

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

FACTORS AFFECTING THE FEMALE EDUCATION IN THE NEWLY MERGED DISTRICT BAJAUR OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

Kefayat Ullah¹, Azizullah Jan², Momna Rani³, Mansoor Ahmad⁴, Ihsan Ullah Khan⁵,

^{1,3} Department of Sociology, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan,

² Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan,

⁴ University of Peshawar, Pakistan,

⁵ FATA University, Pakistan

E-mail: ¹kefayatullah46@gmail.com ²azizj153@gmail.com,

³Mominah.khan14@gmail.com, ⁴mansoorsoc@uop.edu.pk,

⁵ihsansoc@fu.edu.pk

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Factors Affecting the Female Education in The Newly Merged District Bajaur of
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan-- Palarch's Journal of Archaeology of
Egypt/Egyptology 18(4), 3136-3156. ISSN 1567-214x**

**Keywords: Female Education; Patriarchy, Barriers to Education, People's Attitude,
District Bajaur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

ABSTRACT

Female education plays a significant role in the socioeconomic development of a nation. Unfortunately, female of the erstwhile Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA) face with numerous barriers in the field of education. This research study has tried to investigate the responsible factors affecting the female's education in the district Bajaur erstwhile FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. For this purpose, the quantitative research method was used to explore the key barriers to female education by selecting 100 respondents of the family heads and the analyses have been carried out with the application of different statistical tests. The major findings of the study depict that the leading factors which are affecting the female education in this area includes the lack of female educational institutions, lack of female teaching staff, inadequate transport system, poor quality of education, ineffective education policies, and early marriage of females. Moreover, 79% of the sample respondents have shown positive attitudes towards the female education and they have been demanded to provide these facilities in order to improve the ratio of female to male education.

INTRODUCTION

Females' education is playing a pivotal role in the socioeconomic development of a society. It is widely recognized that education is one of the most important institutions which train an individual's behaviour in a positive and progressive way. It is also accepted that the girls' education can increase the income of a family, improves its standard of life, and advances the public living. Since the independence of Pakistan, there has been the gender inequality, i.e. females are exploited in every field of life; and specifically, in the remote areas, females are nowadays facing several major barriers in the field of getting an education. Similarly, in the most rural areas of Pakistan, females are deprived from the basic right of education, at any level (Nazet al. 2013).

The cultural obstacles are the main causes for the low quality of female education in the tribal areas because females of such areas are strictly bound to follow all the rules and regulations of the society. Hence, females socially discriminate in the most tribal areas, which is the main cause of the low ratio of female's education to male, and there is no doubt that the people of ex-FATA are strictly following the religious rules and the religious scholars who always forbid girls from getting the education from learning institutions. In erstwhile FATA, the ratio of female education has always been low because of the tribal traditional factors; and hence, females do not attend school at the primary level as they always feel the social insecurity around (Ebrahim, 2012). Besides, there is a lack of transportation to school; hence, the parents do not allow their daughters to go to the concerned school in a local private bus (Mehdi, 2007).

Furthermore, Pakistan, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF 2019) is ranked second in the world with the highest number of out of school children. An estimated 22.8 million children between the age of five and 16 years are out of school in Pakistan (Ullah 2020). Five million children are out of school at the primary level, and 60% of them are girls. However, due to the various barriers which includes the shortage of nearby schools, lack of the teaching staff and absenteeism, the poor quality of teaching, the poor schooling environment, and the cultural insecurity, weak governance and the lack of community participation in school matters are major restrictions towards the females' education (Malik et al. 2015). In Pakistan, the primary school completion rate for boys in the rural area is three times higher than girls, and in the urban area, it is twice higher than girls (Sperling et al. 2014). In 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set targets for the whole world in which one of the major targets was to achieve the universal primary education by 2015. The universal education might seem a fundamental right of every citizen; but unfortunately, the government of Pakistan failed to achieve this target during the specified course of time (UNICEF, 2012).

The district Bajaur is the smallest district by area in the whole in the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. According to the 2017 Census of Pakistan, the total population of district Bajaur was 1,093,684 and the females' ratio are 49.056% (Pakistan Bureau of Statistic (PBS) 2017;

provisional census results 2017). Geographically, it borders Afghan's Kunar Province with a 52 km border to the east, district Dir to the northeast side, the Utman Khel are in the Southeast of Bajaur, while Mamund are in the southwest, and the Tarkani are in the north of Bajaur. This district consists of four tribes, which are Utman Khel, Tarkalanri, Mamund, and Salarzai along with a small population of Safis. The administrative headquarters of the agency administration is located in the town of Khaar. Out of the total population, 99.5% of the inhabitants are speaking the Pashto language. It consists of 7 tehsils: the tehsil Utman Khel is located at the southeast of district Bajaur. At the Tehsil Utman Khel, Females have been faced with miserable conditions in the field of getting an education. There have no better institutions for female to get proper education. The majority of children go for Madrassa education. The females get an education only up to the primary level, and after that, there have lack of middle and secondary educational institutions to continue further education. All the underlying issues are due to the lack of the federal as well as the provincial government attentions. The existing quantity of empirical research shows that the Pashtun people are against of the female education but the actual reality is still not discovered.

Problem Statement

Education is the fundamental right of every dweller in all societies across the globe. It is considered as the prime step for every human activity. Unfortunately, in the ex-FATA, females are still facing a list of problems in the education sector at all levels of schooling. There are multiple barriers due to which females are unable to go to the school for an educational attainment. In district Bajaur, the conditions of females' education are still not adequate up to a desired level. And there is not even a single empirical study available which has exclusively tried to explore the responsible factors affecting the girls' education in this area. Therefore, this quantitative research is the first attempt of its nature to explore the prevailing factors which are affecting girls' education in district Bajaur.

Research Question

What are the key responsible factors affecting the girls' education in district Bajaur?

Objectives of the Study

Following are the main objectives of this quantitative research activity.

- (1) To explore the key factors which affecting the female's education;
- (2) To investigate the barriers towards female's education;
- (3) Find out the people's attitude towards female's education.

Significance of the Study

It is an undeniable fact that education plays a fundamental role in the improvement of human capital. Education is not only limited to developing the

personality of a female, but also plays an important role in their social, economic, and cultural development. This study has practical as well as theoretical importance. Practically, the findings of the study can be used for the policy and strategy toward the improvement of girls' education in the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study findings could be used by other researchers to extend their literature about the status of females' education. Moreover, theoretically, the findings of the study could be used for the existing theoretical debates on the right of females' equality of education. The findings of the study could help to other researchers who work on girl's education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is widely recognized that females' education plays a vital role in the social and economic change of a country. According to Mehran (2003), education is the basic right of all human beings; it improves the life of a woman. The equality of educational opportunity can pave the road to female participations in the decision making. Therefore, the schools have been assigned the test of education for today's girls to become an ideal woman tomorrow. But globally, a woman faces several problems in getting her basic education in the different countries. The study of (Iqbal et al. 2013; Mehran, 2003) have found the largest gap in female's education at the secondary school level, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, and the South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The main causes behind this backwardness are the religious beliefs, the traditional norms and cultural values, which are impeding the female education. Specifically, the traditional norms and cultural values permit a woman only to serve her family as a wife and a mother. Resultantly, it does not permit a woman to participate in any private program and the social activity. A recent report of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS 2019) revealed that total 61.5 million children are out of school at the lower secondary level in the world including 29.6 million boys and 31.9 million were girls. The study of (Chigona & Chetty, 2007) reported that in the South African countries, the early marriages are very common which create a lot of challenges for the teen-aged girls. The mothers have to carry on their schooling within the social environment and with their homework. Sometimes, after the birth of a baby, the teenage mothers are not able to continue their schooling. The pregnancy and parenting responsibilities are the main causes of dropout of female from the school. Therefore, in the Sub-Saharan Africa and the other developing countries of Africa, female loses their battle for equal access to the secondary education. Gender discrimination on the basis of primary schooling still exists in 60 countries out of 177. Where girls cannot complete their schooling as compare with boys and majority of them belong to low income countries. For girls the lower secondary education opportunities are still lacking. However, in low and middle income countries, just 50% of boys and girls complete their lower secondary schooling (Sharma et al 2020). According to (Hill, Corbett, & St Rose, 2010) this serious gap is common due to the negative stereotypes and the lack of female role models in the field of science and technology. In many countries, females suffer from the lack of education due to the religious activities, specifically in the Afghanistan region under the government of Taliban, most of the girls' schools were shut down

and the gross enrolment ratio comes down from 32% to 6.4%. The Afghan women aged 25 or older have received only 6% of the formal education and only 12% of women in the same age category were educated. Likewise, most parents do not leave their daughters to school due to the threat of Taliban as they consider home a safe place for their children.

Jackson, *et al.*, (2011) highlighted another problem arise in female education is the gender discrimination which is one of the serious issues which practice in our society. In this context, Lin, (1998) stated that women were highly discriminated to many generations in the rural tradition of the Chinese people because the boys were considered superior and the girls were inferior. The underlying reason behind this supremacy of a man was an unequal level of education between female and male, which restricted females from working and partnership with men. Another study conducted by Oplatka (2006) reported that in the Turkey women were not able to apply for the principal jobs, even when they were as well-qualified as the male applicants, because they had negative self-perception and the lack of confidence in their qualifications and experiences. Due to the cultural background and female's low participation in the primary schools, the teaching positions were filled only by male, and the female filled inferior positions in the school. The culture of many countries such as Turkey, China, and Islamic states have a common perception that male is more responsible in comparison with female in the social activities. Such stuff of cultural and religious beliefs determines that females are only responsible for housekeeping and child producing for their family.

In many developing countries, barriers to a woman's career and the educational systems are the strong family obligations and the low level of girls' education. In the words of Iqbal *et al.* (2013), the attitudes and beliefs of the rural people in Pakistan towards the female participation in the social activities have a significant role in deciding the level of female education. The patriarchy and cultural attitudes compel the parents to use their daughters for doing household chores all the time. The parents with conservative mind sets are solely responsible for the less education of their daughters. Another study conducted by (Adcock and Kimberly, 2013) revealed that more than 100 million girls are losing their lives from the world population due to the gender discrimination issues, AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome), sex trafficking, and infanticide. The lack of education in the woman population is leading towards the less participation in a public domain, especially in the rural areas of Pakistan. Therefore, they are unable to read and understand their basic rights unless these rights are elaborate to them by somebody. The equality of education for a female has an important impact on the child education, health, and the elimination of poverty.

According to the study of (Sarkar, Reza, & Hossain, 2014), the female is always considered as a burden and the male are considered as a source of living for their families in the conservative societies. A female is only considered as a child-producing machine that will take care of their siblings and will do all the chores within the household boundaries. Such conservative

people do not believe in female educations and their empowerment in the society. Salik & Zhiyong (2014) described that the gender inequality is found everywhere in Pakistan, but it is more exist in the form of children education, woman empowerment, woman participation in the decision making, a right of expression, etc., especially in the rural areas of the KP, FATA, and Baluchistan. That is why; these regions are the victims of a huge poverty and are considered as the less economically developed areas. Due to the socio-cultural traditions as well as the gender discrimination issues, thousands of talented and intelligent girls have no access to get the higher education at the university level. The study also highlighted that one of the main reasons behind the female educational backwardness in the rural areas of Pakistan is the low education budget.¹ Furthermore, the study of Shaukat and Pell (2015) reported that female are always discriminated on the basis of gender and the underlying reason behind this issue is the socio-cultural climate of Pakistan. The rural families are coming under the control of a male member and they frequently adopt an aggressive attitude towards the Female education.

Besides the reported factors, the political aspects of the country are also playing an important role in the female educational attainment. The on-going war and terror activities, regional conflicts, extremism, strict culture, and the religious ideology have further affected the female education. More specifically, the inefficient government policies, miserable economic conditions, and the lack of interest of the national and international agencies have negatively affected the female education in the research area. (Khattak, 2008) concluded that the security issue is also one of the special reasons for not getting the higher female education.

A supportive study conducted by (Rana, 2008) described that during the Pakistan Tahreek-e-Taliban period, lists of schools were targeted and the workings of different NGOs were banned in the ex-FATA. During January to May, 2008, the Taliban attacked on at least 29 different educational institutions, where 17 females' schools were completely destroyed. Similarly, the Taliban killed at least 61 school teachers and 12 to 25 local and foreign NGOs were forced to stop their working in the ex-FATA during the period 2006-2007². Due to the mentioned reasons, the female literacy rate in the ex-FATA is quite low and hence, there is a lack of female teachers in the surrounding. A relevant topic investigated by (Naz et al. 2013) stated that in the Pashtun society, there is a lack of female staff in the government organizations. Hence, the parents do not send their daughters to schools because the teaching staffs are male. The unfavourable school environment as well as the shortage of facilities in schools also reduces the girls' education.

A more recent study carried out by (Jamal, 2016) concluded that many people are financially stable in the Pashtun society, but they do not provide education to their girls due to their tribal code (Pashtunwali). The author has further stated that some aggressive people are thinking that the designed curriculum is based on the western ideology that will make their girls westernize and in a

¹ Unfortunately, it is only 2% of the Pakistan's GDP.

² February 2007

result, the linkage of girls to the Pashtunwali will become weaker. Due to all these factors, the female education ratio is the lowest in the country. According to the Annual Statistical Report (2018), the overall literacy ratio at the primary level in the newly merged districts (NMDs) is 57%. The male literacy rate is claimed to be 73% whereas the literacy rate among females is 40%. The status of female education in district Bajaur is dismaying. The ratio of female education is very low as compared to their male counterpart. At the primary school level, the total enrolment ratio is 58% including 32% girls and 83% boys. It is important to mention here that beyond primary school level girls' enrolment ratio immensely decreases. The enrollment ratio at the secondary level is 18% including 5% girls and 37% boys (Annual Statistical Report 2018).

SUPPORTING THEORIES

The Feminist Theory

The perspective of this theory is about the subordination of female status in a society. The basic aim of this theory is to understand the nature of gender inequality in a particular society. The theory examines women's and men's social roles, interests, experiences, chores, and feminist politics especially in the field of Sociology. In our research, we are moving one step ahead to the modern approach of the feminist theory, which is known as the liberal feminist theory.

Liberal Feminist Theory (Liberal feminism)

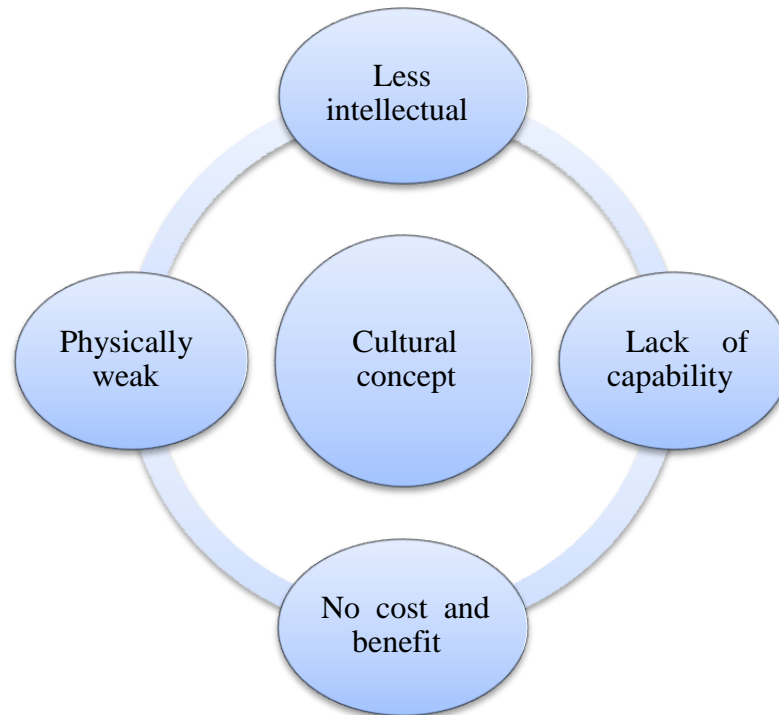
It is an individualistic form of feminist theory, which focuses on women's ability to maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. The theory emphasis is on making the legal plus political rights of women equal to men. The believers of this theory argue that society holds the false belief that women are, by nature, less intellectually and physically capable than men; therefore, this false fitted belief in human minds tends to discriminate against women in every platform of life. The issues on which the liberal feminists work are; sexual harassment, education, voting, affordable childcare, healthcare, equal wages for the same work, and domestic violence against the women in homes. The liberal feminist movement was a collective struggle for providing equal opportunities to women in all political and economic institutions of the society, which was very active during 1950 to 1970. Similarly, the perspective of labour feminists is to remove the barriers that females are facing in the field of education and the way of progress, whether such hurdles exist in schools or even in the marketplaces. There are three major perspectives of the liberal feminism: (1) provision of equal opportunities, (2) removal of sex discrimination, and (3) socialization and sex stereotyping.

By equal opportunity we mean that female must be having an equal participation in the field of education as well as in the social and economic domains. In the traditional societies, the male always tries to keep the female

in a dependent position and suppresses their emotional and political quality (Harding 1987) the liberal feminists argued that if we provide equal opportunities of education to women hence; in a result, the entire social and cultural stereotyped role of a woman in the society will be abolished. Almost in all societies in general, but in the backward societies in particular, females are assigned the major responsibility of unpaid daily household activities, particularly caring for the children, and so on. The head of the family does not allow the girls to get an education as well as to join a private or a government job. That is the special reason that women are earning less as compared to men over the life time span. Most of the time, the educated females find an inferior job in the job market and also doing household activities (Agassi, 1989). Liberal feminists explain that our society is having the wrong belief that female is less intellectual and unable to compete with a man in any field of life. They stress that this is the responsibility of the government to protect females from social and economic violence in the society as well as to provide them the quality education, attractive jobs, and other basic human rights. The theory stressed upon that females are always discriminated in all spheres of life by not providing them equal rights to get education, business opportunities, and the participation in politics.

This theory has a special link to our research study because the Tehsil Utman Khel is a patriarchal and a traditional society, where males have a dominant role in all kinds of decision-making. In this society, people give more preference to their sons' education rather than their daughters' education. They always suppress their females and deprive them of their fundamental human rights. Therefore, majority of females have no access to schools, especially post-primary education. They also have deficiency of health facilities, recreational activities (i.e. playgrounds and parks), political participation, etc. They are not allowed to do anything without the permission of their families' head (i.e. father, husband, brother). That's why; the male dominance is one of the key reasons behind the lack of female education.

The research area is a Pashtun traditional society, where the females are not allowed to go to schools for learning purposes because the Pashtunwali (Pashtun code) is against of the female education. The lack of educational institutions, the unhygienic condition of schools, and the lack of security are also the key factors behind the lack of females' education. In a result, their families compel them to live inside the four walls of homes because they believe that females have no need to get education in schools. As the liberal feminist theory wants the solution of the problem through a legal process; therefore, the government of Pakistan should pay more attention to the issue to make ensure the higher literacy rate of females in the upcoming periods in the NMDs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Figure 1 shows the cultural concept and the perception of people about a female. People commonly believe that females are less intellectual; they are unable to compact with situations come into the society. Hence, spending more money on females has no benefits because after the marriage, they leave their parents' home. Additionally, it is biologically proved that females are physically weak and they have less ability to face bad times like a man.

Figure 1: Model of Theory

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a quantitative research study used the primary set of data which was collected from the Tehsil Utman Khel, district Bajaur ex-FATA. The total population of the district is 10, 93,684 and the female ratio is 49.056%, including 107,356 population of Tehsil Utman Khel (Pakistan Bureau of Statistic (PBS) 2017; provisional census results 2017). Majority of people are living in clustered communities, while the remaining people are living in the mountains and plain areas for their livelihood.

The non-probability sampling method has been selected as a sample design. In the non-probability sampling, we have used the purposive sampling technique because, majority of the data has collected from male respondents' head of the family, because female are not allowed to give information to strange people in the research area. The researchers have selected total 100 respondents including, 94 male and 4 female respondents from the whole population. The selected sample size was quite enough for the researchers on the ground to obtain valid and reliable information about the significant issue at hand. It was already in the authors' mind that this locality is a man dominant society; and therefore, we have the first-hand information only from the male head of the family aged 18-70. Thus, a household was selected as a unit of analysis for the current study.

Data Collection tool and Technique

This research study used the interview schedule technique for collecting the primary information from the selected sample size. The primary data have been collected through a close-ended questionnaire by making personal contact with the selected respondents in a safe place. A well-structured questionnaire was designed, in which few starting questions were the introductory questions and the rest questions were purely research-related specific questions. These specific questions were asked of the chosen respondents which were totally related to the background of female's education and the main hindrances behind their low educational attainment. All the survey questions were originally composed in the English language and then were translated into the Urdu language because the majority of the respondents were not highly educated.

Although, Urdu is not their mother tongue, yet they were comfortable with this medium of instruction because they learn this language in school periods and/or while working in those areas where this language is commonly spoken. After completely understanding the asked questions, they were supposed to tick mark the best possible answer among the alternative options. After filling all set of questionnaires, the conducted survey generated the ordinal data, where all the questions must comply with two rules: (1) different assigned number/category is having different meanings, and (2) the respondents were ranked separately based on their attitudes, i.e. selection towards a given question. For such a purpose, a Likert scale was used which measures the variation of the attitudes of the respondents towards a certain phenomenon. The items that made up the designed scale were completely interrelated to the underlying specific issue.

Pilot Survey

One of the key aspects in conducting a survey study is the reliability and efficiency of the dataset. To make ensure the efficiency in conducting the survey method of data collection, researchers usually conduct a pilot survey before administering survey or interview. This is a unique strategy with the researcher to prior test the designed questionnaire using a smaller sample compared to the planned sample size. In our study, before the filling of questionnaires from the target population, the instrument of data collection (i.e. questionnaire) was pre-tested or evaluated through a pilot survey test. The questionnaire has pre-tested from a very small segment population (i.e. 10 to 15 respondents) so after any ambiguous and vague question was replaced, and then applied to the target population.

Techniques for Data Analysis

The researchers have used the IBM (International Business Machines) statistical software for the analysis of the collected primary data. For this purpose, the researchers have applied different basic descriptive statistics for the data analysis. The empirical results have been tabulated in different tables

and the supporting graphical representations have also been displayed. The whole data analyses have been carried out through the tools of frequency distribution and the percentage methods.

Ethical Concerns

One of the main principles of the ethical research is the invasion of privacy and data protection. It includes the confidentiality of the data given by the interviewees; the interviewers have kept all the information in secret because if it is revealed to someone, the respondent would feel insecure. Therefore, the researchers were remained honest during the whole process of the data collection.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

Table 1 reports information on the gender of all 100 respondents selected as a sample. Out of 100 respondents, 94% were male and the remaining 6% were female, showing the highest ratio of male to female. The solid reason behind this large dispersion in values is the male dominant society, where the female is not allowed to give any sort of information to anyone for any purpose.

Table 1: Gender of the respondents

Variable (gender)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Male	94	94.0
Female	06	6.0
Total (n)	100	100.0

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

Table 2 illustrates that 323 (83%) were school going boys out of 387 who belong to the age category of 5-18 years; whereas, 183 (46%) were school going girls out of 401 who belong to the same age classification. Therefore, the ratio of school going boys as compared to girls is greater in number. Furthermore, 47% of the respondents were 1-2 school going boys, 30% of the respondents were 3-4 school going boys, 12% respondents were 5-6 children, and 8% of the respondents were 7 school going boys. However, the remaining 3% of the population have no male children. Likewise, 48% of the respondents were 1-2 School going girls at the age class 5-18 years, 23% respondents were 3-4 School going girls, 6% respondents were 5-6 School going girls, and 23% of the respondents were no school going girls under the same age category.

Table 2: Number of school going children

Variable (s)	N	Sum	Mean
How many boys are going to school?	100	323	3.23
How many girls are going to school?	100	183	1.83

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

Table 3 shows that 168 female children out of 401 were going to Madrasa for learning the Quranic teachings; whereas, 250 male children out of 387 were going to Madrasa for getting the religious education at the age 5-18 years, and the ratio between the two genders stood at 0.65.

Table 3: Number of Madrasa going children

Variable (s)	N	Sum	Mean
How many boys are going to Madrasa?	100	250	2.50
How many girls are going to Madrasa?	100	168	1.68

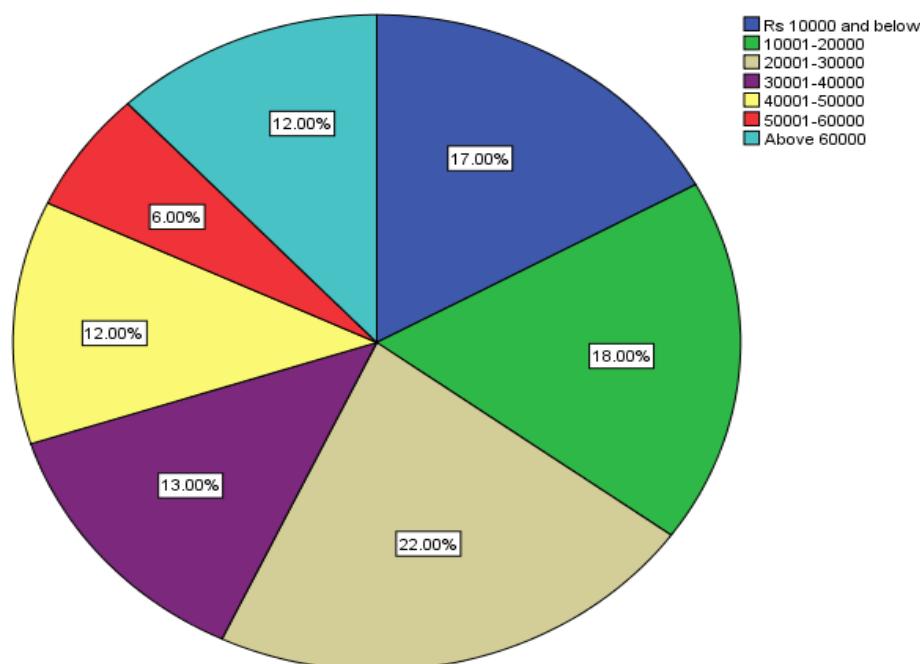
Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

In table 4 it is noticed that not only girls (138 out of 401) are illiterate but also 66 boys out of 387 are illiterate. Alternatively, 17% boys and 34% girls at the age 5-18 years do not have access to schools to get education.

Table 4: Number of children who are not studying

Variable (s)	N	Sum	Mean
How many boys are not studying?	100	66	6.6
How many girls are not studying?	100	138	1.38

It is observed that the income of a household is considered as a key determinant in the decision making. The pie chart (figure 2) illustrates that 22% of the respondents were having the monthly income from Rs. 20, 001 to Rs. 30, 000, 18% respondents' monthly income was from Rs. 10, 001 to Rs. 20, 000, 6% respondents' monthly income was Rs. 50, 000 to Rs. 60, 000, and so on. We can conclude that the majority of the respondents are having no financial problems, which is the main hurdle in the way of education provision to the children.

Figure 2: Monthly income of the respondents***Lack of Educational Facilities***

The main hurdle in the way of female education is the insufficient availability of girls' schools. The results in Table 5 show that 73 % respondents were strongly agree with the idea that the educational backwardness in the research area is due to the lack of educational institutions, whereas, 3% respondents were strongly oppose this fact.

Table 5: Lack of female educational institutions

Scale	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	73	73.0
Agree	17	17.0
Neutral	2	2.0
Disagree	5	5.0
Strongly disagree	3	3.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

The results in Table 6 report that one of the key determinants in the female educational backwardness is the lack of transportation facilities because the girls have no access to go to the far-off schools. The 58% respondents were strongly agree with the statement by saying that we have no transportation facilities in the village and we are unable to hire any mean of private transportation for our daughters to pick and drop on time. However, 2% among the whole respondents were strongly disagreeing with this fact.

Table 6: Respondents opinion regarding transport facilities

Scale	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	58	58.0
Agree	31	31.0
Neutral	6	6.0
Disagree	3	3.0
Strongly disagree	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

Female teachers are the central part of a school system and are considered the basic pillar of girls' education. Table 7 reports that there were too little females' staffs in schools in the village. The 70% of the respondents were strongly agreed that one of the main obstacles in the female educational backwardness was the lack of female teachers in schools, whereas, just 3% of the respondents were satisfied from the available staff.

Table 7: Perceptions regarding the availability of female staff

Scale	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	70	70.0
Agree	18	18.0
Neutral	5	5.0
Disagree	4	4.0
Strongly disagree	3	3.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

Quality of Education

Education must be available and accessible but also acceptable and adaptable. The results of Table 8 report that 35% of the respondents were argued that due to the poor quality of education, girls are not willing to go to schools for getting education. Also, 31% of the respondents support that the poor quality of education is the key factor in the educational backwardness of girls in the village. However, only 3% respondents were opposed to this view.

Table 8: Perceptions regarding the poor quality education

Scale	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	35	35.0
Agree	31	31.0
Neutral	9	9.0
Disagree	22	22.0
Strongly disagree	3	3.0

Total	100	100.0
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Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

Poverty is the root of all social problems in the society across the globe. In the research area, 49% of the respondents were strongly agreed with the fact that poverty is the main cause of female educational backwardness, whereas, only 5% respondents were strongly disagreed with this reality. We can conclude that poverty is largely affecting the educational attainment of females. The results are reported in Table 9.

Table 9: Poverty and female education

Scale	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	49	49.0
Agree	29	29.0
Neutral	2	2.0
Disagree	15	15.0
Strongly disagree	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

Pashtunwali is a non-written ethical code and traditional lifestyle which the indigenous Pashtun people follow. In the existing literature, it is narrated that Pashtunwali is the main hurdle in the way of female education. In our analysis, we conclude that 43% of the respondents were of the view that Pashtunwali is not the serious restriction for those girls who are interested in getting education. On the contrary, 15% respondents were strongly agreeing with the point that Pashtunwali is a barrier for girls in the field of education. The empirical results are given in Table 10.

Table 10: Perceptions regarding the Pashtunwali restriction

Scale	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	15	15.0
Agree	9	9.0
Neutral	14	14.0
Disagree	43	43.0
Strongly disagree	19	19.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

The empirical results of Table 11 concluded that 55% heads of the family were strongly agreed with the perception that the early marriage of a girl is a barrier to female education, whereas, 11% respondents were disagreed that the early marriage of girls is an obstacle in the way of their education. However, the majority of the people were considering that early marriage of a girl is one

of the leading problems due to which the ratio of female education is low in the research area.

Table 11: Respondents perceptions regarding early marriage

Scale	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	55	55.0
Agree	24	24.0
Neutral	1	1.0
Disagree	11	11.0
Strongly disagree	9	9.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

Security barriers

The empirical findings in Table 12 report that 67% of the respondents were of the view that the military operations and war on terror activities has negatively affected female education district Bajaur. However, 21% of the remaining respondents were against this opinion. We can say that the majority of the family heads were agreed with the point that due to the unhygienic security conditions, hundreds of schools were completely destroyed and the remaining schools were closed for most of the time.

Table 12: Respondents perception regarding the military operations

Scale	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	36	36.0
Agree	31	31.0
Neutral	12	12.0
Disagree	15	15.0
Strongly disagree	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

People's attitude towards female education

The survey's respondents were asked a list of related questions about education in order to find out the nature of their attitudes towards their girls' education. These specified questions were about the importance of female education, establishment of schools, provision of education facilities for girls, provision of transportation facilities, and spending income on the female education etc. Surprisingly, 79% of the respondents were claimed that we will send our girls to schools and colleges for getting the higher education, if the government ensures the establishment of schools in the village and provides the proper educational facilities to the girls. Also, 17% of the respondents did not deny the importance of education for their children. However, just 2%

respondents were strongly opposed the importance of education for their children. The results of respondents' attitudes towards the female education are mentioned in Table 13.

Table 13: Positive attitudes of the respondents towards female education

Scale	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	79	79.0
Agree	17	17.0
Neutral	1	1.0
Disagree	1	1.0
Strongly disagree	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

During the survey, we asked the respondents few negative attitude questions regarding the female education. We asked them that you people do not send your daughters to schools for education just because of the fear of harassment, wrong concept about the female education, Purdah system in the society, preference to sons education, focus on the religious education, no importance of female education due to early marriage, etc. The results in Table 14 report that 62% of the respondents rejected such kinds of statements. The respondents were of the view that we want to provide education to our children but due to the scarcity of educational institutions, non-availability of the female staff, and lack of the peaceful environment are key reasons which compels us not to send the girls to schools. Additionally, only 7% of the respondents were supported the negative attitude statements as they were conservative minded towards the female education.

Table 14: Negative attitudes of the respondents towards female education

Scale	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Agree	7	7.0
Neutral	16	16.0
Disagree	62	62.0
Strongly disagree	15	15.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Authors' own calculations (2019)

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION

This quantitative research has tried to explore the hidden factors affecting the females' education in the Tehsil Utman Khel district Bajaur, KP, Pakistan. The empirical results of this study have criticized the existing empirical literature on the same concern that shows the negative attitude of the Pashtun people towards female's education. As we know that most girls are forced to quit education after passing the primary education due to a lack of sufficient number of middle and high schools in Bajaur district. According to the results

of the current study, 83% boys as compared to 46% girls at the age 5-18 years was school going children in the research area, where the ratio of boys to girls was higher. This statistic reveals that there are many social, economic, political, and religious dimensions in the Pashtun belt which are responsible for the female lower literacy rate. There are some internal and external forces which have created hurdles in the way of getting education for females in region. The socio-cultural, patriarchal structure, religious involvement, and the Pashtunwali are considered as the internal factors of education. On the contrary, the government educational policies, the miserable economic conditions, and the lack of interest of the national and international agencies are considered as the external factors of education (Jamal, 2016). In our study, the results are not matching the empirical results found in the existing empirical literature on the female education and the analysis goes in a complete opposite direction. A notable result of our research is that the majority of the respondents (62%) argued that we are not the part of the conservative mindset, and this is the wrong concept of the people about the tribal inhabitants. Besides, 15% of the respondents were of the view that we do not practice negative attitudes towards our girls' education. However, they were interested to provide education to their females if the government of Pakistan builds new high schools, appoints new female staff, and to ensure availability of the transportation facilities in the locality. What's more, 43% of the respondents were of the view that Pashtunwali does not restrict females from going to schools, and there is no exception for the religion. However, the results stress that the household's poverty is the main hindrance to female education. In the context of external factors, 73% of the respondents viewed that the lack of educational institutions is the main reason behind the low ratio of female education as compared to men. Similarly, 70% respondents believed that the lack of female staff in schools is the key determinant in the low female literacy rate. Also, 58% interviewees' argument was that the lack of transportation system towards the middle and high schools is another barrier to the discontinuation of the female education.

As we know that people portrait the wrong image regarding the female education in the Pashtun society. They spread the message to everyone that the Pashtun people are very conservative by birth and they are having a conservative social system with stereotyped ideas, where girls are always considered as a burden and the boys are considered as a living source for the family. Girls are considered as a child-producing machine, which will care for the siblings, and will do tasks inside the home's boundaries all the day. The conservative religious figures do not believe in girls' education and their empowerment (Sarkar et al. 2014).

In our analysis, the primitive thinking of the society has been challenged because the majority of the people have positive attitudes towards the female education. They were acknowledged the importance of female education and women empowerment, but unfortunately, there is a lack of educational institutions, less availability of female staff, no transportation system to far flung schools and colleges, low quality education, unhygienic school conditions, military operations and war on terror activities, and lack of the

government interest. The findings also throw light on the early marriage of girls as a hinder in the way of getting higher education.

Policy Recommendation

Education is the fundamental right of every human being across the globe; but unfortunately, a huge portion of population has been deprived in the 21st century, and same is the case with Tehsil Utman Khel district Bajaur KP. The empirical results of this study confirm the fact that the Pashtun people are not conservative and having a liberal thinking towards the female primary, secondary and higher education. The majority of the respondents have shown a positive attitude towards the importance of female education and woman empowerment. If the federal and provincial governments focus on the establishment of new middle and high schools in the territory and equip the existing schools with modern facilities in the form of computer labs, science laboratories, and other infrastructural developments can boost the female literacy rate up to a desired level. The provincial government should hire more talented females staff in schools on purely the merit basis to encourage not only the women employment but also to encourage the female education. The empirical findings also recommend that the government of Pakistan at the moment should need to control the law and order situation; hence, the students will go to schools without any security threat. After the 18th amendment of the constitution of Pakistan, the education has become a provincial subject; therefore, the provinces should form legislations and design educational policies which ensure quality education. The government of Pakistan should allocate more budgets to the education sector in order to avoid the budgetary constraints. Government and private sector (e.g. private schools, NGOs, etc.) should work together to promote education in the rural area of district Bajaur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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