants, charters) and also in soft law, such as: general comments, recommendations, declarations, and frameworks for action. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to education has been reaffirmed in numerous treaties at international and regional level which include:

- International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1966)

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Pakistan is signatory of all above mentioned treatise and is also a part of several international initiatives on right to education and has been taking initiatives to localize its international commitments to achieve the goal gender parity on education.

Pakistan and Universal Periodic Review

In 2017, Pakistan had its 3rd periodic review in Human Right Council. Pakistan accepted majority of the recommendations made by other countries with regard to improving education system in the country. Following are some key recommendations accepted by Pakistan in relation to education:

- Continue the current efforts to ensure that all children, without discrimination, enjoy the right to education.
- Increase government spending on education to provide compulsory public and private education.
- Ensure better and greater access of women and girls to education with the aim of empowering them.
- Step up efforts to ensure the access of all children to quality education, regardless of social status, gender or ethnicity.
- Step up efforts to ensure provision of free and quality primary and secondary education.
- Strengthen efforts to ensure the access of children to compulsory education.
- Undertake more efforts to ensure equal access to elementary and secondary education for both genders.
- Take measures to further promote the right to education, including by ensuring that school facilities and well-trained teachers are adequately present throughout the country.
- Continue its efforts to increase enrolment rates at all levels of education, in particular continue to improve equal access to education for all children, regardless of gender, income level or background.

Pakistan and Sustainable Development Goals

Pakistan has adopted 2030 agenda in 2016 and developed its own National Framework on localization on Sustainable Development Goals. Pakistan has prioritized following national targets in its framework in relation to education:

- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.
- By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.

State of girls' education in Pakistan

According to the Pakistan Education Statistics 2016-17 launched by the Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM), a subsidiary of the federal education ministry released in July 2018 about 22.84 million children still out of school in Pakistan out of which in fact, 44 percent of boys and 56 percent of girls in Pakistan who do not go to school. It makes 34% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while 57% in newly merged tribal district. In primary to higher secondary level, 49pc of the population of girls were out of school compared to 40pc of the population of boys.





According to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary and Secondary Education Department there are total 1.8 million children (aged 5-17) are out of school in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa out which 64% are girls while 36% are boys. (survey by KPESE in 2018). According to the Survey, major challenges for out of school children includes lack of interest in education, poverty and absence of schools, missing facilities etc.

According to the Education Management Information System (EMIS) report by Directorate of Education in (FATA) in 2018, Overall 73% students including 69% boys and 79% girls, quit schools at the primary education in the newly merged districts (FATA). It also tells that there is 50% drop out of girls at middle and high level.





According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-2018, among the household population of Pakistan 50% of women have no education compared with 34% of men. Only 9% of the women have secondary and 10% have a higher level of education. The 2017-18 PDHS asked the reason for dropping out of school for de facto households' members age 5-24. The most common reasons cited for women are getting married with ratio of 22.3 of females in urban areas and thinking further education was not necessary (18% each) followed by not being interested in education (17%), costing too much (13%), and school being too far (9%).

Below are some key highlights on progress and initiatives made by the KP government in last 5 years on education including girls' education and overall progress and allocation.

Landscape of KP's education system (Settle Areas)

Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 27,514 government schools ▪ 2,201 Girls community schools
Enrolment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4.42 million children in government schools ▪ 119,000 children in girls community schools ▪ 110,000 children in private schools through vouchers
Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 142,000 teachers working in government schools ▪ 17,000 teachers recruitment completed ▪ Recruitment of 9000 teachers in progress
Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 16% annual increase in education budget ▪ 160 billion budget allocated for education

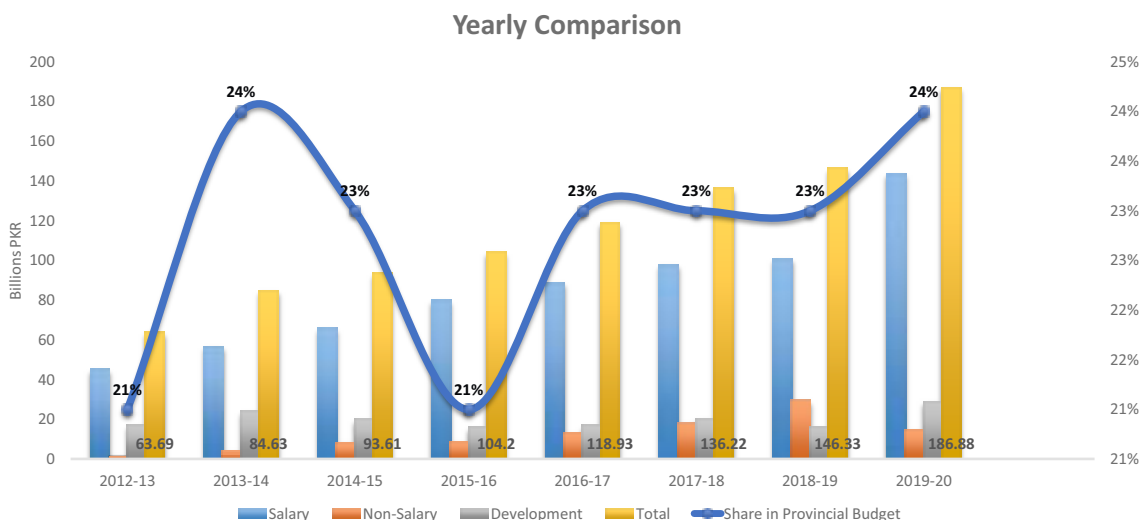
Landscape of KP's education system (Merged Areas)

Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5,619 government schools ▪ 271 Girls community schools
Enrolment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 677,543 children in government schools ▪ 46,221 children in girls community schools ▪ 4,500 children in private schools through vouchers
Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 18,621 teachers working in government schools ▪ 2,500 teachers recruitment in process
Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9% annual increase in education budget ▪ 20 billion budget allocated for education

Comparison of Allocation during last 5 years

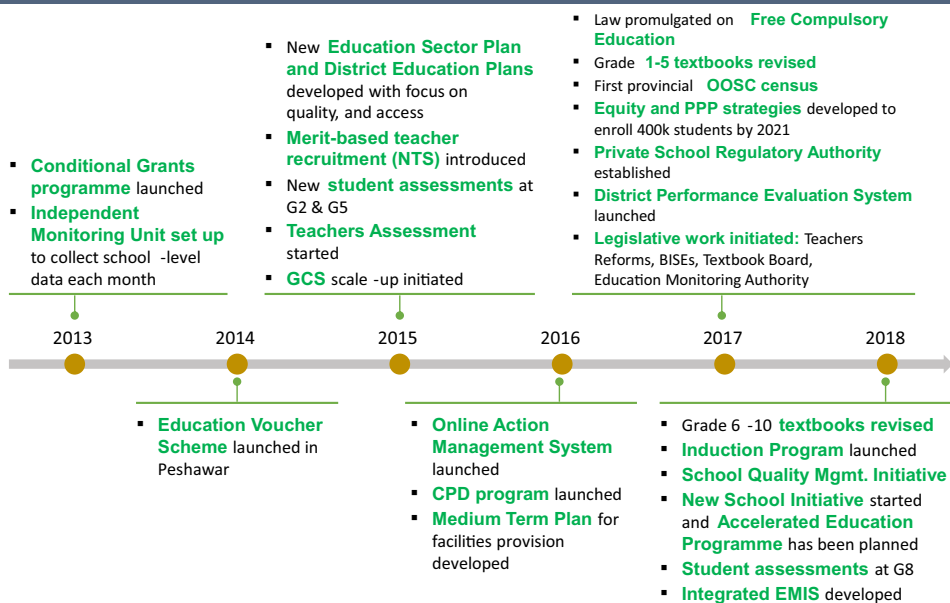
Allocations Snapshot

*** Rs. in Billion

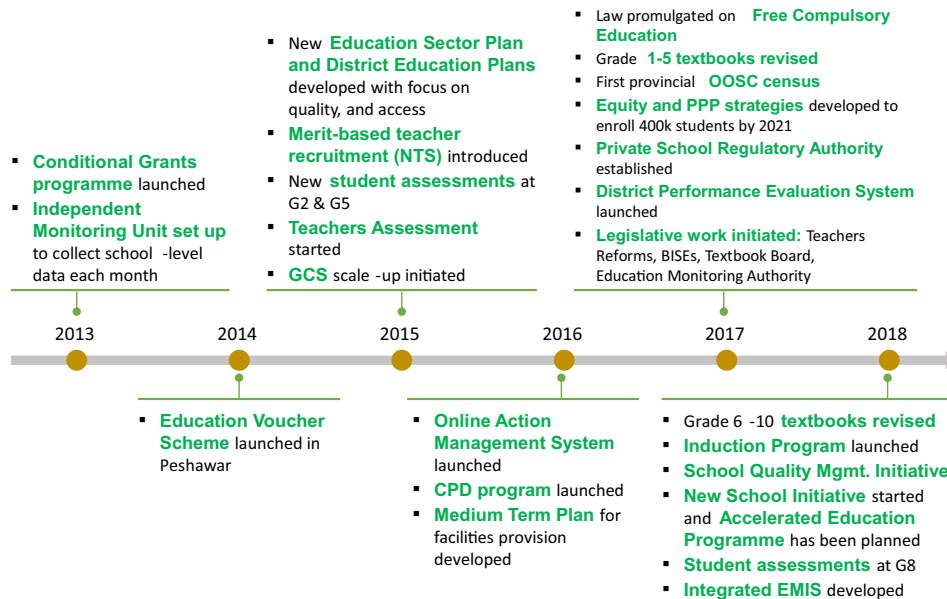


Total Budget: 186.876 including AIP 2019-20 Rs. 7.686 Billion for MAs

The Government undertook successful reform measures over its 05 year terms



The Government undertook successful reform measures over its 05 year terms



The Government undertook successful reform measures over its 05 year terms



Schools Construction/ Upgradation

725 new primary schools established, 360 (6 room) primary schools under construction

551 primary schools upgraded to middle level

512 middle schools upgraded to high level

314 high schools upgraded to higher secondary level

Standardization of 129 Higher Secondary Schools

More places for enrolling students in public schools

The Government undertook successful reform measures over its 05 year terms



Provision of facilities

Community participation for infrastructure development

Rs.25.233 billion to 24,000 schools for 83,000+ facilities, through Parent Teacher Councils

Schools with facilities:

Boundary Wall: 95%

Toilet: 96%

Drinking Water: 88%

Electricity: 84%

Schools with all 4 facilities: 77%

Schools with all basic facilities available improved from 50% to 77% in 5 years

The Government undertook successful reform measures over its 05 year terms



Girls' Community Schools

"Improve access to education for girls in the absence of government girls primary schools"

207 schools established by 2014

2,000 new GCS' established (total 2,207)

118,000 children enrolled including 78,719 girls

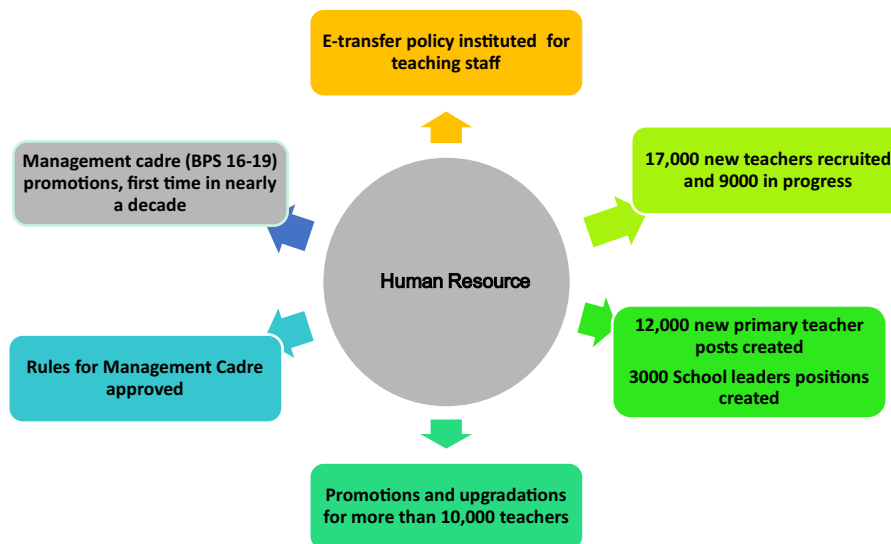
GCS Students performing at par with public schools in Grade-2 Assessments

Low cost and immediate solution to improve access to education.

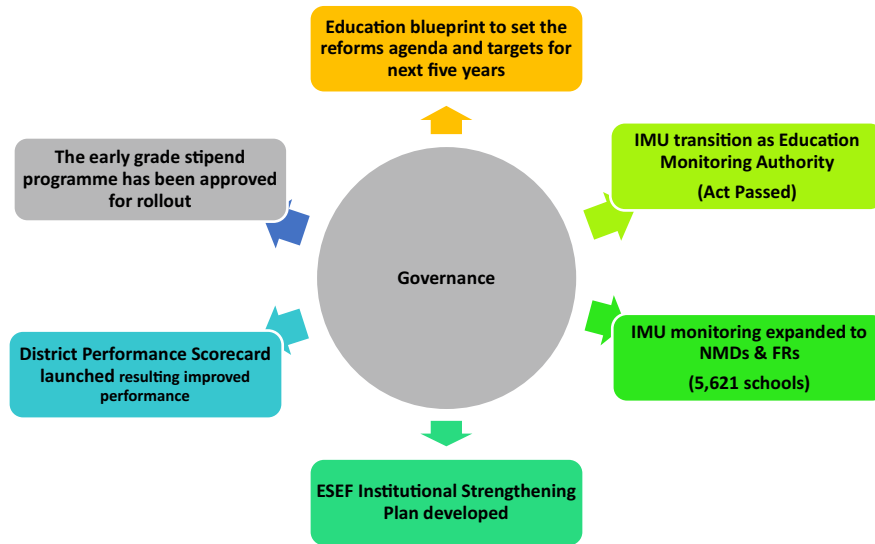
Girls' Education

- 70% of development spending for girls education
- Establishment of Girls' Community Schools (2,207 GCS, 120,000 children enrolled including 80,000 girls)
- Provision of Girls' Stipends in settled districts (Rs. 2.2 billion, 450,000 girls students benefited)
- Replication of Girls' Stipends in merged areas (Rs. 3.0 billion for Primary & Rs. 0.749 billion for Secondary)
- Establishment of Girls' Cadet College Mardan (Rs. 2.5 billion)
- Priority for provision of missing facilities in girl's schools

Achievements in last one year



Achievements in last one year



Financing of Education

According to a report “Reaching education targets in low and lower-middle income countries: Costs and finance gaps to 2030⁷, Paper commissioned for the “EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015, Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges, The government does not adequately invest in schools. A 2015 paper commissioned by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) found that to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals education targets, which include universal completion of primary and secondary school, Pakistan would need to at least double the percentage of GDP going to education.

Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for Education 2030: for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, adopted in 2015 by 160 countries encourages countries to set nationally appropriate spending targets for education. It refers to allocating at least 4% to 6% of gross domestic product (GDP) to education; and/or allocating at least 15% to 20% of public expenditure to education. While according to the media articles and financial reports by state and non-state actors’ Pakistan's public expenditure on education as percentage to GDP is estimated at 2.4 percent in fiscal year 2018-19 and 2.5 per cent in 2017-2018, which is the lowest in the region.⁸

Pakistan is one of about 33 countries which meets neither of these benchmarks, and the percentage increase in expenditure on education has sometimes lagged behind the rate of economic growth, reducing the percentage of GDP spent on education.⁹

As of 2016, 12.6 percent of Pakistan’s total expenditure went to education, and as of 2017, 2.758 percent of Pakistan’s GDP was spent on education—both figures well below recommended benchmarks. This low investment continues in spite of a government commitment in 2009 to spend 7 percent of GDP on education, and makes Pakistan the only country in Asia to spend more on its military than on education.¹⁰

⁷ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002325/232560e.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2018), p. 12

⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1490941/education-spending-pakistan/>
<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/06/20190612485340/>

⁹ UNESCO, “Accountability in education: Meeting Our Commitments. Global Education Monitoring Report,” 2017/18, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002593/259338e.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2018), p. 265; UNESCO

¹⁰ Andreas Benz, “The Crisis of School Education in Pakistan: Of Government’s Failure and New Hopes in the Growing Private Education Sector,” *Internationales Asien forum*, 43 (2012), No.3–4, <http://crossasia-journals.ub.uniheidelberg.de/index.php/iaf/article/viewFile/186/181> (accessed September 12, 2018), pp. 225-226.

The importance of secondary education for girls

Globally evidence shows that secondary education "has far stronger positive effects on women's own outcomes than primary education does - their health and well-being, position in family and society, economic opportunities and returns and political participation. Yet secondary school participation remains low in many developing countries including Pakistan. The benefits of higher levels of schooling suggest that investments in female secondary education are warranted. They also allow us to understand more fully how girls' opportunities and options increase with higher levels of education. According to UN millennium project with regard to labor market benefits, women derive higher returns to secondary education than men do, whereas their returns to primary education are lower than men's returns higher levels of education similarly increase women's probability of engaging in formal paid employment. Female secondary education also has a substantial effect on fertility and child mortality.

Education also have greater influence on health outcomes than lower levels. Women with more schooling are at less risk for disease and make more use of prenatal and delivery services with regard to family life, female secondary education is more strongly and consistently associated with women's increased household decision-making and control over resources than primary levels of schooling. Specifically, women with more schooling have greater control over finances and access to earnings, and exercise greater influence in key decisions such as use of family planning.

Taken together, these greater benefits from secondary education can be conceptualized as increased female empowerment; specifically "women's ability and freedom to make strategic life choices, a process that occurs over time and involves women as agents who have the ability to formulate choices, control resources or enact decisions that affect important life outcomes International development policy also emphasizes the importance of women's empowerment, gender equality in education and increased opportunities for secondary education for girls. Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) exemplifies this focal point. It calls on the international community to "promote gender equality and empower women" with the specific target of eliminating "gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2030 and at all levels of education no later than 2030".

Global best approaches to improve girls' education

Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016 numerous intervention and approaches to tackling girls' education have emerged. Some draw on human rights frameworks, others on economic models; some seek to harness the potential of civil society organizations, others work with government institutions; some mainstream gender into education sector-wide approaches; others focus on challenging discrimination against women and girls.

While many approaches adhere to one or perhaps two types of intervention, many, especially more recently, tackle girls' education using a combined and integrated approach. Combined

approaches often yield the strongest and most sustainable success by complementing activities in the education sector with inputs to tackle challenges in livelihoods, health, employment, and more.

Approach 1: Improving educational institutions for girls

The quality of education significantly affects girls' enrolment, participation, retention and completion of basic schooling. Girls and their parents often identify poor infrastructure, including inadequate toilet and classroom facilities, and insufficient teachers and teaching, including absent teachers and poor attitudes, behavior and pedagogy, as key factors that push them out of school. The language of instruction and school curriculum can also have serious effects on girls' attendance and retention.

Many education sector programs have intended to tackle these problems, through school construction and rehabilitation, in-service and pre-service teacher training on child-friendly pedagogy and alternative discipline, school managers' capacity development and curriculum review processes.

Approach 2: Alleviating economic barriers to girls' enrolment and retention

Removing or reducing the costs of education for parents and families, living in poverty has been shown to have significant effects of girls' enrolment, retention and completion of basic schooling. Costs can be both 'direct' through school fees and levies and 'indirect' through children's need for school materials including books, pencils and uniforms, and food. Although primary education is supposed to be free in many countries, indirect costs may be prohibitive for poor parents. In addition, secondary schooling is often not free of charge. At this level, registration, examination and ongoing direct costs alone may render secondary schooling unaffordable.

A range of social protection interventions to mitigate the costs of education have been tried and tested across disadvantaged, poor communities. Interventions include conditional grant schemes such as school feeding; stipends; conditional cash transfers; and targeted subsidies such as scholarships or incentives in-kind. Studies have shown that, implemented properly; some of these interventions can prove highly effective for increasing attendance and progression rates among disadvantaged groups, including girls. Some schemes for example conditional cash transfers also may help to combat other socio-economic demand-side barriers to girls' education, including domestic work and child labor.

Approach 3: Challenging socio-cultural constraints to girls' schooling

Challenging discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes that curtail girls' education is of critical importance in raising girls' educational attainment. Some interventions that challenge gendered inequalities in education take an explicitly multi-sectoral approach, coordinating efforts to break down socio-cultural barriers to girls' education, such as early marriage and

female genital cutting, across education, health, social justice and other sectors. Showing that girls have value in addition to marriage and childbearing and that they can play an important and active role in the community, through for example, girls' football clubs or community theatre, can have significant positive impact on girls' lives and their futures.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Results

This study collected data from five districts in the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from 104 samples. Semi-structured interviews were used for collecting information besides, secondary sources were also taken into account. The data was analyzed using Miles and Huberman (1994) approach and Concept-mapping method. The following information indicates results of the study.

Role Model

The respondents were asked about their role models. There was a marked difference noted between the responses of people living in rural and urban areas. Although, the difference across the districts were uncommon. In urban areas, the secondary school girls' role model was found mostly their blood relatives, for instance, parents, aunts, and siblings while in rural areas most of the girls idealize their school teachers as role models. It indicates that in urban areas mostly parents, and other family members are educated and adopted certain careers. While in the rural areas parents are generally have little formal education and they perform labor works, or farming which are least attractive for their children as career. For instance, in Kohat city, a girl showed her grandfather as a role model, who was a retired educationist. She called him an intelligent, sincere, and hardworking person.

Besides, a teacher in Mardan revealed,

The girls who have no role models in their life have little inspiration to get higher education, or career orientation and generally show little resistance to their parents' decisions regarding discontinuation of their education or early marriages.

A teacher also shared that girls from poor families have usually no role models and it might be due to their low self-esteem.

A father from Karak district responding to the question of role model said,

Role model for a girl is less an important issue, while discipline and good environment both at home and school are important and contribute to girls' education.

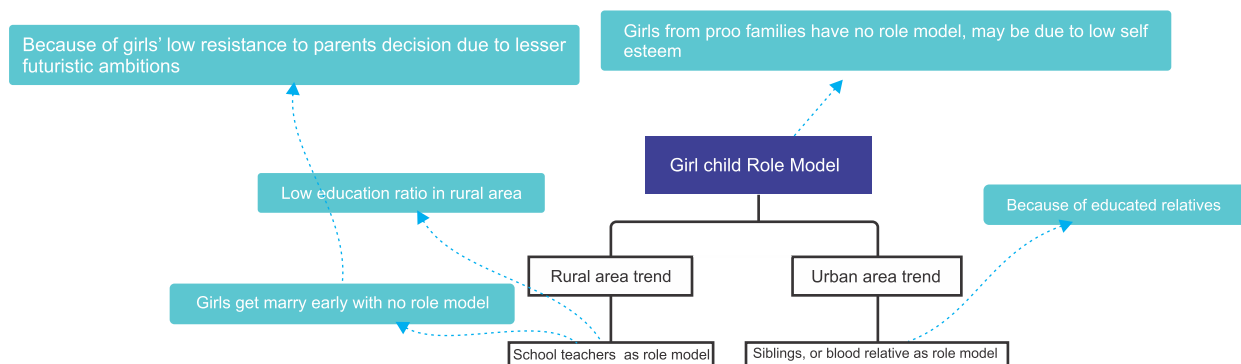


Figure 4. Concept map Role Model

Early Marriages and Girls Dropout Ratio

According to Pakistan Health and Demographic Survey 2017-2018, among the household population of Pakistan 50% of women have no education compared with 34% of men. Only 9% of the women have secondary and 10% have a higher level of education. 22.3 of females in urban areas cited early age marriage as one of the key reasons for discontinuation to their education. Early age marriage has been explored as one of the cultural barrier into girls' secondary schools drop out by research respondents. Girls' who are married off during their school going age, are less likely to complete their secondary and high education due to the social and domestic responsibilities' pressure. The respondents of the research shared their experiences and community perspectives about how child marriage negatively impacts girls right to education.

In Mardan, a respondent indicated that *parents' and girls' in-laws'* seriousness regarding girls' education matter a lot for early-wed girls. If they are serious, they can encourage newlywed girls to continue their education. For instance, a teacher in Kohat rural areas said that a mother-in-law came to school and requested the headmistress to enroll her early teen daughter-in-law. But in the majority of cases, the results are different, i.e. early marriage means discontinuation of education for such girls. Besides, in all districts, the trend of early marriages was found higher in rural areas than urban. The study found that teachers' response to continuation of newlywed girls' education is quite traditional and conservative. Even an Assistant District Education Officer opined that it is inappropriate to keep a married girl in a class at such a tender age, she can spoil her unmarried class-fellows by telling the private marital details, even she said that it is also inappropriate for boys as well.

An education district administrative officer in Karak said:

Female school teachers perceive and discourage married students to attend schools fearing they might spoil other girls by sharing after-marriage experiences.

A respondent said that girls who regularly attend schools are generally busy in their schoolwork, usually get little time to attend marriages and other social events. Therefore, they become less visible in family and receive less marriage proposal within a family.

Besides, in families where parents discriminate children based on gender show high school dropout ratio. A teacher said:

Parents mostly enroll sons at private and daughters in the government schools.

Another teacher said:

Very few in-laws send the newlywed to schools, and mostly they marry a girl to get help for mother-in-law in household chores.

In few cases, parents insist on their in-laws to allow their daughters to continue their education after marriage, it sometimes leads to violence against the girl. A local newspaper reported that a girl in Swat married to a man living abroad, the girl's father got a commitment from his son-in-law that he would allow the girl to continue her education, even he paid the school fee of his

daughter in advance, which the husband unfulfilled. Finally, the issue turned violent and the girl was murdered and the husband escaped and left the country.

Girls' education at secondary level is a societal challenge, as local culture, patriarchy, and gender discrimination seriously influence girls' education and most of the time results in early marriage.

The data indicates that poor families consider girls a financial burden to feed, and provide clothes, in such cases, girls' education is unaffordable for such families. Therefore, marrying a daughter at early becomes a good option for such parents. Besides, few parents fear some untoward which could harm their honor, therefore, they accept earliest proposal for girls enrolled at secondary level.

Some parents educate few of their children leaving the eldest daughter to stay at home and help mother in rearing toddlers and other household chores. A senior teacher said that girls staying at home become more visible in the extended family as hardworking and domesticated. They attract more marriage proposals and chances of early marriage are much higher than other school going girls. One student said:

My parents asked my elder sister to stay at home and look after siblings and now my parents are planning to marry her.

People living in urban areas were more supportive to girls' education than rural. Besides, few families shift to cities from villages as there are better schooling opportunities and such parents rarely discriminate on gender. Contrarily in rural areas, there is a heavy workload on women in a house, and they prefer keeping daughters at home to shoulder work with them for instance, in keeping cattles, and maintaining hujra (community place frequented by many guests). Few parents consider it impermissible to keep daughters in schools after puberty, a father from the rural area said:

A pubescent girl is better to stay at home rather in school. She can learn how to run a home and also help mothers in household work.

In district Karak, the tendency to educate girls were found in some cases at par with boys in both urban and rural, while in other districts there were marked difference in girls' education in rural and urban areas.

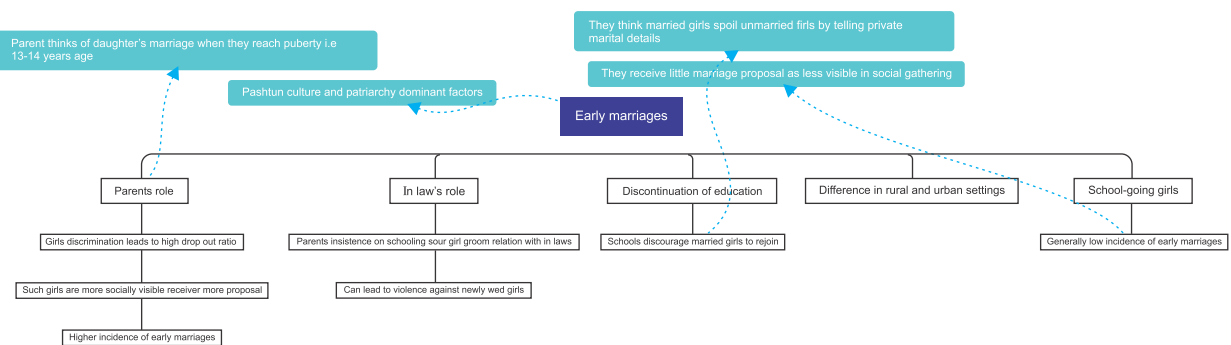


Figure 5. Concept map Early Marriages and Dropout

Pashtun Culture and Girls' Education

Pakhtun culture is highly influenced by patriarchal, conservative tribal norms and traditions. Cultural and traditional constraints have high impact on perception of parents regarding their daughters' education. In spite of the fact that the people are aware of the importance of literacy, there is a gap due to male dominant, power imbalanced culture and gender stereotypical roles. Girls are normally supposed not to be highly educated due to certain cultural barriers which helps to maintain the status quo. The cultural barriers include division of labor, male decision makers, expectations of household duties, the care of family members, early marriage, early childbirth, nonparticipation in economic activities, temporary family membership, inheritance etc. Fathers belonging to different classes and age groups have their own reasons for not sending their daughters to school.

Results show that traditional thinking regarding girls' education is shrinking in rural and urban areas and consistent across the selected districts. One teacher showed her mobile phone and said:

This has changed the world for women.

She continued:

Educating girls in Pashtun society has become now an accepted norm and girls' dropout could be of other reasons (not cultural conservatism).

The study reveals that in urban areas there is no popular culture as people are migrated from different parts of the province, therefore, culture influence is minimum to dropout ratio there. Therefore, any dropout incident is mostly due to individual factors, for instance, poverty, peer pressure, pressure from in laws family on a young child bride, financial issues, lack of interest in girls etc.

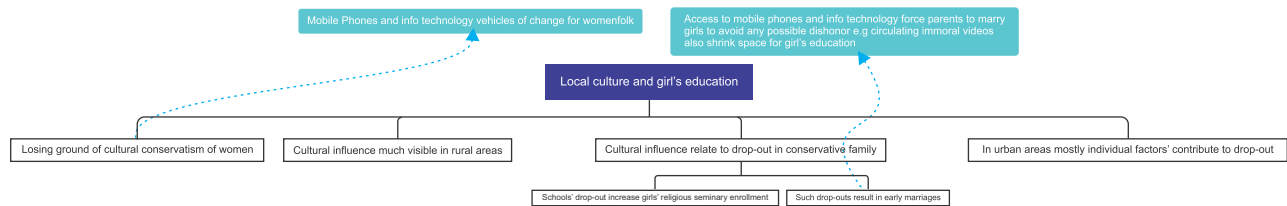


Figure 6. Concept map Pashtun Culture and Dropout

Teachers' Behavior, Low Performance and Girls Dropout

Teachers' attitudes, harsh behavior, their strict teaching styles and low performance is also one of the reason which demotivates girls and hinders their participation in secondary school education. Behaviors of teachers is sometime hostile to the girl-child. Most teachers, probably due to their early childhood socialization, pay less attention to girl's students, leaving them feel neglected and unwanted. This has negatively impacted on the girl's academic achievement in many examples.

The respondents of the research also mentioned low teacher performance as one of the contributing factor of low participation and drop out at secondary school level. The performance of teachers in education system is one of the handfuls of factors determining school effectiveness and learning outcomes. Low performance of teachers in schools contributes in low quality education, which in turn has negative impact on student's performance. Interviews with parents provided clear reflection on importance regarding the role and performance of teachers. Parents expects teachers to have a great contributing role into their child's intellectual, personal and social development the low performance demotivates parents sending their daughters or sons to schools and they consider it as waste of time and money with no positive result.

Female students shared mixed opinions about teacher performance and its contribution into their performance. Some of the female students shared that teacher's attitude is motivational in the continuation of their education. Negative attitudes and corporal punishment are not allowed in schools under government directives. This problem exists only up to 10 percent in girls' secondary schools. One of the female teacher respondent from Kohat district said:

Teacher's attitude does not affect girls drop out.

Whilst another teacher replied:

Teacher attitude contributes a lot in developing students' confidence.

Students revealed that young teachers are very cooperative, and supportive and contribute a lot to their motivation as compared to senior teachers who are not much competent to teach the modern courses and they have very strict behavior towards students.

One student said that school administration is less cognizant of students' complaints regarding their class teachers, but very few students switch schools due to teachers' behavior. She continued that security situation and social harmony are more important than teachers' behavior in girls' dropout, she cited the case of her class-fellow who left school after a blast near the school.

Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa emerged as the first province to initiate implementation of standards through various reform to improve of teachers' competencies and performance based on the teachers' standards. Teachers in KP schools now have to go through a mandatory 6-month long induction program. This induction program is designed to develop key professional knowledge areas and skill sets among the recruited teaching force. Salaries and number of teachers has also been greatly increased during last 5 years.

Similarly, the establishment of an effective monitoring authority IMU (Independent Monitoring Unit) also brought about improvement in teacher attendance rate and performance. Despite all these factors respondent of the research was of the view that government needs to provide more resources and mentorship programs for teachers to enhance their leadership and constructive communication skills which can also contribute into students' intellectual and social development.

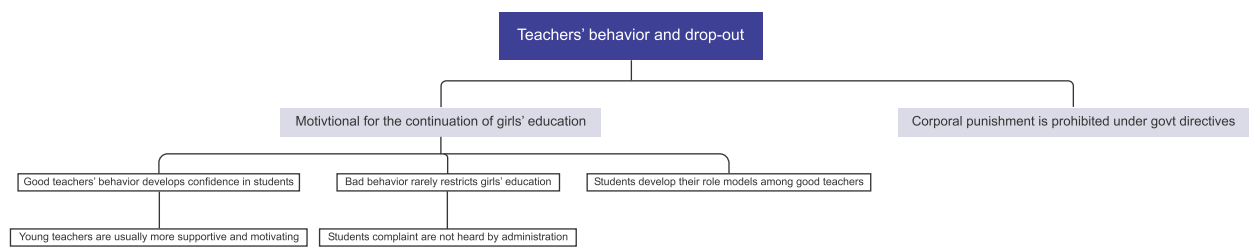


Figure 8. Teachers' Behavior and Dropout

Role of Financial and Political Support in Girls' Education

Financial support from the district government can improve girl's education while security assurance, transportation (School Buses), and motivation via counseling teams also contribute to girls' education. Teachers opined that district government must provide more space in schools to overcome the overcrowded classrooms at the school premises. A school teacher said that local government is not interested in filling the vacant sanctioned teachers' positions in schools.

The government should further improve the security and create harassment free environment to improve females' participation at secondary schools, respondents in district Kohat and Karak said. Teachers and parents show the same fear across all districts about insecurity and harassment in society. Political, financial, moral and social support require for girls' participation in education. To encourage parents to give equal attention to girls' education at the secondary level, government should allocate more financial resources to girls' education.

A teacher from Kohat said that girls' transportation from remote villages and peripheries could be a discouraging reason for parents, therefore, the government should provide school buses to encourage parents to send their daughters to schools.

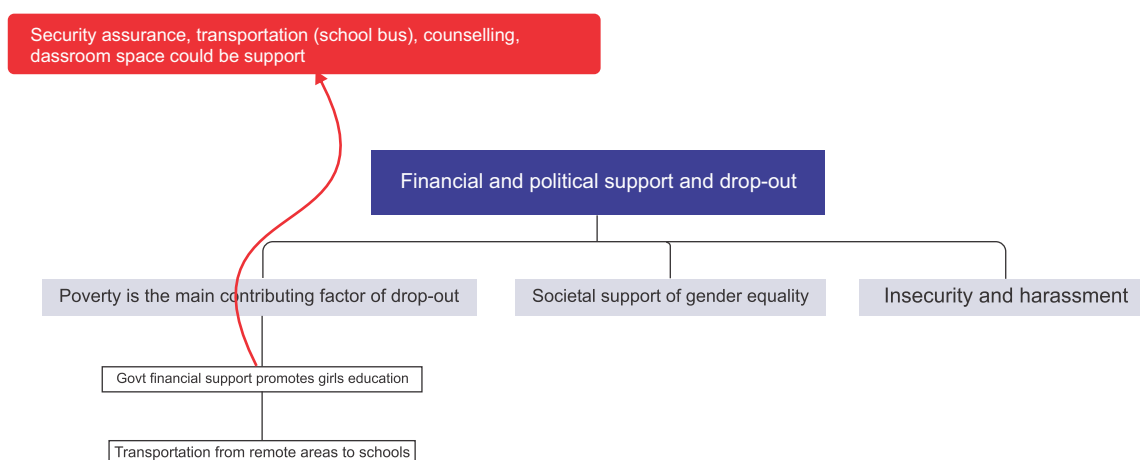


Figure 10. Financial and Political Support

Intolerance and Girls' Education

The previous attacks on education institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also effected the girls' school participation. Some of the female students replied that their morale is high and want to get education and become independent regardless of any risk. While teachers and parents were quite worried about the students' well-being and safety of their schools. Teachers and parents share that it is very difficult for security concerned families to send their children to schools especially girls who they believe are more vulnerable to security challenges as compared with boys.

While a teacher in kohat disagreed to the security concerns and according to her the extended, joint families and community elders in rural areas could easily handle any security issues. On the other hand, a school teacher in the urban Kohat complained of eve-teasing during school hours. The teacher supports the earlier claim from a rural school teacher that eve-teasing and other safety issues are less in rural areas due to the strong communal bond. Another teacher said that in urban areas law and order situation is comparatively better than rural areas. The same trend was found same in all districts.

Long-distance/Transportation and Girls Education

Several schools teacher believe that long-distance is not a factor that limits girls' education, while families especially mothers recognized long-distance between schools and home as a hurdle and which hinders their daughter's secondary education.

On the question of long distance from home to school, researchers received different responses. Long-distance is an issue in rural areas rather than urban. In rural areas schools are far from residential areas, generally, there is one school in a radius of 10-15 villages and sometimes more. Parents, teachers, and students in rural schools stated better facilities, good teachers, and a decent academic environment in schools could convince parents to send their children to long distanced schools. If schools are not well-equipped then parents discontinue girls' education. Few parents were also worried about their daughters' safety due to bad law and order situations and declining moral standards (alluding to the cases of child molestation reported in media).

A female educationist in district Charsadda said that government-support such as girls' stipend and transportation facilities could significantly improve girls' education.

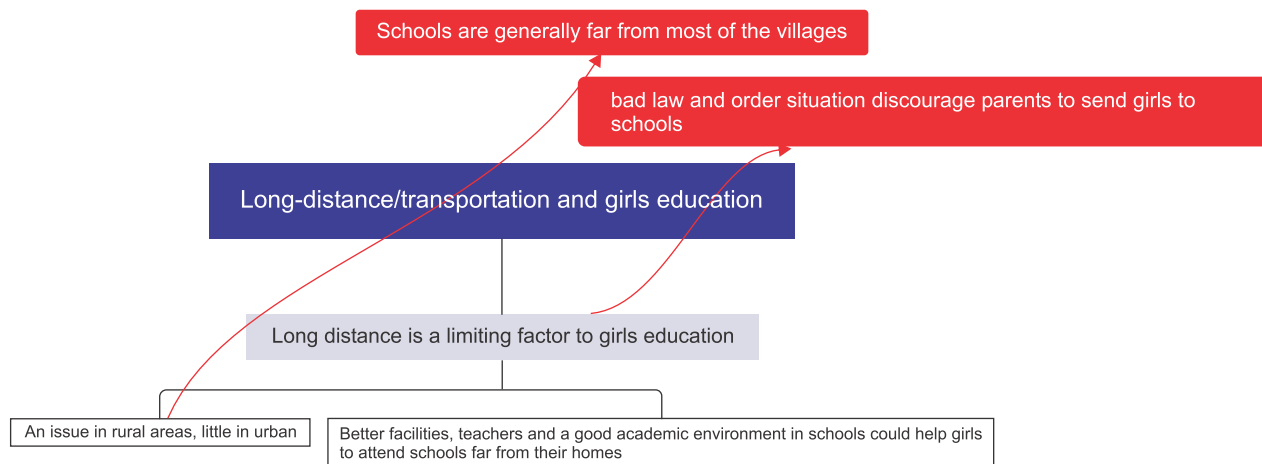


Figure 12 Concept map Long Distance and Transportation

Discriminatory Treatment and Education

The key informants of the research in Kohat shared that in most instances parents send their daughters to government schools while boys to private schools as their general tendency to invest more in boys education because of the expected returns. According to them such discriminating practices are less prevalent in cities while common in rural areas. Teachers said that few parents discontinue education of elder daughter to look after the siblings. Most respondents positively associate parent’s equal treatment between daughter and son a catalyst in girls’ education. It is important to know how majority of parents perceive girls’ education. For instance, a school teacher in Kohat said that parents are mostly interested to educate daughter up-to secondary level as last year only ten migration certificates were issued for higher education in a class of 106 female students in the school, while in district Peshawar in an urban school, the migration was over 80%. There is a low migration of girls to higher education in these districts. A female ADEO said,

Parents' views are socially constructed by many influencers such as Poverty, local culture, religion, security, neighborhood, and long-distance from school.

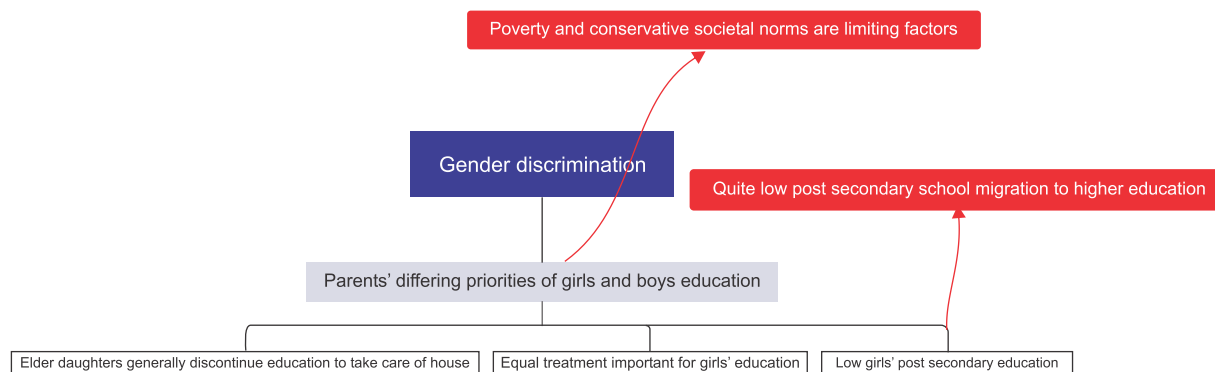


Figure 13. Discriminatory Treatment and Education

Poverty and Girls Education

Poverty was found a noticeable factor linked to girls dropout at secondary school, revealed by majority of the respondents. On the other hand, another school teacher opined that parents' teacher contribution (PTC) funds can resolve many problems due to students' poverty that hinder girls from attending schools.

A school teacher and ADEO said:

Poverty is among the main cause of girls' drop out from school, parents have little choices to fund their daughters' education, even many parents can't afford sons education.

Another teacher said:

"Many social evils are the byproduct of poverty like intolerance, terrorism and insecurity; most of the parents avoid these problems by marrying girls at early age.

Government should allocate more funds towards girls' education to equalize the overall spending on girls. Parents mostly prefer to spend their limited income on sons, therefore, it is the government responsibility to shift tax money towards girls' education.

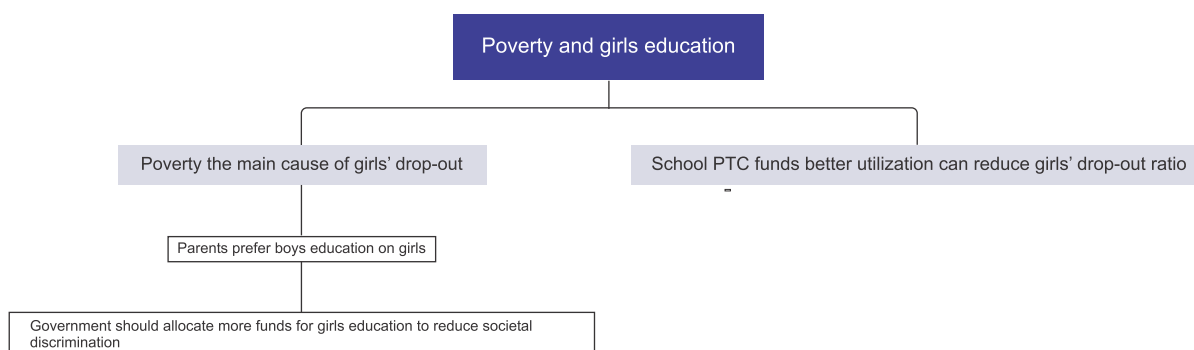


Figure 14. Concept map Poverty and Girls' Education

Facilities at School and Girls' Education

Most respondents replied that absence of basic facilities and accommodated space in schools also is a factor which effects students participation in schools. A teacher said that students are not leaving schools due to the non-availability of such facilities. Besides, space is a big issue at the school premises as the classes are mostly overcrowded. According to the available data overcrowded class rooms, lack of hygienic washrooms, less number of washrooms, unavailability clean drinking water, lack of open grounds, lack of electricity, bound ary walls etc. are the missing facilities highlighted by government and non-government departments several times.

An ADEO said:

Government should support schools to improve their infrastructure, without proper facilities, students show little interest in academic activities and career orientation.



Figure 15. Concept map School Amenities

Menstrual Hygiene Management

Menstrual hygiene is an important issue at adolescence and especially at secondary school level. The study explored menstrual hygiene management challenges and their impacts on participation of girls at secondary level education. Female student respondents of the research reported several challenges related to menstrual hygiene management at schools, including: use of non-absorbent and uncomfortable sanitary napkin and inadequate provision of sanitary materials, water, hygiene and sanitation facilities (WASH) in schools, lack of hand wash or soaps in toilets, doors lock for privacy and had a bad odor.

Menstrual hygiene management is a serious issue as the female students feel shame and reluctance while attending school. Girls mostly remain absent from schools during their menstrual days. One of the female student respondent shared that

when menstruating, girls would rather stay home than be uncomfortable, inactive and embarrassed due to inadequate menstrual hygiene management facilities at school.

Another student said that

A friendly and supportive menstrual hygiene management environment that provides education, absorbent sanitary materials and adequate WASH facilities is essential to providing equal opportunity for all girls which can obviously contribute into girls' effective participation in secondary school education.

One of the teacher respondents said that absenteeism during menstrual periods is common and sometimes leads to school dropout. A headmistress suggested teacher training should also include how to tackle girls' menstrual and psychological problems when they are at puberty

period. Along with the facilities, which must be provided in schools to enable girl's students to manage their menstruation without any shame or fear.

She added:

Menstrual hygiene management materials should also be the part of first aid kit in each school.

All respondents agreed that menstrual hygiene is a serious challenge for girl school administration. An educational manager in District Peshawar said that improper and inefficient menstrual hygiene management results in dropout as students feel reluctance to attend schools.

A teacher in District Kohat said:

Government must hire a female psychologists at district level to counsel students reaching puberty age as it is very difficult for the school administration to cope with that situation.

Other teacher said:

Counselling sessions by the psychologist with the school students for puberty issues and provision of facilities in schools would probably overcome the menstrual hygiene issues and thus dropout could be controlled with this measure; girls in our society need continuous psychological support even in other matters as well.

A mother in Peshawar district said that,

Students are in dire need of clean water and washrooms for safety measures, its non-availability badly affect their health status and lead to absenteeism and ultimately result in dropout from the school.

A teacher confirms these findings, she said that washroom non-availability or nonfunctioning washrooms with insufficient facilities make the menstruating girls absent from schools.

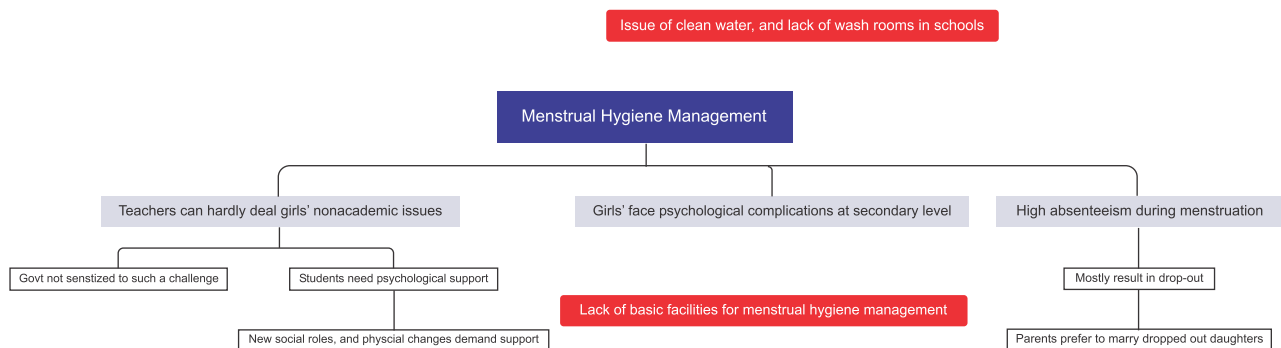


Figure 16. Concept Map Menstrual Hygiene Management

Main themes

The results identify the following main issues related to girls' education at the secondary level.

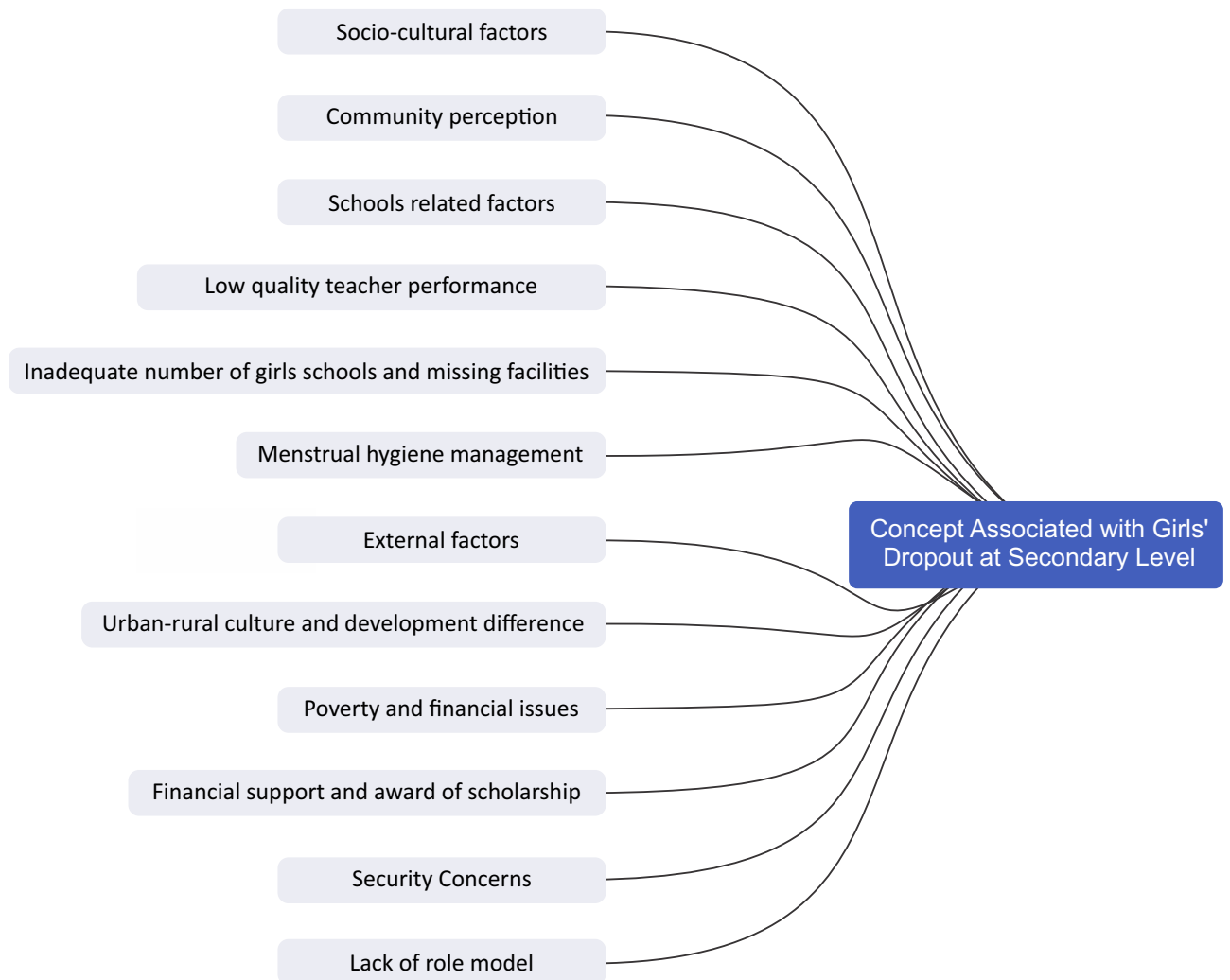


Figure 17. Concept Map.

The detail of each finding is as below.

Socio-cultural factors

The research findings revealed that the social and cultural factors contributed significantly to influence girl-child education. The factors; socio-cultural (culture, social roles, social perception) including in context of early marriage, male dominance, son preference, gender discrimination, gender stereotypical roles, social perception about girls' education, domestic responsibilities, female contribution into financial affect the girls' participation in education. These factors result in many negative outcomes to girls' education like dropout from school, poor academic performance, low value on girl's education, inequality etc.

Parents and community, in general, have the negative perception on girls' education and co perceived as meaningless for girls as they will be married and her education will not benefit her as she will then become responsible for household. Most of the parents prefer their daughters only to get basic primary education just to enable them to read and write and not enroll them into secondary or higher secondary education while they prefer to educate boys than girls as son or boys are considered breadwinners for the family.

Girls are married off at young age, they are forced to quit the schools and are usually denied to make the decision for themselves over their lives after marriage to continue their education. Marriages bring domestic and child bearing responsibility for young girls which hinders her motivation to retain and educational and economic participation. Heavy household workloads, domestic priorities, and gender roles mostly tend to undermine the girl and greatly hinder girls' progressions in education.

Community Perception

Girl- child education in Pakistan and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has for a long time been plagued by a pedagogy of differences, by way of education that stresses on the differences and not the similarities between boys and girls. The challenges towards girl-child education start right at home. The parents, siblings, relatives and even the neighbors perceive girls to be radically different from boys. The myth that, boys are more intelligent, more capable, more responsible and therefore more important to the society than girls are. Although both girls and boys are brought up together at home and in the community the girls are forced to grow up differently through this oppressive socialization. They are often deprived of the same opportunities as boys to prove their potentials. This creates a low self-esteem among large number of girls and deepen the gender divide and social discrimination.

The existing socialization has affected the girl-child in terms of access to education, completion and achievement; therefore, girls often willingly give up for things they believe to be for boys. Girls not strive to outshine the boys in anything including education in case they get ex-communicated in the society because of going against the norms. In our patriarchal society girls are displayed as under-achievers while gender influences the academic performance in favor of boys. The girl -child's participation in education faces other challenges some of which are culturally tailored to meet the cultural and social expectations of the community and not that of individual girl-child, which often compromises the girl-child education.

Low quality teacher performance

The findings suggest that quality academic environment is a first step towards girls' retention in schools. Therefore, teachers' quality performance is very important in this regard. There is a need that government should plan how to improve quality of teaching, which could be materialized by focusing on better recruitment, trainings on modern teaching techniques, communication skills to contribute into students social and intellectual development, and retention policies. Major influential factors such as working conditions, administrative support, attractive salaries and other facilities, skills equipment on teaching methods, subject mastery preparation and planning, effectiveness in presenting subject matters and student-teacher relationship impacts teacher's performance and their retention which ultimately effect quality of education. In this study, most of the respondents including students, parents, and teachers agreed that quality teaching encourages students to continue their education and enhance learning capacity.

Inadequate number of girls schools and missing facilities

According to the Annual Statistical Report 2017-2018 by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary and Secondary Education Department there are total 5, 538 secondary schools in province out which 39% are of girls. There is a general consensus among all stakeholders including educationists that facilities like clean drinking water, toilets and electricity are directly linked with a student's overall learning experiences. However, unfortunately we see a big gap in provision of basic facilities in government schools.

Statistics reveals that the number of girls' schools are less than boys' schools. While this study finding show that the number of girls' schools must be more than the number of boys with many reasons, for instance, parents generally don't prefer to send their daughters to far away schools. The study suggests that funds should be diverted towards new girls' schools.

Missing facilities at schools is also identified as one of the most important factor, responsible for girls drop out and non-participation in girls' secondary education. Overcrowded class rooms, lack of hygienic washrooms, less number of washrooms, unavailability of clean drinking water, lack of open grounds, lack of electricity, boundary walls, furniture's, modern equipment, and transportation facilities are key challenges which effects girls' participation in schools.

Urban-Rural Difference

The study has focused on five districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the study concluded that each district rural and urban areas have different trends while in each district urban-urban depict the same trend. In the rural areas, families are more conservative and restricting on girls' education, while in urban areas parents were found quite interested in the education of their daughters. Besides, there was higher tendency of child marriages in rural areas while in urban the trend is relatively low. Besides, the mothers in rural areas were found less or uneducated while in urban areas the findings were found opposite.

The main difference noted in this research is the division of rural and urban. Quality of life is quite different in urban and rural areas. Therefore, in some parts of the district facilities and economic disparity affect girls' education. The study also shows that socio-economic factors at macro i.e. community, city, and regional level and micro individual and family level contribute much towards girls' education.

Gender discrimination is a universal phenomenon and has been noted in one form or another in every part of the world. Patriarchal patterns are prevalent in the in Pakistani society especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while in rural areas gender discrimination is more prominent than urban. Besides, the districts-wise difference is not much noticeable, although in remote areas discrimination is common. It is also visible at the government level as well, for instance, the number of girls schools is far less than boys' schools in the identified districts which results in less spending on girls' education.

Poverty

Poverty and financial issues at house hold level forces the parents to make choices as to which child to enroll in school. Social, and cultural attitudes of the parents lead to boys getting favored while the girls are discriminated against. The girls are compelled by high poverty level to abandon school because of lack of money to support their transportation, uniform, stationary and other related expenditures, in favor of their brothers.

Study indicates that poverty is the main cause of girls dropout at the secondary level. Most of the parents prefer son education over daughter in their limited financial resources. Poor families struggle to meet the costs of expenditures of education. Government schools are generally more affordable than private education, but they sometimes charge tuition, registration or exam fees, and other costs associated include stationery, copies, uniforms, school bags, and shoes. Text books are provided free but the other expenses are hardly unaffordable for poor families. The additional cost of transportation is another burden for poor parents. Families with low income cannot enroll their daughters into private schools and their participation in public school especially at secondary level is hindered by the associated costly financial and socio-economic factors. Such factors often contribute into drop out of girls a secondary level education.

Menstrual Hygiene Management

Menstrual hygiene management in schools is also revealed another key issue, effecting girls' participation and often causes drop out at secondary level. Lack of menstrual knowledge, poor access to sanitary products and a non-facilitating school environment make it difficult for girls to attend school. Poor sanitation in schools, lack of access to good quality sanitary products, lack of management facilities and disposal management of menstrual waste can be associated with lower enrolment in schools, absenteeism, and dropout of girls at secondary level. In Pakistan, the challenge is often overlooked and rarely discussed due to taboos associated. Our schools lack those basic friendly facilities required to facilitate young girls to deal their menstruation hygienically and confidently. Non-availability of clean washrooms, water, soap or hand wash, unavailability of sanitary napkins in emergency kits, lack of menstrual waste disposal management and other challenges in schools result in unhygienic, psychological complications and academic challenges for girls.

Various studies and available data has shown that the lack of menstrual hygiene management-friendly facilities and support for school girls and female teachers is a barrier to their full participation in school and thus to quality education. Menstruation in our society is a taboo subject. Girls with fear of stain on their uniform and shame associated prefer to be at home rather than going to schools where they cannot find accommodated place to manage their periods. Most of the girls remain absent during their menstrual days resulting in week-long absenteeism and educational loss which sometimes culminates in school dropouts.

Financial Support and Award of Scholarship

The study indicates that financial support is pivotal to encourage girls' education. Poverty is common in the country, and parents spend less on girls' education. In this case, it becomes government responsibility to encourage parents. Teachers appreciate the government policy to offer scholarships to female students, there is a need to spend more on girl's education. The contribution of society and the finances from the government towards girls' education is far less, and without government intervention and support from the influential community actors female education couldn't be brought at par with male education ratio.

Security Concerns

One of the reasons for girls' dropout is the non-availability and access to secondary schools near to their homes. A shortage of government secondary schools for girls, leaves many girls walking long distances to school during which makes them vulnerable to various forms harassment and many other security issues. Families worry about busy roads; the large distance many girls must travel to school increases risks and fears. Such kind of insecurities and issues often lead to girls being shut out or dropping out of education entirely. Even in the urban areas, girls cannot reach a school by walk safely and in a reasonable amount of time. The increasing number sexual abuse with young girls and boys have also worsen the situation. The situation is far worse in rural areas, where schools are even more scarce, and it is less likely that private schools will fill the gap.

The factors of security concern is also contributing factor to girls' education in Pakistan. While due to the efforts of government the security situation in Pakistan has improved significantly in past there were many instances of burning schools and detonating explosives there which had created fear among girls' parents and some parents are still living with this trauma. Similarly, current fear in society due to rise in violence against children mainly rape cases of minor girls, kidnapping, eve-teasing, and chronic enmities among families also potentially restrict girls' education. Although, there is fear among parents regarding their daughters' safety.

Similarly, living in fragile settings like security challenges, disaster effected areas as temporarily displaced persons (TDPs), or otherwise in vulnerable circumstances, due to lack of access to services and infrastructure, fear and insecurities around, girls' education get badly effected and lead to interrupted schooling. For policymakers and practitioners alike, understanding and being able to address this nexus between girls' education and fragile settings is crucial.

Lack of Role Model

Besides, *students' role model* significantly contributes to girls' education. Girls' own interests could be invoked through building role models in their minds. Then they can stress their parents to send their daughters for higher education. Besides, role modeling is not only limited to students, but it is also equally important for parents, and teachers as well. As role models are usually constructed by parents and teachers to idealize people with some real life achievements. Therefore, constructing role models for students and parents could encourage them to continue their education.

Summary of key barriers emanated from the research are:

Based on the literature review, available data review and the responses of the research respondents, following are the key barriers which have been identified as influencing key factors contributing into girls drop out and affecting their participation at secondary school education.

Socio-cultural Factors

- 1) Constraints related to patriarchal socio norms and culture in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- 2) Harmful traditional practices and attitudes, which inflict physical, psychological and development damage, e.g. early, child and forced marriages, ghag, swara, male dominancy, son preference, gender discrimination, gender stereotypical roles, social perception about girls' education, domestic responsibilities, and financial contribution by female.
- 3) Traditional division of labor in the home and society.
- 4) Family instability
- 5) Wrong interpretations of religious beliefs that reinforce negative cultural practices in society regarding gender roles and girls' education.
- 6) Differential motivational scope for the male and female child

Community-related barriers

Circumstances

- Poverty and inability to pay education expenses
- Difficult terrain and lack of transportation
- No employment options for girls other than teaching
- No exposure to life outside and no local role models

Norms and Traditions

- Boys are preferred rather than girls for education expenses
- Boys are considered as breadwinners that's why they are focused on to get quality higher education
- Girls are married off at younger age due to certain socio-economic factors
- Household work and domestic responsibilities are preferred rather than education for girls

Perceptions

- Lack of understanding about the broader purpose of education for girls
- Fear that a family will lose community respect if girls leave their homes
- Fear of girls' involvement in culturally inappropriate activities
- Fear of girls being vocal about their rights and challenging patriarchal norms after getting more education

School-related factors

- 1) Inadequate school facilities, especially:
 - Lack of washrooms and sanitation facilities
 - Long distances for reaching to school, exposing them to potential risk and abuse
 - Lack of provisions to allow for easy mobility of persons, especially girls, with disabilities.
 - Negative gender stereotyping in the curriculum, instructional materials, and teaching-learning methodology and assessment systems.
- 2) The insecure environment in and outside school, coupled with the girl's physical, social and psychological conditioning to a docile outlook with very low self-esteem
- 3) Negative/biased teacher attitudes and low quality performance
- 4) The absence of trained guidance and counselling personnel
- 5) Shortage of relevant alternative quality education opportunities and facilities for girls who remain outside school.

Political/Economic/Administrative Factors

- 1) The wider segment of the society is not sensitized to the importance of girls' education and does not fulfill their responsibility for providing a secure environment for female students.
- 2) Not sufficient resources allocation to respond to the particular needs of girls' education.
- 3) Inadequate enforcement of available laws and regulations.
- 4) Limited availability of and access to gender-disaggregated data.
- 5) Poverty constrains the choices available to parents.

Systemic factors

Planning

- Lack of resources where planning department can effective measures to reduce inequality
- Inconsistent data and not using data for learning and understanding

Infrastructure

- Politically influenced distribution of schools
- Inadequate classrooms
- Inadequate secondary schools within reach of communities
- Inadequate school facilities, especially water, toilets, and school supplies

Quality

- Lack of competent skills among teachers on modern teaching techniques
- Less facilities for teachers effecting their quality performance
- Lack of competency and communication skills in teachers to contribute into students' intellectual and development skills

Women's Representation in administrative role

- Inadequate female staff in the Directorate of Education and decision making processes
- Lack of women in higher leadership roles
- Lack of female staff in field monitoring positions

Specific challenges for girls

In general girls and more so adolescent girls in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa strive against huge odds to remain in school. The following are some of the predicaments that girls face in pursuit of education according to qualitative data obtained from FGDs and KIIs.

- Shyness, hesitation and inadequate knowledge on puberty and menstruation. Menstrual cycle makes it difficult for adolescent girls to concentrate hence most of them absent themselves from school during their menstrual periods. Girls usually are not aware of the menstrual hygiene management and the unavailability of the sanitary napkins and cost associated with it makes it further difficult for the girls.
- Child work: in poor families, girls support their families in earning a living, which depend on their employment (domestic violence) to meet their basic needs, including food. As a result, girls in such families are not enrolled in schools and those that are enrolled are frequently absent as they need to generate income for their families to be able to meet basic needs.

Influencers of Girls' Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

In order to map the key influencers within communities in the targeted district who determine and lead change and influential persons and networks engaged with girls' education was an important aspect of the survey. The research found that at the local level two major actors in the decision to enroll and retain girls in school: family heads (predominantly fathers) and religious leaders'. These are authoritative male figures in the household and in the community. Their prioritization by all key informants indicates the relative exclusion of women and girls in decision-making.

It is difficult to disentangle the decision-makers from those who influence the decision-makers through the results of this research (mainly due to design and analysis gaps). However, while fathers and religious leaders are clearly making decisions for on behalf of girls regarding their education, these figures are also cited as critical influencers of decision-makers, suggesting a mutually reinforcing scenario.

At the household level men, especially fathers, thus tend to be dominant in decision-making while women take responsibility for ensuring the execution of those decisions. Men control households, deciding which children attend school and the level each child can attain. In nuclear or extended households, older males take precedent over younger males. Women's ability to make their own decisions about factors affecting their lives is a key element of empowerment. This empowerment is significantly lacking for many married women in the targeted districts.

The key informants reflect that mother in laws tend to have a stronger voice in decision-making. Once a girl is married and joins her husband's family, evidence suggests that mothers-in-law can become key figures determining girls' lives, including their schooling. Mothers-in-law can veto existing agreements, to which their sons tend to be compelled to agree. Obedience to

parents and elders in all aspects of social life is strongly adhered in our community. The importance of the extended family was highlighted as respondents proactively named grandparents and elder aunts and uncles as influential to household decision-making.

At community level, religious leaders and institutions, traditional leaders, local government representatives and CBOs hold significant sway. Interestingly, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) were believed by key respondents to carry more weight on decisions to enroll and retain girls in school than Parent Teacher Committees (PTCs) or local education authorities. In rural areas, Islamic institutions and leaders influence social interactions and decision-making processes. Islamic leaders determine instructional methods and the curriculum of Qur'anic schools or madrasas. Some girls that drop out of formal primary schooling, continue their Islamic education in a madrasa.

Key Influential social networks

According to the key informants popular and influential social networks operate in isolation of formal education structures. The radio and local channels were identified as the most cited influential social mechanisms.

Literature review and responses of the research reflected that the media, particularly the radio, can play a strong role in influencing individual and community decisions and, for example, advocating for girls' schooling. The radio is the most popular source of information for all key informants, Other media including televisions and newspapers are also well used in rural areas. Newspapers were more common sources of information and influence among urban residents.

Many other social centers are sources of information and influence over social issues, including Hujaras, mosques, markets, sports grounds. Which can influence decisions made at the community or household level. Local Government Representatives also resolve local social, economic, health or education debates in collaboration with other influential community members.

In today's era, social media has become one of the most influential source of information and knowledge both in rural and urban settings. The respondents of the research and literature review reflects that use of different social media channels have greater impact in raising awareness and visibility for certain issues in relation to girls education by using various tools sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Tumblr offer, such as posting, liking, sharing info, news and photos, reblogging, commenting and sparking discussions and debates.

Role of religious leaders and girls' education

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa religion is an influencing factor and has the power to both promote and limit girls' education depending on the interpretation assumed by the majority. The research found that most of the religious leaders have their girls in schools since they appreciate the importance of education and equality of children. It is therefore important to use religious leaders as advocates in awareness creation on the importance of educating girls. According to information obtained through KIIs and FGDs with parents and teachers, authentic understanding of religion is believed to be promoting education of girls.

Mitigation Factors identified by research respondents

Respondents were requested to indicate their opinion on what should be done to ensure girls in school fully participate in education and complete their secondary education. The respondents indicated that creating awareness on the importance of education, provision of adequate learning materials, providing adequate sanitary facilities including sanitary napkins, organization of mentorship forums by female role models and monetary incentives are the top five mitigation factors that can ensure girls in school fully participate in education.

Key informants also reflected that community must identify and help the girls in need as the community has the responsibility for guiding and counselling these girls. Because the child marriage rates in the community is high which causes drop out. Therefore, the community should play a role in bringing these girls back to schools. For this to happen, the key informants recommend civic education to community on the importance of educating girls and parents who will go against the requirements, strict measures be taken against them to ensure that they take their girls to school. The community should also work hand in hand with the school administration.

Some informants suggested that young female role models from the same or other communities and districts should also be invited to come and mentor the girls in the community in order to boost their morale and see the importance of education in life. International and national institutions or NGOs should also sponsor bright girls to continue with their studies so as to give the rest of the girls in the community female role models that they can emulate. Key informants also emphasized on the role on the potential role of religious leaders in promoting girls' education.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

In general, girls and more so adolescent girls in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa strive against huge challenges to remain in school. The transition from primary to secondary education is the key to gain the knowledge and skills needed to live a meaningful life. On the other hand, the aforementioned barriers singularly or jointly strangle the opportunity for girls to get an education.

The factors that cause some girls to stop attending schools fall into two categories; push out effects related to poor school quality and the fall out effects of poverty, family and social pressures. These forces are most certainly at play in rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where poverty, early marriage and social attitudes towards women and non-conducive school environment are among the reasons why girls main stop attending during the secondary cycle.

Some of the recommended measures to improve enrolment and retention of girls include establishment of an enabling environment for girls, training of teachers, financial aid to school girls, awareness raising on the importance of educating girls, building confidence of girls in schools, support to education management, provision of incentives for school going girls and their families as well as preventing violence in schools.

Girls' participation and success in secondary education depend on decisions made by families, schools, and at the policy level by government. This study supports the notion that relative poverty and the conditions that put some girls relatively more at-risk than others are crucial to understanding the obstacles that girls face in secondary school. While poverty is widespread in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, some families are abler to keep their daughters in school. The stakeholders who participated in this study link this discrepancy to family conditions such as parental education and socio-economic status. The limitations caused by illiteracy and poverty are made worse in a system where many students have a poor foundation of primary education and can only succeed in school if they receive – and are able to afford - private tutoring.

The girls who participated in this study demonstrate that combination of both school and family processes create complex interactions. It is also important to consider this policy recommendation in the context of a larger system of improvements. Demand-side considerations such as family characteristics are crucial, but so too are enhancements to the supply of education.

There is wide ranging, intertwined set of complex issues involving multiple stakeholders at different levels influencing girls' secondary education. The results of the focus group discussions, case studies analysis, literature review, available data and in-depth interviews with all the stakeholders reflect that the issues regarding the barriers to girls' education are very complicated. There are multiple facets to each issue and each requires policy solutions to improve the status of girls' education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The interconnected nature of these issues demands that we push forward integrated policy solutions to mitigate these impediments to girls' education and improve the situation on the ground. In some places the development policies seem to be effective, however the scale and the scope of the challenge require a much broader and integrated approach.

Nothing can replace the importance of good quality service delivery in the education sector. Good teachers, administrators, and staff tend to attract more and better students. Similarly, investments in safe building infrastructure, improving access, classrooms, laboratories, libraries and playgrounds incentivize enrollment and retention. The data indicates that good quality education in itself is a major incentive, because the interviewed girls have aspirations of pursuing education and employment to better their living standards. Providing basic facilities like clean drinking water, furniture, electricity, fans, heaters, hygienic restrooms, clean toilets, menstrual hygiene management, safe travel etc. are likely to improve both enrollment and retention. However, unfortunately the lack of consistent provision of these basics is a major challenge that continues to serve as a major impediment to girls from receiving quality education in government schools.

Another major barrier for girls' education is the 'safety' issue. The school locations and the travel to the school are often not perceived to be safe for girls, by their parents. Terrorism, bad law and order situation, and other conflicts can potentially fuel these perceptions, making parents' concerned for their daughters' lives. Needless to say, safety is also a matter of perception, and if the government is doing good work, it needs to communicate it better with the parents to ensure that girls feel safe in attending school.

Poverty is another major barrier to girls' education as indicated by the majority of the parents interviewed. In situations where people have trouble being able to feed and clothe them, education becomes a lesser priority. Buying uniforms and stationery is expensive and poverty prevents some parents from being able to afford these items. The government's policy to address this by providing free education and books up till tenth grade along with stipend per month to the secondary school going girls has shown to increase enrollment and retention. because in their opinion the major dropout occurs at the secondary level.

The research respondents did find a positive impact of incentives for parents (cash, books, uniform and stationary) on enrollment and retention, indicating that poverty is a major impediment and policies addresses poverty, can improve the state of girls' education in KP.

The research also reflects that uneducated parents are less likely to send their daughters to school and also prefer earlier marriages. It was also observed by all stakeholders that there were segments of the community, who did not agree with girls' education, as it prevented girls from being 'useful' in their households in the traditional sense. Some respondents of the research suggested that the cultural and situational barriers are major impediments to girls from accessing education.

Secondary education was never given priority in allocation of funds for development schemes as compared to primary education and, therefore, expansion at the secondary level was limited due to which adequate access was not available to girls at the secondary education level. In 2019, government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has shown increased focus on girls secondary education and in an unprecedented move, allocated 70% of its educational budget on girls education which includes various development schemes related to girls secondary education. Standardization and establishment of secondary schools is one of the key government priority in Annual Development Budget 2019-2020.

The study concludes that diversity of the findings requires policy actions, which has to be integrated at all levels of service delivery, and should provide overarching solution to all major stakeholders, while ensuring enough space on ground adjustments.

Recommendations:

The study suggests the following policy recommendations for the improvement of girls' education at the secondary level mainly in a conservative society.

- Increase expenditure on education in line with UNESCO recommended levels i:e 20% of total budget to be allocated for education, is needed to fulfill obligations related to the right to education and promote girl's education.
- Ensure allocation of 6% of total GDP of Pakistan towards education and improves the utilization of allocated development funds every year.
- Strengthen effective oversight and evaluation of education systems' including for government, private and religious schools progress toward achieving parity between girls and boys and universal primary and secondary education for all children without any gender discrimination
- Build capacity of institutions on developing accurate data management systems on girls' education, monitoring enrolment and attendance by girls, and setting targets in each province.
- Overall budget allocation both developmental and recurring may be increased for secondary education with a special focus on girls' education.
- Girls education including primary, secondary and higher education should be a priority of government (federal and provincial) in budget, in regard to construction and rehabilitation of schools, training and recruitment of adequate number of female teachers, and provision of missing facilities, to address the imbalance between the participation of girls and boys in education at all levels.
- To promote girls' education at grass root level, education stakeholders should carry out physical and digital campaigns including mass media programs like television, radio programs and social media campaigns to educate and discourage the bad socio-cultural practices and negative perceptions in the community that effect and deteriorate girls' education.

- Provide free or affordable transportation services for students especially girls who travel long distances or through difficult environments to get to a school.
- To increase the attendance and retention in schools, financial and supportive incentives should be provided to girls from poor families through scholarships, stipends, food distribution, uniform and stationery support, or meal programs and other.
- Innovative approaches are required to address the issue of access to education and the question of sustainable improvement in the quality, governance and management of the education system.
- Reform education with provisions of all basic facilities and needed school supplies to all students, including notebooks pens, pencils, and a book bag, providing uniforms at no or very low cost to students so that every student can have an access to quality education without any financial hurdle.
- Enhance teachers' quality performance and competency providing them periodic trainings and workshops on modern teaching techniques and skills building, communication and counselling skills to contribute into girls' intellectual and social development.
- Religious, tradition and community leaders should be mobilized and engaged to play their role in promoting girls education at community level. They have power and influence to help unlock challenges and remove barriers to girls and women's education by bringing every other key decision-maker on board. Religious, community and traditional leaders can engage and influence families, communities, parliamentarians and decision-makers in communities.
- Civil society, by bringing together religious and traditional leaders through a constructive dialogue, can contribute to sustainable solutions to girls accessing and staying in school, and to promote best practices on girls and women's education and empowerment with communities and implement innovative approaches and cultural transformation, in particular increase the completion rates of girls at all levels of education.
- Adopt mechanisms to ensure all schools regularly monitor students who are out of school for prolonged periods of time or drop out of school altogether and reach out to determine the reasons for non-attendance and seek to re-engage the student in school.
- To ensure safety of girls, introduce mechanisms and engage school administration to work with police in the area of schools to identify locations where girls walking to school can potentially be targeted of harassment or other incidents and enlist police and community leaders in preventing such threats to their safety and taking quick action when girls encounter them.

- Provision of guidance and counseling for the girls to enable them make informed decisions as regards their education.
- Formation of good government policy that lead to affirmative action for the girls in terms of admission to secondary schools and other institution of higher learning.
- Targeting boys and men to be a part of discussions about cultural and societal practices which hinder girls' participation in education.
- All public and private schools should develop their security plans in consultation with students and parents, with each plan for a mixed or girls' school giving special attention to security issues of concern to girls.
- Child marriage is one of the key cause and consequence of girls' drop out. Government should make legislation to prevent early age marriages by the standardization of legal age of marriage to 18 years for both sexes.
- There should be mechanisms which permits and encourages young married student/girl to continue her studies, even including during pregnancy and if they have children, and schools should where possible provide childcare assistance.
- Expand access to secondary and high school for girls through the government education system, including establishment of new secondary schools and colleges and their standardization, where possible, adding additional grades to existing schools.
- Providing economic incentives to the students may encourage the parents to send their children to school and may help in reducing the dropout ratio.
- Incentives for school going girls in the form of provision of school uniform, shoes, books, stationery and bags should be made to enable them continue their study without any financial hurdle. Equally incentives for families with girls in school would increase enrolment and retention of girls in schools.
- To improve the quality performance of teachers, there should be periodic teachers training which must also include mandatory trainings on alternative forms of class management and teacher discipline. Teachers should be adequately trained in positive forms of class management, and must be provided with sufficient materials and tools to adequately manage large classrooms.
- Local government system is helpful in promoting and monitoring education in the country. Local government bodies should be engaged in allocation of and monitoring the spending of the funds for education on a need basis by the locality.
- Develop a phased plan to achieve Sustainable Development Goal target 4.1, by 2030 ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education.

- Gradually roll out compulsory education across the country, including through public awareness strategies, plans for engaging community leaders, and systems for identifying and engaging out-of-school children and their families.
- Strengthen merit based appointments through fair and systemic recruitment tests and invest in continued professional development programs designed to help teachers improve their teaching techniques.
- Ensure equitable approach to resource allocation towards girls' education . Allocate more financial and other resources towards girls' education to ensure gender parity in education system and improve access to quality education for girls.
- Continue to strengthen Independent Monitoring Unit (IMU) and other such interventions and invest more in monitoring and evaluation of teachers, students and administrators within education sector in KP.
- To enhance the interest of students in education, encourage and support decoration of classrooms with chart papers and posters to make the environment more educationally productive. Investment should be made in maintaining and building private functioning toilets for girls in order to facilitate menstrual hygiene management at schools with basic facilities for waste disposal.
- Nutrition, medicine and other incentive based programs encourage poor families to send their daughters to school. Depending on the poverty indicators of an area, such programs should be piloted case-by-case basis.
- Governments should continue and strengthen more enrollments walks, campaigns and other similar activities province wide to promote girls' education at community level.
- There is a need to engage community influencers actors in campaign to maximize the effect of campaign and get successful results in context of more enrollment of girls and increased interest of parents.
- Motivational or inspirational stories of young educated girls who are contributing into different sectors in Pakistan, should be shared within community, and it can be of great benefit to enhance hope, encouragement and to improve positive perceptions about educating girl child at grass root level.
- Sensitization of parents especially mothers through advocacy strategies such as mother forums or school mother clubs where they will be engaged on ways to retain girls in schools and how to reach more mothers and general public on importance of girl child education and enrolment drive aimed at enrolling more girls in schools. This could be done through programmes that will involve or encourage parents to participate in school activities.

- Religious leaders and parents are authoritative decision-makers and their positive influence and engagement in education can transform girls' lives
- Different media platforms should be utilized for awareness creation on the significance of girls' education e.g. sensitizing parents through radio programmes as well as activities that promote awareness creation on the importance of girl child education. Such advocacy platforms should utilize resource persons such as religious scholars who can clarify and eradicate misconception that might be rooted in wrong religious beliefs.
- Strategic campaigns by the civil society in collaboration with the education department should be carried out to highlight the benefits and socio-economic effects of girls' secondary education and its impact the development.
- It is often discovered that although government is taking remarkable initiatives to improve the education system and state pf education for boys and girls both, the enrollment does not meet its direct because community is not aware of the improvements, therefore government must advertise their strengths and progress to attract people's attention towards girls' education.
- In order to retain girls in schools there is need to have a gender sensitive learning environment with adequate WASH facilities. On the same token schools should provide guiding and counselling services for adolescent girls as well as sanitary napkins so as to make them comfortable during menstrual period. Equally school feeding programme to be initiated with a view to provide school meals to children to relieve hunger and encourage enrolment, especially in primary schools.
- Girls can be powerful advocates for their own rights and their voices should be heard.

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Questions of Semi-structured Interview for Secondary Schools Girls Dropout in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

1. Does your daughter have a role model in the family (e.g. cousins or uncle and aunts) or in the neighborhood who is educated and who is a source of inspiration for her?
2. Are early marriages a reason for drop out of girls from Secondary Education?
3. Is local culture (Pashtun Culture) a hindrance to girls' education?
4. Can co-education be a reason for the early dropout of female students?
5. Is the teachers' attitude a factor in girls dropout at secondary school?
6. Do the local community/ neighborhood/religious leaders support girls' education?
7. What kind of political support do you expect for girls' education?
8. Do you think that the present wave of fundamentalism/conflict/terrorism will affect girls' education in your region? For instance, the destruction of girls' schools in Swat, Mingora and other areas or religious intolerance towards minorities or suicide bomb blasts, etc.
9. Do you think the long distances from home affect girl's education?
10. Are you satisfied with your school's teachers?
11. Do you agree that nondiscrimination between a girl child and boy child by parents give confidence to girl for her education? Is such discrimination still exist in families in your family or locality?
12. Does the parent view about girl education is important?
13. Does poverty lead to drop out of girls' education?
14. Is security an issue while going to school?
15. Does your school have labs, Playground, and other facilities, is there any dropout case due to the non-availability of such facilities?
16. is Menstrual Hygiene Management in schools a challenge that hinders girl's participation in education?

Codes of Sampled Groups

T teacher **S** student **P** parent **Sa** Social Activist **M** Educational Managers **R** Researcher

“Secondary education has far stronger positive effects on women's own outcomes than primary education does - their health and well-being, position in family and society, economic opportunities and political participation improves. It also serves as a mean to potentially empower girls and raise a person's socio-economic status. It allows individuals to expand their choice and to improve personal and work-related skills. Increased availability of secondary education significantly affects the demand for and completion of girls' primary education. At the same time it is crucial to promote gender equality and empower girls and women.”



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