



## THE EFFECTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON THE DROP-OUT OF AFGHAN REFUGEE GIRLS' FROM SCHOOLS

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### Abstract

*The study explores how socio-economic factors affect the dropout of the Afghan refugee girls' students from schools. This study uses exploratory approach. While data for the paper has been collected through self-made questionnaire and has been analysed through descriptive statistical analysis. The target population consists of Afghan parents, teachers, administrators and dropped out girl children in selected districts of Pakistan. The sample size for the study is 377 and simple random sampling technique has been used to choose the respondents. This study found that socio-economic factors such as the need of girls to work at home or elsewhere, the importance given to brother's schooling forces parents to pull out girls from school as an alternate, the financial burden on parents, the parent's low social status, the joblessness of father, and the need to have more than one bread earner in the families results in the dropout of Afghan refugee girls' students from school. The study concludes that, socio-economic factors resulted in the dropout of the Afghan refugee girls' students from schools. This study recommends extensive education campaign to educate parents and the public on substitute methods of reducing school dropout, and provision of livelihood opportunities to the parents.*



**Keywords:** Afghan Refugee girls; parents, teachers, socio-economic, Pakistan

### ***Background of the study***

Education is a basic human right and it plays a significant role in the development of any society.. Educated Individuals who are equipped with the knowledge and values of the society can prove to be valuable assets not just for themselves but also for the society (Noori, 2017). Education plays a key role in the economic development and provision of quality life to the citizens of any country.(Okumu et al., 2008). Samady (2007) is of the view that education plays a significant role in the security, economic development, technological and scientific advancement, and reconstruction of the country.

According to the national and international laws and Islamic fundamentals that education is the basic right of every man and woman without any discrimination based on place of birth, social status, language, race, ethnicity, gender etc. States must provide equal opportunities to everyone in getting education. However, unfortunately, there are a lot of countries where gender discrimination still exists in relation to access to education opportunities.

Refugee crisis is on the rise globally. After the Soviet intervention, a massive number of Afghans fled to neighboring countries including Pakistan. The people of Pakistan met their physiological and safety needs. Besides other needs, the Pakistani government with the help of the international community addressed their educational needs. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee's report, Pakistan hosted about 1.38 million Afghan Refugees which is 10% of the world refugees. The age group 5-17 constituted 43% of the total refugees thus warranting the need for schooling. Afghan children now have access to a variety of educational institutions inside Pakistan, including Public, private and UNHCR assisted school in camps (UNHCR, 2016).

The issue of school dropouts is a grave issue across the world. All nations, advanced and developing, are concerned about their country's future. Progress and prosperity cannot be attained or maintained in the absence of educated members of society. The state's affairs cannot run efficiently if the bulk of the population are uneducated. The dropout phenomena are not a problem of the past nor a issue of the present, but if it is not tackled appropriately, it will become a severe problem for forthcoming generations. This issue did not arise recently but stretches a long way back into the history of education. Out-of-school and unemployed children are a thorny subject for society. It is a dynamite for a nation's socioeconomic stability (Farooq, 2011). Numerous studies in Pakistan showed varying causes and rates of dropout. When compared to their urban counterparts, rural girls drop out of elementary school at a higher rate. There is no one explanation for the student's

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dropout; rather, it is the result of a pattern of factors. The dropout rate is the fraction of pupils who drop out of primary school before the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This is not merely a high rate, but it is also in a precarious condition (Bhatti, 2007), (Shami & Hussain, 2005), and (Malik, 2002). The dropout problem of children from school in the primary stage is strongly ingrained in nearly all underdeveloped countries, which attract the researchers and policy makers to find out the solution of problem (Sajjad et al., 2012). Furthermore, Holmes (2003) found that girls students obtained less education than boys because the girls are withdrawn earlier or dropout from school due to social cultural and economic reasons.

There are abundant aspects which lead school children to make determination for cessation of their education. High dropout rates are driven by poor educational quality, particularly in rural and public-sector schools. The main causes of high dropout rates include high student-teacher ratios, particularly in urban schools, as well as poor knowledge of child psychology, harsh treatment of kids by instructors, low morale among primary school teachers, and inadequate/improved residential amenities. Particularly in distant places, forcing them to miss school to attend to family matters, female instructors' reluctance to visit schools in remote areas, shortage of teachers, rigid formal system of education, non-availability of text-books on time, inflexible system of examination, poor quality of education, lack of relevance of curriculum to the need of the community, curriculum that is out of sync with children's demands and cognitive capacities, undue political interference, teacher absenteeism, administrative and managerial personnel's indifference toward teachers, lack of supervision and weak administration, poor communication facilities, natural calamities in the hilly areas, long distances from homes to schools, scattered pattern of population in the large parts of the country, overcrowded classes, unfamiliar/ unattractive environment of the school, learning problems of children, introduction of the formal education begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school, practice of forcing children to repeat classes, heavy load of school bag, non-conductive atmosphere of schools, disciplinary measure teachers' adoption and loss of self-esteem, poor motivational level of parents to send children to schools, poor condition of school building, in-adequacy of audio-visual aids, costly text-books and exercise books, poor-standard of health and nutrition, shortage of funds especially to meet the recurring expenses, inadequate provision of physical facilities in schools, low-income, and low economic development of the country (Ministry of Education, 2003).

It is difficult to pinpoint a single element that is the primary cause of dropping out since this phenomena is impacted by a variety of various variables connected to school, family, community contexts, and the student himself (Rumberger, 2001). A great deal of study has taken place to investigate the phenomenon of school dropouts. Over the last 40 years, adequate resources and efforts were made to provide primary schooling to Afghan

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girls, however, the massive and continuous dropout from schooling continued at parallel and has not been investigated. Barriers that prevented Afghan girls from entering school were neither investigated nor addressed, though these girls had different facilities of public, private and camp-based schools. Therefore, this whole phenomenon affecting the schooling of Afghan refugee girls needs to be explored and explained due to its magnitude, importance, complexity, and relevance. This study was conducted to investigate the socio-economic causes of dropouts at primary level in the selected areas of Pakistan. The research analyses the parents, teachers, and dropout girls' opinion on barriers to draw conclusions and base recommendations on these conclusions. This research aims to recognize the dropout phenomenon and various barriers to the schooling of Afghan refugee girls in Pakistan in selected locations. The research will investigate the causes of low enrolment and dropout in selected locations to mitigate the phenomenon. The research will also investigate socio-economic factors the dropout of the Afghan refugee girl's students from school.

### ***Literature Review***

Ouma et al. (2017) study many elements that explain the phenomenon, with a particular focus on artisanal mining regions in Nyarugusu village, Geita Region, Tanzania. They gathered data using random sampling of two hundred dropped out students. Their findings indicate that the a lack of school needs, social norms, family duties, early pregnancies, and early marriages in the community are among the major reasons for students' dropouts from school. Guio et al. (2018) investigate the link among the dropout risk, academic performance, and labor market circumstances by unravelling the effects of unemployment in the case Spain and used the linear regressions for estimations. They found that at the age of fifteen the student's academic performance have affected the labor market situation and effect the future educational decisions.

Bhandari (2019), determine the relationship between school attendance and the chance of marriage Dhanusha, Nepal. Sixty schoolgirls from grades 9 to 10 took part in the evaluation and noted that the principal sources of marriage offers to a family when a daughter turned thirteen. According to Manzuoli et al. (2019), investigate four elements of school engagement—cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and agentic—using a self-report questionnaire and comparing rural and urban schools of Colombia. The questionnaire was completed by 802 seventh graders (51.2 percent males and 48.8 percent girls), the majority of whom were between the ages of 12 and 13 (71.7 percent) and attended public schools. Their findings imply that students should participate in activities that assist them understand their metacognitive talents and improve their classroom involvement.



Shah et al. (2019) study the factors of elementary school dropout in Pakistan. Data were gathered from 208 education executives and 291 primary school teachers. They found the probable dropout variables were classified as socioeconomic aspects, physical aspects, and school-facility-related components. Effiong and Edet (2020) investigated the impact of family background on secondary school dropout in the Yakurr local government area of Cross River State. They collect data from one hundred and fifty (150) pupils were chosen at random from five (5) secondary schools in the research region. They found that the student drop out from school due to family size, parents' attitudes, parents' socioeconomic level, and educational background. Rooy et al. (2021) want to explore the theory that a dislike of education is a trigger for adolescent pregnancy. Their research is based on 1,393 female students from public schools. Both univariate and multivariate regression analysis were employed to evaluate the hypothesis. They use the parental employment, as a proxy for socioeconomic class, and found to be a significant predictor of school discontent, but greater levels of alcohol use indicated a larger likelihood of hate of school.

According to Amir-ud-Din et al. (2021), over 23 percent of all pupils who dropped out of school in Pakistan in 2017. The ambiguity at the core of absence of interest frequently puts stakeholders in the dark about how to effectively deter school dropouts. They seek to identify the elements that contribute to pupils dropping-out from due to loss of interest. Their findings indicated that students' were more likely to drop-out due to a lack of interest, orphaned, lived in cities, married, belonged to families where the head of the household was over 40 years old, or were female. Saravanan and Ramesh (2022) want to investigate the socioeconomic features of tribal households as well as the factors influencing school dropouts among tribal females. Individual surveys were used to obtain information from 126 indigenous families in the Namkkal district's Kolli hills taluk. They utilized a basic table, percentage analysis, and regression analysis and conclude that working moms, adolescent home alone, and family economic position influenced school drop-out rates with low-income and high reliance.

There to many scholars investigate the determinants of dropout of the student. Many scholars identified the socio-economic determinants of dropout or no enrolment at primary level education like educational infrastructure, place of residence, caste, family size, parental education level, monthly income and type family (Akhtar, 1996), (Brown & Park, 2002), (Deolalikar, 1997), (Boissiere, 2004),(Connelly & Zheng, 2003), (Okumu et al., 2008), and (Husain & Chatterjee, 2009). Many scholars shows that the gender difference is the major cause of the dropout or no enrolment of the students in schools like (Bandopadhyay & Subrahmanian, 2010) and (Mukherjee & Das, 2008). According to Rao (2000) stated that inadequate earning, poverty, illiteracy and poor living conditions of the

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parents force their children away from school but also send him/her to work to earn money for them. Similarly, Sharma et al. (2007) stated the main causes of drop out or no enroll the girls students due to large family size, household income, household works, lack of interest and parental precure. However, many studies also rise the point that the cash transfer scheme for low income families have significant effect on the children health, dropout from school and no enrolment in school (Behrman et al., 2005), (Schultz, 2001), and (Dubois et al., 2012).

### ***Theoretical Framework***

Household-poverty, child marriage, a poor-learning environment, and bullying/harassment at school all raised the likelihood of dropping out of school (Prakash et al., 2017). Other risk variables were parental divorce, tense relationships with peers, late school admission, grade-repetition, and low academic success (No et al., 2016). According to a Norwegian study, a lack of instructors help and a felt sensation of loneliness strongly anticipated the intent to drop out of school (Frostad et al., 2015). Marijuana usage and smoking were discovered to be significant risk factors for high school dropouts. Poor reading and numeracy proficiency implies a higher chance of dropping out (Zuilkowski et al., 2016). Furthermore, pupils who are not required to attend formal schooling, who are male, and who live with single parents are more likely to drop out of school (Steege et al., 2015). Children's enthusiasm in education was diminished by community-level risk factors such as persistent family difficulties (Rahbari et al., 2014). A study of primary school dropouts in Kenya found that children, rather than parents, made the majority of school-related decisions (Zuilkowski et al., 2016).

### ***Research Methodology***

This research study was exploratory and focused on the relationship between the education of Afghan girls and factors associated with their lack of schooling. The exploration process will help the researchers to reach out to out of school Afghan girls, their parents, and teachers. The descriptive statistical analysis was conducted through a self-made questionnaire built on the five (5) point Likert type scale. In the light of linked literature review about the causes of children dropout from school. A pilot study was carried out to test the questionnaire's dependability and the Cronbach's alpha calculated value is 0.859, which means that the questionnaire is reliable. To use the sound research design its mandatory to informed the respondent about the purpose of the data collection, willingness of the respondents, anonymity, privacy and confidentiality to avoid wastage of time of the respondents involved were specifically considered during the conduct of study (Farooq, 2011).



In this research study, the target population is of Afghan parents, teachers, administrators and dropped out Afghan's girl children in selected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. According to the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) presented sample size determination table, this study used the sample size is 377 at 5% level of confidence based on the taking population as 20,000 (approximately) girls which is not yet enrolled in the school or dropout because the fix number of girls which is not yet enrolled in the school or dropout are not known. There are lot of Afghan refugees live in Pakistan which are unregistered.

### **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 indicate the respondents (teachers, fathers, mothers, and relatives of the students) views about socio-economic factors that influence the dropout of the Afghan refugee girl's students from school. The respondents' views about the dropout of the Afghan refugee girl's students from school due to the need of girls to work at home that the 16.2 percent has no extent, 31.3 percent has small extent, 33.4 percent has moderate extent, 14.9 percent has large extent, and 4.2 percent has very large extent. Therefore, the majority of respondent argues that the need of girls to work at home has moderate effect on dropout of Afghan refugee girls' students from school. Yang (2014) explored the same factors of girl's dropout from school. The Chi-square value has also significant, which the results of this item is significant and good fit.

Correspondingly, the respondents' views about the dropout of the Afghan refugee girl's students from school due to the need of girls to work elsewhere that the 10.9 percent has no extent, 26.3 percent has small extent, 40.3 percent has moderate extent, 13.5 percent has large extent, and 9.0 percent has very large extent. Therefore, the majority of respondent argues that the need of girls to work elsewhere has moderate effect on dropout of Afghan refugee girls' students from school. The Chi-square value has also significant, which the results of this item is significant and good fit. Furthermore, the respondents' views about the dropout of the Afghan refugee girl's students from school due to the brother's schooling forces parents to pull out girls from school that the 11.1 percent has no extent, 26.8 percent has small extent, 40.3 percent has moderate extent, 17.0 percent has large extent, and 4.8 percent has very large extent. Therefore, the majority of respondent argues that the brother's schooling forces parents to pull out girls from school has moderate effect on the dropout of Afghan refugee girls' students from school. The Chi-square value has also significant, which the results of this item is significant and good fit.

Similarly, the respondents' views about the dropout of the Afghan refugee girl's students from school due to the financial burden on parents to pull out girls from school that the 5.8 percent has no extent, 28.1 percent has small extent, 40.1 percent has moderate

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extent, 19.9 percent has large extent, and 6.1 percent has very large extent. Therefore, the majority of respondent argues that the financial burden on parents to pull out girls from school has moderate effect on the dropout of Afghan refugee girls' students from school. Sajjad et al. (2012) explored that financial burden has significant effect on student's dropout from school. The Chi-square value has also significant, which the results of this item is significant and good fit. Furthermore, the respondents' views about the dropout of the Afghan refugee girl's students from school due to the parent's low social status forces them to retain girls at home that the 8.5 percent has no extent, 23.6 percent has small extent, 42.7 percent has moderate extent, 18.6 percent has large extent, and 6.6 percent has very large extent. Therefore, the majority of respondent argues that the parent's low social status forces them to retain at home has moderate effect on the dropout of Afghan refugee girls' students from school. Sajjad et al. (2012) stated that the parent's low social status has affect the student's dropout from school. The Chi-square value has also significant, which the results of this item is significant and good fit.

Moreover, the respondents' views about the dropout of the Afghan refugee girl's students from school due to the joblessness of father forces girls to dropout from school that the 5.8 percent has no extent, 24.9 percent has small extent, 38.2 percent has moderate extent, 24.1 percent has large extent, and 6.9 percent has very large extent. Therefore, the majority of respondent argues that the joblessness of father has moderate effect on the dropout of Afghan refugee girls' students from school. Di-Maio et al. (2016) found that parent's job loss has increase the dropout risk. The Chi-square value has also significant, which the results of this item is significant and good fit. Furthermore, the respondents views about the dropout of the Afghan refugee girl's students from school due to dropout of girls does not happen when there is more than one earner in family that the 17.5 percent has no extent, 30.0 percent has small extent, 39.0 percent has moderate extent, 12.7 percent has large extent, and 0.8 percent has very large extent. Therefore, the majority of respondent argues that the dropout of girls does not happen when there is more than one earner in family has moderate effect on the dropout of Afghan refugee girls' students from school. The Chi-square value has also significant, which the results of this item is significant and good fit.



**Table 1: Socio-Economic Factors of Dropout Afghan refugee Girl's Students from school**

S. No	Socio-Economic Factors of Dropout (extent)	No (%)	Small (%)	Moderate (%)	Large (%)	Very large (%)	$\chi^2$ .value (p-value)
1	The need for the girls to work at home results in their dropout	61 (16.2)	118 (31.3)	126 (33.4)	56 (14.9)	16 (4.2)	112.562 (0.0000)
2	The need for the girls to work elsewhere results in their dropout	41 (10.9)	99 (26.3)	152 (40.3)	51 (13.5)	34 (9.0)	131.528 (0.0000)
3	Brother's schooling forces parents to pull out girls from school	42 (11.1)	101 (26.8)	152 (40.3)	64 (17.0)	18 (4.8)	146.727 (0.0000)
4	Financial burden on parents' forces to pull out girls from school	22 (5.8)	106 (28.1)	151 (40.1)	75 (19.9)	23 (6.1)	162.456 (0.0000)
5	Parent's low social status forces them to retain girls at home	32 (8.5)	89 (23.6)	161 (42.7)	70 (18.6)	25 (6.6)	158.690 (0.0000)
6	Joblessness of father forces girls to dropout from school	22 (5.8)	94 (24.9)	144 (38.2)	91 (24.1)	26 (6.9)	140.690 (0.0000)
7	Dropout of girls does not happen when there is more than one earner in family	66 (17.5)	113 (30.0)	147 (39.0)	48 (12.7)	3 (0.8)	167.390 (0.0000)

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The main objective of the study is to investigate socio-economic issues of the dropout of the Afghan refugee girls' students from school. To achieve the objective of the study, this study would use exploratory approach and descriptive statistical analysis. The data was collected through a self-made questionnaire based on the five (5) point Likert type scale. The population has consisted of Afghan parents, teachers, administrators of the dropped-out girl children in selected districts of Pakistan and used the sample size is 377 and used simple random sampling techniques to collect the data. This study found that the socio-economic factors like the need of girls to work at home or elsewhere, the brother's schooling forces parents to pull out girls from school, the financial burden on parents, the parent's low social status, the joblessness of father, and more than one earner in family has a significant effect on the dropout of Afghan refugee girls' students from school. Therefore, this study concluded that there are lot of socio-economic issues of the dropout of the Afghan refugee girls' students from school. This study recommended that to educate the parents and a robust education campaign be launched to educate parents and the



general public on alternative methods of reducing school dropout. Furthermore, the government should provide the financial assistant to those girl's whose parents are poor to ensure completion of full primary schooling.



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