

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FEMALE EDUCATION IN BALOCHISTAN, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

A study was carried out to analyze the socio-economic force of education (especially female) in Balochistan during March to June 2011. A total of three hundred house hold (10 households from 10 villages in each district) randomly selected from three districts Kalat, Mastung and Sibi of Balochistan province. A well planned questionnaire was developed to collect the information on such as literacy rate, inter and intra-household responsibilities, and socio-economic conditions of women. The findings regarding family income per month illustrated significant relationship between income and education among three districts. Further noted that educated/skilled (male and female) respondent were earned higher income from job as compared to illiterate/unskilled and majority (81.4%) of the respondents were well aware of the importance of education. Significantly higher number of families lived in joint family system 158 (52.7%) as compared to single system 142 (47.3%) and results showed significant association in difficulties faced by female getting education. It is noted that discrimination was perceived in gender and need to be addressed for development of the province and country. Female education is critical for the economic growth of the family and society. For this purpose better educational facilities should be provided for women. Gender disparity has yet been the most significant problem contributing poor female literacy in rural areas of Balochistan in comparison to that of urban areas.

INTRODUCTION

Women constitute almost half of the population of the world. Education for women is the best way to improve the health, nutrition and economic status of a household that constitute a micro unit of a nation economy. In this context, it can be argued that lack of woman education can be an impediment to the country's economic development. In Pakistan, women achieve far less education than of men. The changes in the policies and

infrastructural supports on primary, secondary and higher education reflect the initiatives of the Government towards women education (Javed *et.al.*, 2008).

Female participation rates are generally lower than for males and vary widely across countries, but are likely to increase with higher levels of educational attainment. However, there is evidence that female education, especially in developing countries, also produces social gains by reducing fertility and infant mortality, improving family and child health, increasing life expectancy, and increasing the quantity and quality of children's educational attainment. Hence, even if female participation rates are lower than for males, the effects of improved female education on general levels of education, health status and population growth can boost measured productivity growth indirectly (Subbarao and Raney, 1995). Education in Pakistan has and still suffers from countless issues including low levels of public spending (supply side inadequacies and under investment), poverty, cultural constraints and acute regional and gender inequalities in the budgetary allocations to education. Gender gaps in urban education are almost non-existent but they are wider in rural education since gender disparities are also higher in rural areas. The poor condition of public schools in Pakistan has a negative effect on the overall enrolment rates (Din and Khan 2008).

Education and in particular schooling, was conceived as one of the necessary preconditions of development, but in the remote areas, particularly in rural remote areas of Balochistan, the concept of education for females is very amusing. Perhaps the people associated with ancient tribes mostly consider a female as an entertaining element for males having no sense of equal participation in the family affairs. In this situation, the female has lost her confidence and she has to work even against her will (Javed *et.al.*, 2008).

Education of women is the most effective channel for reducing the inequalities between men and women and ensuring the maximum participation of women in the developmental process. Male and female are integral part of each other in life; female participates with her partner in living, passing life and struggling for it; shares with him in the daily life activities, sorrows and pleasures of life (Khan and Usmani 2005).

Due to poor development strategies for remote areas of Balochistan, the educational and socio-economic scenarios do not coincide with other areas of the country. No existence of female education in most of the areas and hence, female class of human being is mostly illiterate and undeveloped. Moreover than half of the population based on females is man guided against her will. It is high time to conduct research to know the ground realities regarding level of female education and the existed potentials to this effect, so that policies are devised at grass root level and to accelerate the females for active and effective participation in the social, economical, political and national affairs. Thus, such association cannot be effective and general society cannot progress when a woman does not participate dedicatedly in social as well as economic affairs of a family. The present study was carried out to analyze female education and its impacts on socio-economic conditions in Balochistan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the current study sample comprises of a total of three hundred households (10 households from 10 villages in each district) randomly selected from three districts Kalat, Mastung and Sibi of Balochistan province. A well planned questionnaire was developed to collect the information during March to June 2011 and participatory research approach (PRA) technique was applied. During base line study of the focus groups, open-ended questions with pictorial and sound recording will be used to record opinions on various study-related parameters, such as literacy rate, inter and intra-household responsibilities, and record the socio-economic conditions of women in Balochistan. The data collected was subjected to statistical analysis using ANOVA and Chi square test by using computer software SPSS-16.

RESULTS

Age of Elder in a House Hold: The age of the elder of the household indicated insignificant ($P > 0.05$) relationship between districts, however, they were numerically varied. It was noted that maximum age group persons (22 – 28 years) were in-charge of the house hold in districts Kalat (42%) and Sibi (41), while minimum frequency observed in age group (≤ 21 years) in Kalat (7.0%).

Statistically non-significant difference ($P < 0.005$) was observed among family size in relation to district wise distribution of respondents (Table 1).

Effect of Adult Males and Females: The influence of adult male and female household of studied districts were observed insignificant ($P > 0.05$), respectively. The highest frequency of (≤ 1) adult males was observed in (33%) Kalat and Sibi and followed by Mastung district (32%) and lowest number of (4+) adult males members as (17.0%), in Mastung district as compared to rest of the districts. The highest frequency of (2 – 2) female adult members observed in (30%) Mastung followed by district Kalat (5+) 28% and Sibi districts (4 – 4 and ≤ 1) 22%. Statistically non significant difference ($P > 0.05$) was observed females adult members in relation to district. Statistically significant difference ($P < 0.05$), was observed among male and female child in a house hold in association to district wise distribution of respondents. The overall highest frequency of (2-2) male and female child was seen in (92%) and (82%), respectively among treatment groups. Approximately 73.70% of the respondents were female and 26.3% were male.

Education Status: The result of education status in the districts indicated a non significance association ($P > 0.05$). Most of the respondents were Illiterate (no formal education) 78(26.0%) and lowest was observed post graduate 3(1.0%) respondents.

Family Income/Month: The findings of family income per month showed that there were significance relationship between income and education among three districts. It is further noted that educated/skilled (male and female) respondent earned monthly income form job and business Rs 14000(43%) as compared to illiterate/unskilled received only Rs 3500(57%).

Family System: It is reflected from the results that significantly ($P < 0.05$) higher number of families lived in joint family system 158 (52.7%) as compared to single system 142 (47.3%). The effect of gender groups of respondents in three districts Mastung, Kalat and Sibi were observed non-significant. However, results indicated numerical variation between female and male gender.

Table-1

FAMILY STRUCTURE/FEATURE OF RESPONDENTS OF THREE DISTRICTS OF BALOCHISTAN.

Trait	Classification	Districts			Total (%)
Age of elder in house hold ($X^2=16.98$, $P=0.009$)*		Mastung	Kalat	Sibi	
	≤ 21	13	8	7	28 (9.3%)
	22 – 28	27	42	41	110 (36.7%)
	29 – 35	26	31	26	83 (27.7%)
	>36	34	19	26	79 (26.3%)
Marital Status ($X^2=5.45$; $P=0.487$)	Single	28	31	23	82 (27.3%)
	Married	65	66	73	204 (68.0%)
	Widow	6	2	2	10 (3.3%)
	Divorced	1	1	2	4 (1.3%)
Adult male in Family ($X^2=7.018$, $P=0.070$)	≤ 1	32	33	33	98 (32.7%)
	2 – 2	24	18	21	63 (21.0%)
	3 – 3	27	18	24	69 (23.0%)
	4+	17	31	22	70 (23.3%)
Adult Female in Family ($X^2=10.169$, $P=0.253$).	≤ 1	21	18	22	61 (20.3%)
	2 – 2	30	17	16	63 (21.0%)
	3 – 3	15	17	19	51 (17.0%)
	4 – 4	17	20	22	59 (19.7%)
	5+	17	28	21	66 (22.0%)
Education Status ($X^2=15.508$; $P=0.344$)	Illiterate	18	31	29	78 (26.0%)
	Primary	21	17	20	58 (19.3%)
	Middle	6	2	3	11 (3.7%)
	Matriculation	26	14	18	58 (19.3%)
	Intermediate	20	21	17	58 (19.3%)
	Graduate	5	11	7	23 (7.7%)
	Post graduate	0	1	2	3 (1.0%)
	Madressa	4	3	4	11 (3.7%)
Family income/month (Rs) ($X^2=11.121$; $P=0.033$)*	Illiterate/ Unskilled	3500(58)	3600(54)	3500(61)	3500(57%)
	Educated/ Skilled	15000(42)	13000(46)	14000(39)	14000(43%)
Family system ($X^2=6.525$, $P=0.038$)*	Joint	44	62	52	158 (52.7%)
	Single	56	38	48	142 (47.3%)

¹Chi square values;

* Significantly different at ($P<0.05$).

Importance of Education: The results of the awareness regarding the education showed that majority (81.4%) of the respondents were well aware of the importance of education. There

was no significant association among district and classification ($P>0.05$).

Participants in General Election: The response of participants towards general election and their participation indicated that most (72.7%) women are provided vehicle provided by either family head or by the favorite candidate to reach polling station to cast their vote. There was a significant association in the districts and source of transport used during election ($P<0.05$).

Social Activities: The respond of accomplice towards participation in social activities showed that majority (64.7%) of women were not taking interest in participation in social activities, however (35.3%) woman were involved in social activities. There was a significant association in the districts and female participation in social activities ($P<0.05$).

Problem Facing Female in Getting Education: The results regarding difficulties facing female in getting education in the target area of the districts revealed that (37.3%) of the responded were not allowed by the family elders. While least number of respondents indicated distance of school from the house was the hurdle in getting education. There was a significant association in the districts and difficulties facing by female in getting education ($P<0.05$).

Gender Discrimination: The result of the data regarding discrimination between sexes the respondents (199) 66.0% indicated that such behavior prevail in the stratum of the target area of the districts. The analysis of the data revealed significant association ($P<0.05$) among district and parameters.

Source of Information: The source of information for the respondents was heterogeneous and number of different media sources was indicated by the respondents. Top most source of information was the TV (51.3%) followed by radio (41.7%). The results revealed significant association among districts and source of information ($P<0.05$).

Table-2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PARAMETERS OF DISTRICTS BALOCHISTAN

Trait	Classification	Districts			Total
		Mastung	Kalat	Sibi	
Perceive benefits of education ($X^2=1.391$; $P=0.499$)	Yes	68	79	72	219(81.4)%
	No	19	14	17	50(18.6)%
Female response (how do they vote?) ($X^2= 18.428$; $P=0.001$)*	Traveling by vehicle	47	51	54	152(72.7)%
	On foot	6	33	15	54(25.8)%
	Using transport (fare)	0	3	0	3(1.4)%
Participation in social activities ($X^2= 36.97$; $P=0.000$)*	Yes	14	55	37	106(35.3)%
	No	86	45	63	194(64.7)%
Problems in getting education ($X^2= 9.363$; $P=0.013$)*	Not allowed by family elders	48	24	40	112(37.3)%
	Un availability of school	6	18	21	45(15.0)%
	Distance of school	12	6	6	24(8.0)%
	Transportation	10	20	20	50(16.6)%
	Religious leader	18	4	10	32(10.7)%
	No problem	6	28	3	37(12.3)%
Discrimination in comparison to male member of the family. ($X^2= 59.77$; $P=0.000$)*	No discrimination	33	30	38	101(34.0)%
	Attitude	19	5	17	41(13.7)%
	Education	33	54	30	117(39.0)%
	Dietary	1	2	3	6(2.0)%
	Work	5	0	3	8(2.7)%
	Dress	0	1	1	2(0.7)%
	Mobility	4	4	3	11(3.7)%
	Property	2	3	4	9(3.0)%
	Land management	3	1	1	5(1.7)%
Source of information ($X^2= 32.075$; $P=0.000$)*	Radio	22	56	47	125(41.7)%
	TV	71	38	45	154(51.3)%
	Newspaper	0	3	1	4(1.3)%
	Neighbor	5	2	5	12(4.0)%
	Family head	2	1	2	5(1.7)%

¹Chi square values; * Significantly different at ($P<0.05$)

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study regarding education status, family income per month, importance of education, difficulties facing female in getting education, family system, and decision-making power are in the agreement with results of many researchers (Rizvi, 1980; Begum, 2002; Sandhu *et.al.*, 2005; Parveen, 2008; Din and Khan 2008)

Din and Khan (2008) reported that family income dependent on jobs and business that is possible due education (both sex) and skilled work. They further added that female education is essential for the economic development of the family and society. For this purpose better educational facilities should be provided for women. Moreover, promotion of research on the conditions and problems of women is essential. Khan and Usmani, (2005) reported that employment opportunities should be provided for women by establishing cottage and agro-based industries. Education empowers people, strengthens their abilities to meet their needs and increase their productivity and potential to improve their quality of life.

The education system in Pakistan has to meet the basic learning needs of our society emphasizing basic literacy and life skills, increasing access and completion of quality education, address gender problem, geographical and structural disparities, and enhance the efficiency of education governance. The overall literacy rate is 56% (69% for male and 44% for female) in 2010-11 compared to 55% (67% for male and 42% for female) in 2009-2010. Literacy remains higher in urban areas (71%) than in rural areas (49%) and more in men (69%) compared to women (44%). When analyzed provincially, literacy rate in Punjab stood at 59 % followed by Sindh (56%), Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa (KPK) (49%) and Balochistan at 46%. The literacy rate of Punjab and Balochistan has improved considerably during 2009-2010 to 2010-11. Province-wise school attendance (age 10 and above) for 2007-08 as against 2005-06 shows Punjab to be on the top (62% Vs 59%) followed by Sindh (58% Vs 56%), Balochistan (42 % Vs 34 %) and (KPK) (51% Vs 51 %) to be at the lowest level (Government of Pakistan, 2011).

Zahid *et.al.* (2009) also supported the present study who documented that a variety of socioeconomic and socio-

demographic characteristics lead to perception of health, among individuals, in a varied manner. Among several socio-economic variables, schooling, gender, occupation, economic status and provinces are the significant determinants of self reported health. However, schooling (education) seems to have the most significant impact on health status. It is evident that individuals with higher education level tend to have better health status than a person with lower levels of education. There is also evidence of gender being an important determinant of health in Pakistan.

The result regarding difficulties faced by female respondent during getting education was not allowed by the family elders are supported by Hill and King (2004) and Javed *et.al.*, (2008). They further added that impact of education on socio-economic status of rural and urban life. Empirical results demonstrated that economic growth of any economy not only depends on physical capital but also on the human capital. Education (especially female) is most the important and valuable factor on overall environment of society, but primary education has fewer effects on the behavior of residents.

Begum (2002) reported that low female literacy rate significantly results in poor mental and physical health of school going children (boys and girls) because of poor or even no education of their mothers, their poor health status and low standard of living as well as their lack of recognition of social and legal rights.

The findings of the present study regarding socioeconomic status, educational facilities, discrimination between gender and economic condition were supported by Geeta, (2002) and David (2004), who reported that socioeconomic status of women was worse because of low literacy rate, lack of educational facilities, awareness, poor economic condition, lack of skills and insecure environment of the society for working women. Men have more decision-making power than the women regarding family, choice of selecting male partners and household expenditure. In certain cases only elderly women were consulted for opinion in decision-making. It indicated that women were culturally constrained to remain at home and care for their children. Majority of the sampled respondents were in favor of getting formal education but only few of them were able to take independent decision in getting formal

education. Independent decisions about family type, level of income, landholding and level of literacy of the sampled respondents had no significant effect on the living standard. However, the results of discriminatory behavior regarding gender (towards female) of the present study were in agreement with Geeta (2002). It is suggested that female education is imperative for the economic growth of the family and society.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Education empowers people, strengthens their abilities to meet their needs and increase their productivity and potential to improve their quality of life. Family income is dependent on jobs and business that is possible due education (both sex) and skilled work. Female education is vital for the economic development of the family and society. For this purpose better educational facilities should be provided for women. Gender disparity has yet been the most significant problem contributing poor female literacy in rural areas of Balochistan in comparison to that of urban areas. Inter and intra-household activities performed by women significantly constrain women's access to education. The advanced/higher levels of education of mothers (or even fathers) significantly affect their role in sending their girl children to schools. The varying advanced levels of female and male education significantly improve the socio-economic status of the households in Balochistan province.

Low female literacy rate significantly results in poor mental and physical health of school going children because of poor or even no education of their mothers, their poor health status and low standard of living as well as their lack of recognition of social and legal rights. There are various other cultural (tribal) and religious constraints, other than poor status of female education, significantly limiting the scope of sustainable female education development in Balochistan province. Although female education has been given relatively greater attention during the last decade nationwide, but the fruits of the Government and NGOs efforts could not reach the rural areas of Balochistan province due mainly to a variety of social, cultural and religious factors.

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