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# STUMBLING BLOCKS OF CHILDREN EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY IN THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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#### **Abstract:**

Islam emphasizes to educate every child without discrimination of sex, ethnic, religious or any other identity. Education is a basic and the most important capability for the wellbeing of individuals but it is depressively stated that the children especially girls of developing countries face many stumbling blocks in the inclusion of Primary education in Southern Punjab. The current study was conducted in 3 districts "Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur" of Southern Punjab, Pakistan to study the demographic characteristics of the respondents, parents, attitude toward girls education and negative attitude of teachers. The researcher used the

multistage random sampling and selected 975 household heads as a sample. Interview schedule was used as a tool for gathering the data because majority of the respondents were illiterate. It was found that low socio-economic status of the parents affected their girls' educational inclusion. It was also found that negative attitude teachers' also played a negative role in the educational inclusionary process of girls in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. It is recommended that government of Pakistan should have to focus the marginalized areas by providing the scholarships to the needy children and organize the different seminars in these areas to motivate the community towards children education and fulfill the Islamic as well as constitutional obligation to enroll every child without discrimination in Southern Punjab, Pakistan.

# **Introduction:**

There is a great importance of education in Islam because the first verse of Holy Quran was states with the importance of education.

"Read in the name of your Lord Who created (Al-Quran, 96: 1)."

Islam declares education as a fundamental right of every individual without discrimination of sex. The Holly prophet (SAW) emphasizes to provision of education to both boys and girls. He says

"Seeking the [obligatory] religious knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim (Ibn-e-Majah, Hadith 224)."

Islam encourages the parents to educate their children for their well-being. Education raises true consciousness among children and makes them productive members of society. Getting education is essential for both men and women for the well functionality of the society. It is usually stated that educating a girl is like educating a family. A mother's lap is the first schooling of her children and if the mother is educated, she can play a vital role in the process of the children's socialization. Hazrat Mohammad (\*\*) declares a mother responsible for her children's safety and their socialization.

The woman is caring in her husband's house and is responsible (Imam Bukhari, Hadith 893).

Pakistan is an Islamic country and majority of the people want to follow the teachings of Islam and educate their children but due to different stumbling blocks millions of children were excluded from basic education among them some are being discussed below. Pakistan is a poor country and majority of the households are spending impoverished life. The study conducted by Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (2014-15) showed that 14.38 percent household were spending worse economic situation; 2.89 percent households spent much worse; 11.21 percent households were spending better economic situation and only 1.29 households percent were spending much better economic situation in Punjab, Pakistan. In this situation it is quite difficult for Pakistan to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The previous literature highlighted that low economic status of the households was one of the most powerful stumbling block in the path of children especially girls' education(Sattar,2012; Chaudhry et al., 2009 &

Chandrasekhar, 2006).

The condition of Punjab regarding net enrolment of primary schooling (6-10 years old children) was not satisfactory. The figures showed the consistency of net enrolment rate of primary schooling in Punjab. Net enrolment of primary school children was 70 percent in 2010-2011 and in the years of 2013-14 it remained the same (70 percent). Literacy rate was 60 percent in 2010-2011 with slight increases it was 63 percent in 2013-2014. Adult literacy rate was 57 percent in 2010-2011 and it was 60 percent in 2013-2014 (Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey 2014-15, 2016). These above figures showed the un-satisfactory situation of Punjab regarding achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

# **Review of Literature:**

Pakistan is a poor country and majority of its population is confronting socio-economic problem. Due to the low socio-economic status of the children overall 38 percent children did not enter the primary schools among them 28 percent male and 49 percent female children were suffering from this issue in Pakistan. Among the children who entered the schools almost total 52 percent children completed primary or higher education in Pakistan. In the province of Punjab 35 percent children were excluded from the primary schools and among them 26 percent male and 44 percent female children faced the exclusion from entry in the schools. Among the children who entered the schools almost 54 percent children completed primary or higher education in Punjab. The data depicted that the children who belonged to the districts of Southern Punjab suffered more than upper Punjab. In Bhakkar there were 44 percent children who did attended the school and among them 30 percent were boys and 62 percent were girls and furthermore it was also noted that 41 percent children who belonged to rural areas did not ever attend the school and among them 64 percent were female and 32 percent were male children. Among the children who entered the schools total 43 percent children completed primary or higher education in Bhakkar. In the district of Minawali 42 percent children did not ever attend the school and among them 22 percent were boys and 59 percent were girls and furthermore it was also noted that 45 percent children who belonged to rural areas did not ever attend the school and among them 64 percent were female and 23 percent male children. Among the children who entered the schools total 48 percent children completed primary or higher education in Minawali. In the district of Multan 39 percent children did not ever attend the school and among them 31 percent were boys and 48 percent were girls and furthermore it was also noted that there were 41 percent children who belonged to rural areas did not ever attend the school and among them 61 percent were female and 38 percent were male children. Among the children who entered the schools total 49 percent children completed primary or higher education in Multan.

Among the children who entered the schools total 42 percent children completed primary or higher education in Lodhran. In the district of Dera Ghazi Khan 60 percent children did not ever attend the school and among them 42 percent were boys and 70 percent were girls and furthermore it was also noted that 62 percent children who belonged to rural areas did not ever attend the school among them 78 percent were female and 46 percent were male children. Among the children who entered in the schools among them total 34 percent children completed primary or higher education in Dera Ghazi Khan. In the district of Layyah 46 percent children did not ever attend the school and among them 33 percent were boys and 51 percent were girls and furthermore it was also noted that 39 percent children who belonged to rural areas did not ever attend the school and among them 64 percent were female and 25 percent male children. Among the children who entered the schools total 52 percent children completed primary or

higher education in Layyah.

In the district of Muzaffargarh 53 percent children did not ever attend the school and among them 40 percent were boys and 47 percent were girls and furthermore it was also noted that 57 percent children who belonged to rural areas did not ever attend the school and among them 72 percent were female and 42 percent were male children. Among the children who entered the schools total 35 percent children completed primary or higher education in Muzaffargarh. In the district of Bahawalpur 50 percent children did not ever attend the school 39 percent were boys and 62 percent were girls and furthermore it was also noted that 57 percent children who belonged to rural areas did not ever attend the school and among them 70 percent were female and 44 percent were male children. Among the children who entered the schools total 38 percent children completed primary or higher education in Bahawalpur. In the district of Bahawalnagar 46 percent children did not ever attend the school and among them 46 percent were boys and 57 percent were girls and furthermore it was also noted that 51 percent children who belonged to rural areas did not ever attend the school and among them 63 percent were female and 39 percent were male children. In the district of Rahim Yar Khan 52 percent children did not every attended the school among them 40 percent was boys and 65 percent were girls and furthermore it was also noted that there were 57 percent children who belonged to rural areas did not ever attend the school and among them 61 percent were female and 43 percent were male children. Among the children who entered the schools total 41 percent children completed primary or higher education in Bahawalnagar (Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16, 2017).

In the children's education there were many other stumbling blocks that played a negative role in the inclusion of primary school age children in Pakistan. The low qualification of the teachers also played a negative role in the inclusion of children. It was highlighted by Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16 (2017) that there were 370 public teachers whose qualification was middle, 47683 were matric qualified, 55596 were working as a public school teachers whose qualification was intermediate and there were only 68 PhD. Holding teachers in government Primary school throughout Pakistan. In this way we can ask how it can be possible that a huge number of less qualified (Middle, Matric and Intermediate) teachers can teach in an appropriate way because now the curriculum of the primary classed is updated and the less qualified teachers cannot teach it properly. It is the social as well as religious responsibility of the state to hire the well qualified and trained teachers for the quality enhancement of the children.

#### **Methodology:**

The current study was conducted in the 3 Districts "Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur" Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The researcher used the multistage random sampling in which firstly three divisions were selected (Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan) then he reselected the two tehsils from each district and at the end two Union Councils were randomly selected from each tehsil randomly (Punjab Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The researcher selected 975households who had 5-9 years old children. The researcher conducted the household survey from the household heads because household heads were the main stakeholders of the family. The researcher made two categories, the households where 5-9 years old children were excluded (600) from primary education and the households where 5-9 years old children were not excluded from primary education (375). Interview schedule was used as a tool for data collection because majority of the respondents were illiterate. The data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. The researcher used the descriptive

statistics which included frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics.

#### **Results:**

The results and discussion of the data have key importance in the scientific research. These steps are helpful in the generalization and prediction of the data. The results and discussion of this research are given in the following lines

Table No1: Demographic characteristics and Educational Exclusion of Children
School Distance and Educational Exclusion of Girls Children

	School Distance and Educational Exclusion of Girls Children									
Categori es	Half Kilomet er	One Kilo meter	Two Kilo meters and Above	Total	Chi- Square	P=Value				
Not Excluded	88 -23.50%	87 (23.2%)	200 -53.30%	375 -100.00%						
Excluded	174 (29.0%)	154 (25.7%)	272 -45.30%	600 -100.00%	$\chi^2 = 6.248^a$	(P=.044)				
Total	262	241	472 48 40%	975						

# Monthly Income of Household and Educational Exclusion of Girls Children

Categories	1001 - 6000	6001- 11000	11001- 16000	16000- 21000	above than 21000	Total	Chi- Square	P=Value
Not Excluded	46 - 12.3 0%	80 (21.3 %)	78 (20.8%)	76 (20.3%)	95 (25.3%)	375 (100.0 %)		
Excluded	146 (24.3 %)	137 (22.8 %)	153 (25.5%)	93 (15.5%)	71 (11.8%)	600 (100.0 %)	=47.175	(P=.000)
Total	192 (19.7 %)	217 (22.3 %)	231 (23.7%)	169 (17.3%)	166 (17.0%)	975 (100.0 %)		

The researcher asked different questions to know the stumbling blocks of girls' education in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The first question was related with the school distance. There were 262 (26.9) percent respondents whose school distance was a half kilometer; 241 (24.7) percent respondents school distance was one kilometer and there were 472 (48.4) percent respondents whose school and home distance was two or more than two kilometers. The study showed a significant relationship ( $\chi^2$ =6.248<sup>a</sup>), (P=.044) between the public school distance and the educational exclusion of the children. It is quite difficult for the parents to provide pick and drop service due to their busy schedule. In this way children faced difficulties for getting education. Islam motivated us to ensures easiness and remove difficulties. Allah almighty says

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

"Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability" (Al-Quran, 2:286).

Due to the lack of educational budget the government did not construct new schools in south Punjab and it strongly affected the children enrolment in Southern Punjab. So, the government should have to increase educational budget and construct more primary schools for the boys and the girls. It will be helpful to remove the issue of distance and improve the socioeconomic status of the backward areas of southern Punjab, Pakistan.

The economic resources and educational exclusion of children were also checked by asking the monthly income of the household heads. The economic role in the provision of girls' education was also checked by asking the question of monthly income of the households. The survey showed that 192 (19.7) percent households monthly income was between 1001-6000; 217 (22.3) percent surveyed families earned 6001- 11000 monthly income; the monthly income of 169 (17.3) percent respondents was 16001-21000 and there were only 166 (17.0) percent respondents who earned more than 21000 per month. It showed a significant relationship ( $\chi^2$ =47.175<sup>a</sup>), (P=.000) between the household monthly income and the educational exclusion of the girls' children.

Table No.2: Teachers' Characteristics

Abusive Language of the Teachers and Educational Exclusion of Children

Categorie s	Disagree	Strongl y Disagre e	Noutral	Agree	Strongl y Agree	Total	Chi-Square	P=Value
Not Excluded	50 (13.3%)	14 (3.7%)	72 (19.2%)	124 (33.1%)	115 (30.7%)	375 (100.0%)	X <sup>2</sup> =303.400 <sup>a</sup>	(P=.000)
Excluded	213 (35.5%)	109 (18.2%)	200 (33.3%)	68 (11.3%)	10 (1.7%)	600 (100.0%)		
Total	263 (27.0%)	123 (12.6%)	272 (27.9%)	192 (19.7%)	125 (12.8%)	975 (100.0%)		

# Teachers' giving Corporal Punishment and Educational Exclusion of Children

Not	69	20	75	121	90	375		
Excluded	(18.4%)	(5.3%)	(20.0%)	(32.3%)	(24.0%)	(100.0%)		
Excluded	291	94	163	49	3	600	$\chi^2 = 293.037^a$	(P=.000)
	(48.5%)	(15.7%)	(27.2%)	(8.2%)	(.5%)	(100.0%)		
T-4-1	360	114	238	170	93	975		
Total	(36.9%)	(11.7%)	(24.4%)	(17.4%)	(9.5%)	(100.0%)		,

Teachers' Coming Late in the School and Educational Exclusion of Children

Not	46	18	80	144	87	375		
Excluded	(12.3%)	(4.8%)	(21.3%)	(38.4%)	(23.2%)	(100.0%)		
Excluded	200	104	215	62	19	600	$\chi^2 = 256.827^a$	(P=.000)
	(33.3%)	(17.3%)	(35.8%)	(10.3%)	(3.2%)	(100.0%)		
	246	122	295	206	106	975		
Total	(25.2%)	(12.5%)	(30.3%)	(21.1%)	(10.9%)	(100.0%)	,	

# Shortage of Teachers and Educational Exclusion of Children

Not	92	45	61	120	57	375		
Excluded	(24.5%)	(12.0%)	(16.3%)	(32.0%)	(15.2%)	(100.0%)		
Evoluded	239	153	161	38	9	600	2_205 729a	(D= 000)
Excluded	(39.8%)	(25.5%)	(26.8%)	(6.3%)	(1.5%)	(100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 205.738^a$	(F =.000)
	331	198	222	158	66	975		
Total	(33.9%)	(20.3%)	(22.8%)	(16.2%)	(6.8%)	(100.0%)		

The researcher also examined the teacher's attributes of primary schools by asking the different questions to the respondents. It was asked that "did the teachers use the abusive language. It was found that 125(12.8%) respondents did Strongly Agree; 192(19.7%) did Agreed; 263(27.0%) did Disagreed; 123(12.6%) did Strongly Disagree and majority 272(27.9%) of the respondents did Neutral that primary school teachers used the teachers use the abusive language. There was a significant relationship ( $\chi^2=303.400^a$ ), (P=.000) between the teachers abusive language and the educational exclusion of the children. It was asked if "Teachers given Corporal Punishment to the students?" It was found that 93(9.5%) respondents did Strongly Agreed; 170(17.4%) did Agreed; 238(24.4%) of the respondents did Neutral; 360(36.9%) did Disagree and 114(11.7%) did Strongly Disagree that primary school teachers gave corporal Punishment to the students. There was a significant relationship ( $\chi^2=293.037^a$ ), (P=.000) between the corporal punishment and the educational exclusion of the children.

The next was related with the formal school time table followed by the primary school teachers. It was found that 106(10.9%) respondents did Agree; about 206(21.1%) respondents did Strongly Disagree; majority 295(30.3%) of the respondents were Neutral; 246(25.2%) respondents did Disagree and 122(12.5%) of the respondents did Strongly Disagree that primary school teachers were coming late in the schools. There was a significant relationship ( $\chi^2=256.827^a$ ), (P=.000) between the teachers' coming late in the school and the educational exclusion of the children. The next question was about the teacher's shortage in the government primary schools". It was found that 66(6.8%) respondents were Agree; about 158(16.2%) respondents did Strongly Agreed; 222(22.8%) respondents did Neutral; 331(33.9%) respondents did disagree and 198(20.3%) respondents did Strongly Disagree that there was a shortage of primary school teachers. There was a significant relationship ( $\chi^2=205.738^a$ ), (P=.000) between the shortage of teachers and the educational exclusion of the children.

#### **Discussion:**

The children of Southern Punjab faced different stumbling block in the path of getting education. The longer distance of school and home was one of the most problematic issues faced by children of Southern Punjab. The data showed a Significant relationship ( $\chi^2$ =6.248<sup>a</sup>), (P=.044) between the public school distance and the educational exclusion of the children in the studied areas of Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The previous studied researches also verified the results that longer distance of school and home created lot of issue in the children education Chaudhry, 2009& Zulfiqar & Ch., 2019). Hazrat Mohammad ( $\stackrel{\text{\tiny{de}}}{=}$ ) also gives instructions to the Muslims to create easiness for the people.

"Narrated Anas bin Malik: The Prophet said, "Make things easy for the people, and do not make it difficult for them (Imam Bukhari, Hadith 6125)".

It means that the core focus is to facilitate the children in any way. The most important is the availability of the school building in the hometown. It will play a vital role in raising the enrolment of the children. The Present study also found a significant relationship ( $\chi^2$ =47.175<sup>a</sup>), (P=.000) between the household monthly income and the educational exclusion of the children. The economic resources also played a vital role in the inclusion or exclusion of children in primary education. It was highlighted by Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement 2014-15(2016) that at least half of the children from the poorest households aged five to nine were excluded from basic education. This situation showed a worse impact of poverty on children education (Hashmi, 2009). The Islamic teaching emphasizes the education of the children and motivates the parents as well as government to give necessary education to all children. The government should have to give scholarships to the needy children for their education and fulfill the Islamic and constitutional obligation in a good way.

There was a significant relationship ( $\chi^2$ =303.400<sup>a</sup>), (P=.000) between the teachers' abusive language and the educational exclusion of the children. Islamic teachings emphasizes that teachers a characterful personality because children follow the teachers' characteristics. Umer Bin Atba gave instructions to the teachers of his children (Ataleeq) to have a good personality with high morale because his children would learn the definition of right and wrong from their actions (Abu Umr, Vol.1, P.363). Imam Ghazali said that a teacher should interact with students as he interacts with his children (Imam Ghazali, Vol.1, P. 46). It could be stated that the poor and excluded children faced teachers' harshness and bad behavior due to their low social identity. Teacher should have to treat all the students equally to all students without discrimination of caste, creed and other identity (Abu Abdullah, Vol.2, P.158). It was estimated by DFID (2005) that approximately 891 million individuals faced social exclusion on the name of their ethnic, religious and religious identity.

There was a significant relationship ( $\chi^2$ =293.037<sup>a</sup>), (P=.000) between the corporal punishment and the educational exclusion of the children. The results showed that corporal punishment was also one of the important reasons of children exclusion from primary education in south Punjab. Imam Ghazalirecommended teachers that they should avoid corporal punishment and if punishment is necessary, it should be a last option but punishment should not be sever in its nature (Imam Ghazali, 1961, P.43). Ibn-e-Khuldun wrote that the teachers should not consecutively punish the students because children would tell a lie to save them from punishment and in this way their life will be destroyed (Ibn-e-Khuldun, Vol.1, P. 211).

There was a significant relationship ( $\chi^2=205.738^a$ ), (P=.000) between the shortage of

teachers and the educational exclusion of the children. It could be argued that time is a money and more precious thing in this world and every person was responsible for time management and care of the time but majority of the people were wasting it easily. The research conducted in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa showed that children education highly affected due to the teacher's lateness and absenteeism (Bennell, 2007).

The study conducted by Fobih (1999) showed that 85 percent teachers reached late (from 5 to 90 minutes) in the school, in this way teachers were playing an important role in the exclusion of children because teachers wasted the teaching time and the students would ultimately come late and be irregular due to the negligence of their teachers. It was found that due to the weak educational management, teachers did not perform their positive role in providing the quality of education to the students. In this way it could be argued that teachers' lateness badly effected on the children education and it compelled the parents to exclude their children from basic education.

It could be argued that the shortage of teachers negatively affected the enrolment of the children. There were total 331451 public primary school teachers in 2011-12 and with the decrease of 14188 total teachers 317263 teachers remained in 2015-16. It could be argued that there is a strong relationship between the shortage of teachers and low children enrolment in the government primary schools (Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16, 2017).

#### **Conclusion:**

It could be summarized that due to the active and passive exclusion the people of southern Punjab were excluded from basic necessities of life. People of these districts were excluded from the visionary future of their children due to the low socio-economic status and lack of true religious knowledge. It not only affected the children future but also lay down the progress and prosperity of the society as a whole. Teachers related issued were also found like shortage of teacher, usage of bad language by teachers, teachers giving corporal punishment to the teachers and teachers came late as well. These above issues negatively affected the educational inclusion of children in southern Punjab, Pakistan. It is recommended that the government of Pakistan should have to focus the marginalized areas by providing scholarships to the needy children and organize the different seminars in these areas to motivate the community towards children education and build gender sensitivity. Government should have hire more well qualified teachers and give them Islamic training.

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