



SOCIO CULTURAL CAUSES OF LOW LITERACY AMONG FEMALE IN SOUTHERN PUNJAB, DISTRICT DERA GHAZI KHAN

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Abstract

The female literacy has a substantial and central obligation in the progress and development of a nation particularly in the national economic growth of a country. But status and standard of the female education and literacy in the Pakistan is mostly at a low level. The study was conducted to find out the socio-cultural causes of low literacy among females in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. A cross sectional survey was conducted, and data was collected from 200 household heads selected through multistage sampling technique. Binary logistic regression was applied to assess the likelihood of low literacy among females. The findings indicated that there are various impediments to female literacy such as cultural factors, religious factors financial factors and social factors were putting great pressure on female literacy in the rural areas. In addition impact of various other factor was also observed which include purdah restrictions family honor and early marriages. The study suggested that some literacy promoting factors may play a role to promote female



literacy like provision of funds by the Government for improvement of infrastructure, awarding stipends and scholarships and providing proper security arrangements in female schools. Also, safe and secure environment and other allied facilities for females can act as motivational source for female literacy

Keywords: Female Literacy, Cultural Factors. Binary Logit model, Social Factors

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is defined as the capability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, with the use of printed or written data associated with varying context. Literacy includes a variety of learning and empowering individuals to accomplish their targets, to extend knowledge and ability to participate within their own community and to the outer World (Oghenekohwo, 2017).

Female literacy may be helpful to establish a powerful female community to strengthen the education system. The educational quality requires to be revised, when we look at the effectiveness of our educational system. We cannot get success in quality education only having access to education (Wickens, 2007).

We cannot repudiate importance of literacy in the current scenario of globalization. The literacy and education are first and foremost thing by which developing countries can change lifestyle of their people. The integration of people with social and religious practice is an important factor that resists to the changes and progress in society. The parents' thinking regarding literacy and education is also very detrimental in the rural areas all over the world and it is mostly observed while talking about female literacy and education. Parents are held responsible for their children's education (Andrabi, 2007).

Literacy has an immense role in the development and progress of a country. It fortifies our youth with the knowledge of modern knowledge and is helpful for new inventions. In Pakistan, the literacy rate is low with compared to neighboring countries: China 80%, India 74%, Iran 85%. Currently, Pakistan has a 58% literacy rate. Female illiteracy is worse than men's literacy due to patriarchal culture and difficult circumstances for females. (Khan, 2019).

. Many girls who are otherwise talented and intelligent for getting education, are disadvantaged due to various social, cultural and economic issues and gender



discrimination. Due to this reason, females cannot give an energetic move to the progress and development of society (Asghar, 2012).

The low literacy and educational level are one of the foremost reasons behind the less development and progress in those tribal and rural areas of Pakistan. There has been a worldwide insight that the social and economic reasons along with parents' willingness, are vital elements in connection with children's education. Deficiency in parents' educational level keep children missing from the schools. On the other hand parents' literacy is likely to improve their children's education and also play its role in the progress and development of the state (Lall, 2009).

Maximum individuals of Pakistani society believed that attainment of education is a source of getting a job, which further causes termination of their education. Another strong reason is that parents are less or not literate and they are slightly known to the importance of education and insist that their daughters should get knowledge about household, cooking, stitching, sewing, handicrafts and embroidery, that may benefit them in the days of hardship. In this way daughters can assist the parents and the learnt skills may produce good impression on their husband's life at home. There is an ultimate consequence on their education (Tilak, 2005).

Female modesty has greater rate in the tribal settings of Pakistan, particularly in those parts which are remote from settled areas and distance is larger from home to school. The Parents have a lot of concerns on security of female children. They cannot allow their females to attend the school with coeducation. Due to long range of distance of school building from home, the risk regarding sexual harassment rises. (Zulfiqar, 2019)

A number of studies conducted on female Literacy. This study aim to examine the socio cultural causes of low Literacy among females in southern Punjab

Review of Literature

Pakistan stands unlikely to attain the primary enrolment objective of at least 95% by 2015, and the possibility of attaining gender equality is even dimmer and shifting away from the focus. Resultantly, Pakistan remains with those countries, which will weaken the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals set out for 2015. UNESCO (2013)

Pakistan is an active member of international human rights declarations and commitments since 1990 (Education for All (EFA), Dakar Forum and Millennium Development Goals (MDG). In spite of these obligations and exertions, the educational



standard is not up to mark in Pakistan and it is a pity that every 10th child rest of the world is from Pakistan who does not attend the school. Pakistan has decided to disregard illiteracy and pledged to get its all children attend the schools. Yet, there is a great difference between the model and reality.

Most of the tribal belt of Pakistan is blessed with natural mineral recourses. But there are a smaller number of schools and institutions and it has low literacy rate with compared to other cities of Punjab. The number of female schools is very nominal. Teaching staff also lacks with weak infrastructure in female schools. The vacant seats are kept unfilled for years due to non-enlistment of teaching staff for years. The local people depend upon agriculture, livestock and dairy products. In the rural and tribal areas, there is a dire need female schools with proper infrastructure and other allied facilities to raise female literacy. Awan (2015)

There found a strong relationship between children's mother education and professional objectives of the education. Zulfiqar (2019) . The feudal structures in Pakistan made it difficult for females to get education as a right and even for male population. The people of Pakistan think that the education is unnecessary for girls. The government is also not taking interest in female literacy and education. Due to female illiteracy, the country remained poor and underdeveloped. A Survey revealed that three Pakistani's out of every four are illiterate. Thus, literacy is very much essential for both gender of the society. Iqbal (2000)

Bikak (2003) stated that in the patriarchal society, the women leadership is very much needed to perform its roles and functions. The society is being ruled by men at large. Women are deprived of attaining education and literacy in this society, and it is dominated by males in all ways of life. The opportunities in all directions are for men excluding females. A lot of programs of administration are being run under the close supervision of men and majority of professionals working there are male. The trends are changing now with a great work done for the look after of all matters by females. This will only be possible through education and literacy among the females in our society. The parents' attitude towards female literacy is very much significant to achieve the goals and require results. Dreze (2003) observed that social and economic reasons pay an important role to inequalities in the fulfillment of education and literacy among females in rural and urban areas.

Husain (2005) discussed that the patriarchal structure in society is a major cause of female low literacy. The people are culturally very rigid to permit their daughters for schooling. The tribal and rural people feel ashamed and against the culture that their daughters may



get literate. In these areas the females cannot cross the boundaries of their houses. They are mere permitted to go out of their homes. The awareness is needed to be given to the tribal and rural people regarding female literacy and education as it is the most common and important element for the development of the society. This is also a great factor for keeping females away from literacy and education. The parents in rural and tribal areas feel ashamed and against the family honor to send their females alone out of homes for getting education. They prefer early marriages of their daughters instead of educating them. However, they favor sons in getting literacy and education in any circumstances. The girls are assigned household tasks and duties to take care of their kin. Foregoing in view, the female literacy is very low and high dropouts exist in schools. The parents consider their daughters less intelligent and talented and they are not aware of the importance

Objectives of the study

Following objectives were set for current study.

1. To investigate the social causes of low literacy among females in the study area.
2. To identify the cultural aspects of low literacy among females in the study area.

Significance of the study

This research will help others to understand the basic and vital factors performing behind female low literacy in our rural areas. The findings of the study would definitely be useful for the stakeholders and will help the literacy and education departments to come up with seminars and different programs to promote and highlight female literacy and its direct proportion with the progress and development of a nation. The importance of this study is to provide Government, non-government organizations and other stakeholders to identify effective strategies to maximize female literacy. This study will be particularly useful to the four major stakeholders: Females themselves, their parents, their children and for the Govt administration. This study will highlight the ways in which female literacy can better be promoted, considering all the barriers, and establish a framework for future programs and initiatives. After reading this study, literacy teachers will gain best practices that encourage them to put their efforts and inputs to engage huge proportion of the society in the mainstreamed of modern courses and subjects.

METHODOLOGY

Study settings

The present research has been conducted in the Sothern Punjab Province. Multistage Sampling Technique was used to get data from the respondents. In the 1st stage, Dera



Ghazi Khan District was selected. In the 2nd stage, two Tehsils Dera Ghazi Khan and Kot Chutta were taken. In the 3rd stage, 02 UCs from each Tehsil were selected and a sample size of 200 household heads was taken from the targeted population through proportional allocation method (Ali et al, 2013)

Variables of Study

The researcher adopted interview scheduled for data collection. In order to give them facilitation or support by explaining the question so that they can have clear understanding about the questions which was ultimately helpful for them for option of their own choices Interview scheduled was comprised of three major parts: social emographic variables, social barriers variable and economic barriers variables

Binary logistic regression was applied to assess the probability of low literacy among rural females as a result of various socio-cultural causes broadly categorized as cultural, financial, religious and social. The predictor variables also include purdah restriction, family honor and early marriages of the female folk. The general equation of the model is as under.

$$P(Y) = \frac{e^{b_0 + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 \dots + b_nx_n}}{1 + e^{b_0 + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 \dots + b_nx_n}}$$

Where

$P(Y)$: probability of Y occurring

e : natural logarithm base

b_0 : interception at y-axis

b_I : line gradient

b_n : regression coefficient of X_n

X_I : predictor variable

X_I : predicts the probability of Y



Results

Table 1 reveals the demographic characteristics of respondents. Descriptive results depict that majority (36.5%) of respondents were in age group of 42 and above. They(33.5%).were illiterate More than half (57%) of the respondents were living in joint family system. Whereas majority (41%) of the respondents belong to the Low-income families earning less than 10,000Pkr

CATEGORY	N0. %
AGE	
18-25	22(11)
26-33	42(21)
34-41	63(31.5)
42AND ABOVE	73(36.5)
Education	
Literate	67(66.5)
Illiterate	133(33.5)
Monthly Income	
Less than 10,000	82(41)
11000-15000	20(10)
16000-20,000	36(18)
21000 and above	62(31)
Family Type	
Nuclear	56(28)
Joint	114(57)
Extended	30(15)

Binary Logistics Regression



Likelihood of females having low literacy were calculated using Logistic Binary Regression. Cultural barriers, economical barriers, religious barriers, and societal barriers have all been identified as obstacles to female education. In addition, several other factors, including as purdah restrictions, family honour, and early marriage, were. The results shows that all the factors (variables) are statistically significant with family honor variable as moderately significant as $p=0.052 \approx 0.05$.

Table: 4.4.1 Model summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	222.709	.110	.155

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 4 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Based on the model, the table indicates that the variation in the dependent variable ranges from 11% to 15.5%. In other words the model explained 15.5% (Nagelkerke R-square) variance in the dependent variable (females' low literacy rate).

Table: 2 Variables in the equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1a								
Cultural constraints	1.609	.481	11.195	1	.001	.200	.078	.514
Financial constraints	2.056	.523	15.464	1	.000	.128	.046	.357
Religious constraints	1.205	.438	7.579	1	.006	.300	.127	.707
Social constraints	1.132	.492	5.285	1	.022	.322	.123	.846
Pardah restriction	1.386	.500	7.686	1	.006	.250	.073	.474
Family honor	1.133	.622	3.320	1	.052	3.104	.918	10.495



Early marriage	1.476	.610	5.851	1	.016	4.375	1.323	14.464
Constant	.860	.528	2.660	1	.103	.423		

- a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Cultural constraints, financial constraints, religious constraints, social constraints, purdah restriction, family honor, early marriage and transportation issue.
- b.

Table 2 indicates that all the variables are statistically significant ($p=.001<.05$ for cultural constraints, $p=.000<.05$ for financial constraints, $p=.006<.05$ for religious constraints, $p=0.022<.05$ for social constraints, $p=.006<.05$ for purdah restriction, $p=0.052\approx 0.05$ for family honor and $p=.016<.05$ for early marriage). The results also illustrate that financial constraints were the major contributing factors (cause) to the issue of low literacy rate in the study area as the probability of low literacy rate amongst females due to low income and poverty of the respondents (financial constraints) was more than 2 times ($B=2.056$) followed by cultural constraints ($B=1.609$), Early marriages ($B=1.476$), religious constraints ($B=1.205$), purdah restriction ($B=1.386$), family honor ($B=1.133$) and social constraints ($B=1.132$) in descending order. The results corroborate that the probability of female low literacy increases varyingly with unit variance in the predictor variables.

Discussion

The results signify that the selected sociocultural factors (cultural constraints such as sanctions and taboos, financial constraints such as low income and poverty, religious constraints such as misinterpretation of Islamic teaching regarding female education, various social constraints, purdah restriction, family honor and early marriages of females) are statistically significant as p-value for the predictor variables was found to be .001, .000, .006, .022, .006, .052 and .016 respectively. Financial constraints variable was highly significant ($p=.000<.05$) with a probability of 2.056 for causing females' low literacy rate in the study area. Economic conditions of a person determine whether or not his or her children will have access to educational opportunities. Studies by Qamar (2017) affirm that low income and poverty are the key limiting factors for female literacy rate in Pakistan. There is gender inequality in education that serves both as a cause and consequence of poverty in developing countries (Rahman et al., 2018). Due to limited income and poor economic condition of majority of the population in Pakistan, most of the male children are sent to earn money for livelihood and female children are either engaged in household activities or employed in agricultural ones especially in rural areas. As a result overall



literacy rate in general and female literacy rate in particular is low in comparison to other neighbouring developing countries of the region (Arcinieg, 2021). One of the important causes of female low literacy rate in the countries is misconception and misinterpretation of Islamic teachings. Female education is the most challenging problem as majority of the Muslims lack the rules and jurisprudence of Islamic teaching (Ilyas, 2014). Despite the fact that Islam strongly emphasizes the importance of education for females, the religious class has developed a negative attitude towards the contemporary female education resulting in low literacy rate for women in the country to some extent (Inamullah et al., 2010). The results clarify that similar negative attitude from religious clergy increases the probability of lowering female literacy rate by 1.205 times (see column 2 of table 4.4.2) in the study area.

Cultural and social constraints in the study area lower the probability of female literacy by 1.609 and 1.132 times respectively. Socio-cultural constraints to female education included social sanction, taboo, social trending, permission from family, preference of male education over female education and parental education. Lack of parental education is one of the important social cause of females' low literacy rate (Paul et al., 2021). Various socio-cultural constraints such as purdah restriction, conception of family honor and early marriage of females have varying impact on the likelihood of lowering female literacy. The probability was recorded as 1.386 times for purdah restriction, 1.133 times for family honor and 1.476 times for early marriage as constraints to female education and subsequent literacy rate. The study are in accord with Yaqoob (2012) highlighting that low family income, restriction on purdah, sexual harassment, inferior status of females in the society and early marriages are some of the important socio-cultural and economic causes of females' low literacy in rural Pakistan

Conclusions

This research concluded that the socio-cultural factors are putting great pressure on female literacy. Local clerics and the notables' positive role is very much detrimental towards female literacy and education. Socio-cultural factors such as Pardah, honour early marriages are currently working against the literacy of rural females

In addition, the economic factors such as large family size, low income level, unemployment are also playing role in low literacy. The study further recommended that parents should be convinced and educated about the need of female literacy through government and non-governmental organization (NGO) awareness programmes, and that the number of female schools be expanded to areas in close vicinity of villages



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