SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS FACED BY GIRLS REGARDING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN MIANWALI (PAKISTAN)

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ABSTRACT
The present study was aimed to explore the socio-cultural constraints that limit girls' access to higher education in Mianwali. Quantitative technique was used and 120 girls were taken as a sample and their education was Intermediate (F.A) to Graduation (B.A). Age range of respondents were 18-30 years. Along with this the study was also aimed to investigate the family structure, parent's education, family's income and their relation with the socio-cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education. The present study was conducted in two phases. First phase of the study was aimed to develop the questionnaire and phase II to testing of hypothesis and fulfillment of objectives. Self designed questionnaire consisting of 31 items, divided in two sub categories supply and demand constraints (individual, family, society) was used for data collection. Snow ball sampling technique was used and the value of Alpha Reliability coefficient was 723. Hypothesis was supported by findings that girls in Mianwali are behind in higher education due to the socio cultural constraints such as the lack of institutions, the lack of female teachers, the preference of boys and the traditional role of women. The findings indicate that there is no significant effect of type of family, parent's education, family's income and socio-cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education.

Introduction

Education is an action or a procedure which converts the behavior of a person from instinctive behavior to human behavior (Taneja, 1997). Through education the values, knowledge, skills and manners can be passed over to the next generations. Education is not only important for the development of the human being's future but it is also important for the social and economic progress as without education no nation can develop (Rao & Dutt, 2003). It increases the person's action and as a result creates expert who is able to lead the economy structure which is helpful for the sustainable economic development (Rasool, 2007).

The formal education in Pakistan is divided into five levels. First of which is "Primary" that consists of the grades from one through five. The second is "Middle" that consists of grades from six through eight. Third level is known as "Secondary" with grades of ninth and tenth known as matriculation, leading to the Secondary School Certificate. The fourth stage is known as "Intermediate" consisting grades of eleven and twelve, leading to a Higher Secondary School Certificate; and the last level of education in Pakistan is that of "University programs" leading to graduate and advanced degrees. According to the report of World Bank, (1996) higher education refers to all post-secondary education. Higher education is defined as the degree in higher national diploma, national certificate and higher national certificate. Higher education broadly refers to all post-secondary education but not limited to universities.

Higher education is viewed as a capital investment and has a great importance for the economic and social development of the country. Up till now women have little chance for obtaining higher education (Government of Pakistan, 2000). A huge number of young people drop out of the education system during the first ten years of schooling and a very small proportion goes to tertiary education; the majority pursues undergraduate education at the colleges of arts and sciences. In specialized colleges and universities, women's enrolment is substantially lower than that of men. Women represent only 25% of the total enrolment in specialized colleges in 1990-91 which stay unaffected till 1999-2000 (Qureshi, Rrieya, 2007).

According to the World Bank group report, (1996) there are different socio-cultural constraints towards girls' education at different levels, which can be categorized into two major sections; first of which is known as demand constraints and second is known as supply constraints that are closely interwoven. Demand constraints mean all the expectations from the education system and the society as a whole along with the government sector in it. Demand constraints consist of three sections i.e. individual level, family level and community level. Whereas supply constraints are the lacking and shortcomings in education system from the state or government side i.e. they include the list of those facilities that are not provisioned by the state or government towards education section (Haq, 1998). According to Khalid and Mukhtar (2002) for girl's education in

Pakistan different forces are engaged in it like demand as well as supply obstacles such as poverty, inferior position of women in society and her safety measurement. More prominently, there are strong associations of the education sector with other sectors (Hafeez, 2004).

In Pakistan people are not interested to invest their money in girl's education. In Pakistani society work is divided for men and women, public sphere is for men and private for women and the cause of this work separation is due to the perception of honor and Purdah because the honor of the family are linked with the women's behavior (Adetunde & Akensina, (2008).For that reason they restrict the women within the four walls. Only less than 3 percent of the age group 17-23 has access to higher education. Women have very limited chances for getting higher education or achieve professional/technical degrees. This is due to the cultural direction of gender roles (Rasool, 2007).

Along this a key feature of patriarchal structures is the social assigning of men as the heads of families. In the absence of other support systems parents prefer to invest more in a son's education, because they are considered most likely to provide some return on their investment. Women suffer additional constraints due to their restricted mobility, lack of control over resources, limited sovereignty and decision-making, and a low level of awareness of their civil rights. There is minimal questioning of the role of the family, community, society, school, education department, and other institutions, in promoting and sustaining stereotyped roles and images of girls and women. Social norms and religion are used to underestimate the need for educating girls, with either religious education, or a few years of schooling, being considered as sufficient for them. Restrictions on girls mobility is one way parents seem to deal with the issue of sexual security, critical in a society which places a high premium on 'honor'. The preference for schools near the homes of the girl students is thus directly related to safety issues and hence the acceptance of informal institutions of teaching (Zafar, 2004). So the girls receive less encouragement for their education therefore precious human resource is spoiled that can play a vital role in the economic and many other important frontiers of life.

In the above literature it becomes quiet visible that a girl faces and goes through many problems in her education in most of the respective societies and these issues are confirmed and authenticated by above mentioned literatures therefore this particular study will provide an opportunity to highlight various socio-cultural constraints that girls face to access higher education. The aim of the present study is to indicate the influence of tradition, socially accepted patterns, the culture and the implications of these with respect to the girl's access to her higher education.

Objectives

To find out the socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education

To find out the relationship between type of family and socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education.

To find out the relationship between parents' education and socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education.

To find out the effect of family income and socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education.

Hypothesis:

Girls face socio- cultural constraints regarding access to higher education.

Operational definitions:

Socio cultural constraints:

In the present study social and cultural constraints refer to limitations or restrictions in a society for any particular activity. The girls face social and cultural constraints in getting higher education due to traditions and customs. It will be measured in terms of scores on socio-cultural constraints questionnaire.

Higher education:

In the present study higher education refers to all post-secondary education. Higher education defined as degree and higher national diploma, national certificate and higher national certificate.

Research design:

This research was conducted in two phases. Phase I was about the development of an instrument which was done by following systematic procedure in which item pool was generated through literature review and focus groups and instrument of 31 items was finalized for tryout after taking opinion from judges. The phase II (Main study) dealt with testing of hypothesis and fulfillment of objectives.

A.Sample:

For current study non-probability sampling technique (snow ball) was used to select the sample. Sample size of main study consisted of 120 girls. Their education level and age ranged from F.A to B.A and 18 to30 years respectively.

B. Instrument:

Instrument termed as SCCQ(socio cultural constraints questionnaire), consisting of 31 items, designed in phase I was used as tool to collect the data from respondents which was consisted of two categories supply (7 items) and demand (individual, family, society) 24 items. These items have five response categories with scoring included 1 ''strongly disagree'' 2 disagree, 3 undecided, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree. The Alpha reliability of questionnaire was .723.

C. Procedure:

Before handing over the questionnaires to the respondents all the participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and asked about their willingness to participate in the research. After handing over the scale, they were asked to read the note carefully and assured the confidentiality of their responses. SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) was used for the analysis of the data.

Results

Table1: The categorization of the percentile ranks (low, undecided and high constraints) and of the corresponding frequencies and percentages of SCCQ (N = 120) is the following

Categories	Percentile	frequencies	percentage
Low	Up to 25th	32	26.4
Medium	below25th to 75th	61	50.7
High	75th& above	27	22.9
Total		120	100

Table 1 present frequencies and percentage of low, medium and high constraints on socio-cultural constraints questionnaire. In total 22.9% of girls scored on high constraints and 26.4% girls scored on low constraints while 50.7% girls faced medium constraints

Table 2: The percentages of five response categories of supply constraints of items of SCCQ (N=120)

No	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The lack of institutions	5	15	5.8	54.2	20
2	The lack of transport	5	12.5	3.3	55.9	23.3
3	The shortage of separate institutes for girls	3.3	21.7	5.8	44.2	25
4	The distance of schools from home	2.5	16.7	2.5	47.5	30.8
5	The lack of female teachers	8.3	24.2	5	49.2	13.3
6	The lack of free curriculum books in schools	3.3	25.8	9.2	45.8	15.8
7	The lack of fee concession	5	18.3	10	45	21.7

Results in table 3 present the percentages of the five response categories on socio cultural constraints questionnaire. The high percentage on agree and strongly agree categories were on item no 2 (79.2), 4 (78.3), 1 (74.2).

Table 3: Percentages of five response categories of individual constraints of items of SCCQ (N=120).

No	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	respondent desire of education	6.7	7.5	8.3	22.5	55
2	permission of education from family	9.2	15.8	9.2	28.3	37.5
3	low income of respondent family	16.7	35.8	5	30.8	11.7
4	sexual harassment	18.3	32.5	6.7	30	12.5
5	purdah restriction in family	17.5	29.2	4.2	30.8	18.3
6	lack of scholarship	17.5	30.8	9.2	40	8.3
7	burden of educational expenditure	11.7	23.3	5	38.3	21.7
8	lack of permission for study in other city	11.7	20.8	5.8	32.5	29.2

Results in table 3 present the percentages of five response categories on socio cultural constraints questionnaire. In demand categories at individual level the high percentage on agree and strongly agree were on item no 1(77.5), 2 (65.8), 8 (61.7).

Table 4: Percentages of five response categories family constraints of items of SCCQ (N=120).

No	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Dependency of women	6.7	20.8	14.2	37.5	20.8
2	Preference of boys education over girls education	13.3	20.8	5.8	35	25
3	Preference of informal education over formal education	8.3	34.2	7.5	36.7	13.3
4	The Concept of honor	10	21.7	9.2	35	24.2
5	lack of awareness regarding importance of education for girls	10	21.7	5.8	47.5	15
6	early marriages of girls	9.2	15.8	3.3	37.5	34.2
7	timing of schools	6.7	11.7	24.2	43.3	14.2
8	responsibility of domestic chores	10.8	20.8	9.2	44.2	15
9	society pressure on family for girls education	10.8	20	8.3	42.5	18.3
10	effect of parents low education	19.2	30	4.2	28.3	18.3

Results in table 4 present percentage of five response categories on socio cultural constraints questionnaire. In demand categories at family level the high percentage on agree and strongly agree on item no 5 (71.7), 4 (62.5), 8 (60.8)

Table 5: Percentages of five response categories of community constraints of items of SCCQ (N=120).

No	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	wrong perception about women education	8.3	15.8	7	4.6	28.3
2	inferior position of women in society	6.7	19.2	9.2	45	20
3	women role of bearing and rearing child	10	17.5	20	46.7	10.8
4	role of religious practitioners	12.5	22.5	15	33.3	16.7
5	feudalism in society	6.7	16.7	12.5	36.7	27.5
6	concept regarding education expenditure on women in society	8.3	16.7	7.5	45	22.5

Results in table 5 present percentage of five response categories on socio cultural constraints questionnaire. In demand categories at community level the high percentage on agree and strongly agree on item no 1 (68.3), 6 (67.5), 2 (65).

Table 6: Mean, standard deviation and t test values on SCC questionnaire (N=120).

Questionnaire	Nuclear family		Joint family		
	M	SD	M	SD	t
	119.8	16.38	121.50	21.16	.66

df = 118, p=n.s

The finding in table 6 presents the differences between nuclear and joint family on socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education. Although there was a slight difference between means but that difference was found to be statistically non- significant (t= .66, df = 118, p=n.s). It reflects that no difference exists between nuclear and joint family regarding girls education.

Table 7: ANOVA shows relationship between father's education and socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education (N=120).

Questionnaire	Illiterate		Under metric		Above metric		
	6		51		63		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F
	116.50	19.86	119.68	19.12	120.21	16.16	.218

df = 2, p= n.s

In table 7 ANOVA was computed to find the relationship between father's education and socio-cultural constraints there is the differences on education basis. The result found to be non significant (*df = 2, p= n.s*). It reflects that there does not exist the relationship between father's education and socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education.

Table 8: ANOVA shows relationship between mother's education and socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education (N=120).

Questionnaire	Illiterate		Under metric		Above metric		
	6		51		63		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F
	118.39	18.62	121.61	16.96	117.75	18.42	.573

df =2, p=n.s

In table 8 ANOVA was computed to find the relationship between mother's education and socio-cultural constraints which found to be non-significant (df =2, p =n.s) It reflects that there is no relationship between mother's education and socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education.

Table 9: ANOVA shows effect of family income and socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education (N=120).

Questionnaire	1000-10,000		11,000-20,000		21,000-above		
	40		48		32		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F
	119.45	19.93	118.72	15.85	123.40	16.89	.737

df =2, p= n.s

In above table ANOVA was computed to find out the effect of family income and socio-cultural constraints there are differences on income basis. The result found to be non-significant (df =2, p = n.s). It reflects that there is no effect of family income and socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education.

Discussion

This study was designed to explore the constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education and impact of demographic variables (type of family, parent's education, family income). The importance of education is quite clear. Education helps men and women claim their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Everybody has the right to education, which has been recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. Girls are less likely to access school, to remain in school or to achieve education. Women's role in society is to look after the kitchen and it creates hurdle for their education.

In order to measure the socio-cultural constraints percentile ranks were computed. Results in table 1 showed frequencies of low, moderate and high scores on socio-cultural constraints questionnaire. In total 26.4 % girls reported low level of socio-cultural constraints, 50.7 % girls reported they face medium level of constraints while 22.9 % girls faced high level of constraints. Along with this response analysis attempt was made to further know in detail that what types of constraints were reported more as compared to others. According to this analysis with reference to supply constraints (see table 2) high scores on agree and strongly agree were on item no 1, 2, 4 which showed that lack of institutions, lack of transport and distance of school are major hurdles for girl's access to higher education. These type of hurdles have also been reported by previous researches also as Jacobs, (1996) that distance of institutions play important role in the girls education and hurdles like long traveling and lack of transport create problems for education of girls, personal security of girls and parent's decisions about permitting their children, their perception of possible threats on their daughter's security on her way to school is a reason of low enrollment and high drop out of girl's from schools (PIHS, 2002) especially in the rural areas where there is lack of good communication system, and in provinces with scattered population because in rural areas girls are not allowed to mix freely with males and to step out of the house without permission because mostly parents in rural areas do not allow their daughters to learn from male teachers and also there is very strong relationship between high enrolment of girls and low dropout rates with the presence of female teachers.

While on the other hand in demand constraints with reference to individual level (see table 3) the high scores on agree and strongly agree were on items no 1, 2, 8 and 7 which indicate that girls have the desire of education but there is shortage of institutions within their city and along this they are not permitted to go out of city for further study. This might be because due to poverty, parents have very limited resources so they want to spend money on their son's education with this perception that they will be supported in their old ages.

With reference to family issues (see table 4) high scores on agree and strongly agree were on items no 4, 5, 8, 1, 3 and 10 which indicate that lack of awareness regarding girl's education, early marriages, preference of boy's education in the family, inflexible timing and societal pressure of not permitting girls for education become hurdle for girls higher education. Similar findings were reported in the previous researches as Sharma, (2006) reported that marriage is one reason because due to marriage girls are unable to continue their formal education as after marriage they are subjected to the desires and approval of their husbands and in-laws which is usually not possible and supportive for their education.

With reference to community issues (see table 5) high scores on agree and strongly agree were on items no 1, 6, 2, 5 and 3 which indicate that perception about girl's education, status of women and the traditional role of women are considered as the constraints for girl's education. Girls and women have a low position in the family, community and society as compared to boys and men. This results in the poor access to all kinds of resources like education, health care and economic. Girls are socialized to serve men in the family and to be submissive to them so their mobility is controlled and reliant on the decisions of the men and seniors in the family. The societal perception about women education and their productive and reproductive roles affect their participation in formal education. Society perceives women as homemakers and child protector therefore any activity that takes them away from such normal schedules is glared upon. As a result women find it difficult to get on further studies (Evans 1995; Compora 2003; Plummer 2004; Przymus 2004). According to the report of UNICEF, (1993) low status of women in Pakistani society is the result of gender inequality in the accessibility of food, health, education and in the employment opportunities because feudal system and socialization process of girls and boys are different, which give priority to boys and they are fed better as compared to girls which influences their contribution and presentation in school.

T-test was computed in order to find out the relationship between type of family and socio-cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education (see table 6).There was difference between mean but there is non significant about type of family and socio cultural

constraints. To analyze the relationship between parent's education and socio cultural constraints regarding access to higher education ANOVA was computed (see table 7, 8). For this three categories were made on the basis of parent's education (illiterate, under metric, above metric). The results showed non-significant on the basis of their education. The education of father (above metric) has slightly higher (mean = 121) as compared to the other two (mean = 116 & mean = 119.6 respectively), showing that third group above metric has negative attitude as compared to other groups. To analyze the effect of the difference of family and socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education ANOVA was computed (see table 9). For this three categories were made on the basis of family income (1000-10,000, 11,000-20,000 & 21,000-above). The results showed non-significant on the basis of family income. The family income (20,000-above) has slightly higher (mean = 123.40) as compare the other two (mean = 119.45 & mean = 118.72 respectively) showing that third group has negative attitude as compare to other group.

Finally the present study concludes that girls are not allowed to step out of their domestic spheres without the permission of any male member of their family because cultural and traditional values stand between girls and their prospects for education which condemns the girls to live a life without quality education. One reason for denying girls and women their right to an education is rarely articulated in our society that is the fear of the power that girls will have through education and greater fear to lose the cultural identity.

Conclusions

The present study was aimed to explore the socio cultural constraints faced by girls regarding access to higher education. In the present study girls expressed an intense desire to get more education but due to societal pressure, family does not allow them to go to other cities for the purpose of higher education because it would hurt their honor in family. Besides this, the lack of institutions, lack of transportation, early marriages, dependency of women on their families, traditional role of women, lack of awareness regarding importance of girl's education and lack of separate institutions for girls create hurdles for girl's education. If there are institutes for girls

and transport facilities then there is chance to increase the enrollment of girls in higher education institutions.

It is also concluded that social status of women in the society affects strongly her education because traditionally women are considered as the creatures of the family. Future security and education largely depends upon the respect and value given to her by male members of the family. Preference is given to males in every sphere of life including education.

Recommendations

To enhance the literacy in the women sector, short term and long term measures need to be adopted. In short terms, education programs in the rural areas to educate the girls and facilities should be increased. There is need to have more separate institutions for girls at all levels especially in the specialized field at the higher level.

The private sector should be encouraged and financed on joint venture basis to expand the professional and technical higher education institutions.

Incentive in the form of financial assistance to the private sector, scholarship to the deserving students and rewards to the teaching faculty should be increased.

In the rural areas and small town teachers and staff do not have residential, medical and transport facilities. Therefore, usually they get discouraged and avoid doing job even on Government specified appointments. There is need to attend to these problems and preference be given to backward and rural areas. Local talent and students should be encouraged to fill the gap.

The free education, free curriculum books, more number of scholarship and elimination of red-tapism shall bring better results.

Awareness programs regarding importance of girls' education should be conducted by arranging various workshop, seminars and educational tours.

To inculcate reading habits among the students, libraries and computer labs should be well equipped and increased in numbers. So that maximum students may avail the modern facilities of info technology and internet.

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