

WOMEN EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: IS THE LEVEL ENOUGH FOR EMPOWERMENT?

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Abstract—The women considered to have an important role in building the society. This role of women can be further bettered by educating them so that they can differentiate between the right and wrong and pass only the right thing to their generations. In Pakistan, the population of women was higher than men but as the country was still in the developing phase so the literacy rate of the population was very low which is lower in women of the country. The literature focused on analyzing the situation of women education in Pakistan. The government should allocate more quotas for women in governmental organizations and should try to ensure that all the private sector organizations also work on equal employment opportunities. The girls should be educated to build a better nation.

Key Words: Women, Education, Society, Empowerment.

1. Introduction

Education is considered as a key to success. Education not only helps in bringing awareness, in getting opportunities, in knowing the world but also helps in empowerment (Ashraf et al. 2015). It is also true that knowledge is not defined by what one study in books but it is gained from nature and nurture. However, education defines the correct way to interpret the learning from the environment as well as nature that can enhance the awareness and brings knowledge ultimately which can be applied in every path of life (King and Winthrop, 2015). Education runs the systems, the economy and the people. It has an importance that cannot be ignored at any case. The importance for education in Islam can be as shortly defined as the first revelation to Prophet (S.A.W) was about education. If we then come towards to the other big personalities then according to Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world".

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This quote also emphasize on the importance of education for the globe.

Pakistan is a developing country and has a large population. The noticeable factor is the women majority in the population of the country. It is a common quote that "there is a woman behind every successful man". This defines the importance of women for any nation. It is a woman who gives birth to children, who look after them and built a nation. It is also said that for a good nations, good women are required. Hence, women have the role of lifeblood in building nations, running countries, and the economic systems eventually. An educated woman cannot only contribute in economy, government but also as a good mother makes her children do the same. One other noticeable factor of Pakistani population is that Pakistan is also called the youngest country of the world, as major portion of its population is young. Therefore, a young population with major portion of females is a resource that if used wisely can help to bring benefits to the country in all terms.

In Pakistan, the education level is very low. (Ashraf et al. 2015), Many of the children are not going schools and are included in child labor. If the students attends school so the

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drop out are made after the primary level and the after matriculation as well. A very low percentage of people have the reach to higher education. It is not the case that Pakistanis are deficiency of aptitude and is unable to study due to lack of intelligence. The reason is the poverty level in Pakistan that many students who wants to pursue education are unable to pay the tuition fees that results in dropouts. The ratio of females acquiring education is lower than the males due to many reasons where primary reason is the mentality of people and lack of awareness about the need of education of females (Khan et al. 2011).

2. Education Level in Pakistan

Pakistan is a developing country with high population, which is constantly growing. Pakistan is currently facing many problems in terms of economy and law and order situation. The other problem is growing population, which is also an indirect cause of the problem of sluggish economy and adverse law and order of the country. The literacy rate in Pakistan is also very low. In Pakistan, a person who is able to write and read his name is considered as literate and still with this eligibility of literacy, the rate is very low. Pakistan is ranked number third on the list of having highest illiterate adults ((Ashraf et al. 2015). The reason of low literacy is mainly the lack of resources for education purpose and lack of awareness on the need of education in the people. The condition of female education is worse than the male of Pakistan as in Pakistan many people do not consider education a good thing for women that ground for high illiteracy in the women of Pakistan and the country is dominated by males.

The following table shows the literacy rate of Pakistan in 2011 and 2012 with categorizes it into male and female as well as urban and rural. This table is likely to give an overview of the area and gender wise education level.

Province/Area	2010-11			2011-12		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Pakistan	69	46	58	70	47	58
Rural	65	35	49	64	35	49
Urban	81	67	74	82	68	75

(Source: Pakistan Economic Survey 2014-15)

The above table shows that in 2011 and 2012, the literacy rate in Pakistan was 58% which was same in both the years. In 2011, 69% of the total males of Pakistan were literate whose percentage increase by 1% to 70% in 2012. This shows that the ratio of male population having basic literacy level is not very poor. But when it comes to

females, only 46% females of Pakistan were literate in 2011 that increased to 47% in 2012. This shows the poor condition of literacy in females of Pakistan that not even half of the female population of the country knows to read and write their names. In rural areas, 49% population was literate in 2011 out of which 63% were males and only 35% were females in 2011, which in 2012 increased to 64% literate rural population of which 64% males are literate and 35% females are literate.

The table below shows the enrollment of students in preprimary, primary, middle, matriculation (high), intermediate, degree colleges and universities in 2011-2013. The enrollment statistics will give a better understanding of education level of Pakistani people. This will help to understand that where more improvements are required and how much of the people enrolling in the next degree.

Year	Enrolment		
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13 (E)
Pre-Primary	9412.5	9513.5	9919.1
Primary*	18063.4	18667.4	18747.9
Middle	5643.7	6020.2	6244.8
High	2630.1	2753.0	2823.7
Higher Sec./ Inter	1187.8	1294.1	1382.3
Degree Colleges	431.2	497.1	556.2
Universities	1107.7	1319.8	1602.5
Total	38,476.4	40,065.1	41,276.5

(Source: Pakistan Economic Survey 2014-15)

The above table shows that in 2011, around 38 million population of Pakistan were enrolled in any educational program which increased to 40 million in 2012 and 41.2 million in 2013. The enrollment in education is increasing continuously. In 2011, around 9.4 million students were enrolled in pre-primary, 18 million students in primary, 5 million in middle, 2.6 million in matriculation, 1 million in intermediate, 0.4 million in degree colleges and 1.1 million in university programs. While, 9.5 million students were enrolled in pre-primary, 18.6 million students in primary, 6 million in middle, 2.7 million in matriculation, 1 million in intermediate, 0.5 million in degree colleges and 1.3 million in university programs in 2012 which shows a slight increase in enrollment of students in educational institutions. In 2013, around 10 million students were enrolled in pre-primary, 18.7 million students in primary, 5 million in middle, 2.8 million in matriculation, 1 million in intermediate, 0.5 million in degree colleges and 1.6 million in university programs. The increase in enrollment of students in pre-primary section shows that the awareness in the people on the need of education is increasing and they are now willing to send their children more to school than wasting them at home or by child labor. The increase in enrollment in universities than the degree colleges shows that students are now pursuing education more at

universities and are willing to get higher education to have successful careers.

3. Education Policy of Pakistan

In Pakistan, the literacy rate is very low as discussed above. The government of Pakistan is working to increase the literacy in the country. The Article 37 (b) & (c) present in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan states that:

"The State shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within the minimum possible period; make technical and professional education generally available and higher education equally accessible by all on the basis of merit" (Malik, et al. 2014).

The above article shows that the government at all the level and times should provide education to the people of Pakistan and should make efforts to eradicate illiteracy from the country. The government should also ensure that all the education provided should be based on purely merit only to the one who deserves to get educated due to their capabilities and without having personal references.

The constitution of Pakistan also quoted

"The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law" in the Article 25-A (Malik, et al. 2014).

The article mentioned above also shows the responsibility of the government to provide education to all the students aged between 5 years to 16 years. The law is to enhance the literacy rate in the country. There were two major policies implemented in the past two decades that both emphasized on increasing the level of education in the country. The main points included in the policy implemented between the period of 1998 to 2010 were increasing the enrollment in education institutions, removing gender discrimination in the educational institutes, inclusion of pre-primary class also in the formal education system, reducing the adult illiteracy rate by initiating programs for adult education, and increasing the contribution of private sector in the education system. However, the policy could not be implemented properly due to the military rule, disturbed political scenario and terrorism wave in the country. The other policy came in 2009, the National Education Policy which aimed to enroll all the children of Pakistan in schools by 2015 (Joint Education Advisor Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training, Govt. of Pakistan, UNDP – Pakistan and Dubai Cares, 2015). But the situation discussed above shows that the goal has not been achieved yet. In the 18th amendment of the constitution made in the year 2010, the amendment proposes that deciding the curriculum and making the policies would be under the

federal government but the implementation of this should have to be carried out by provincial governments. This was a major shift in the policy, which shows that now it is responsibility of the provinces actually to work on the increment on the literacy rate. Now after the change in the policy, now all the governments of different provinces in Pakistan are working to increase the literacy in their province by providing different types of incentives (Shaheen, 2013). The incentives include no tuition fees, free books, stipends, scholarships, gift of edible oil on punctuality etc. The governments are also giving special incentives to the girls enrolling in the schools to promote education in the girls particularly.

4. Islamic Perspective of Education

Pakistan is a country, which is formed based on religion that is Islam. Allah, the Almighty has provided its Muslims followers a complete guideline as to how to follow the religion and spend the lives. The Holy Quran and the quotations of Prophet (P.B.U.H) are the complete advice and rule to follow the religion and live the lives so that the Muslims can be successful both here and after. Allah has provided revelations to his beloved Prophet (S.A.W) and the first revelation was about knowledge. The need of getting knowledge cannot be defined as clearly as that.

Allah says in his Holy Book, The Quran that:

"(O Beloved!) Read (commencing) with the Name of Allah, Who has created (everything). He created man from a hanging mass (clinging) like a leech (to the mother's womb). Read, and your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught man (reading and writing) by the pen, who (besides that) taught man (all that) which he did not know" [al-'Alaq, 96:1-5.]

This verse shows that the Almighty Allah wants his followers to study and get the knowledge. The Almighty also said that he has taught his man reading and writing and he have directed them to get the education.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) also said that:

"Seeking of knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim" (Ibn Majah 1/224 and Tirmidhi 218)

The statement of The Prophet (P.B.U.H) shows that acquiring knowledge is compulsory on all his followers regardless of their race, age, gender and social status. The education is mandatory to get for all the Muslims. To be a good Muslim, we must follow the guidelines provided by Allah and his Prophet ((S.A.W). The above verse and quotation shows that to be a good Muslim, knowledge must be acquired. Therefore, Pakistan being an Islamic country and having almost all the Muslim population should focus on education to follow the religion.

5. Level of Women Education in Pakistan

The population of Pakistan is increasing continuously and the country is ranked among the list of top highly populated countries. The interesting fact of Pakistan population is that most of the population of the country is young and therefore are able to work for the betterment of the country. The other interesting fact about the population is that most of the population is of women. The depressing factor of the population of the country is that the literacy rate of the country is very low that shows that most of the population, which can contribute in the growth of country, is wasted. It is also need to be discussed here that the population is also distributed through urban and rural factor. The literacy level of Pakistan is different for Urban and Rural areas obviously but the common factor is that the literacy rate by gender is low for women belonging to both the areas.

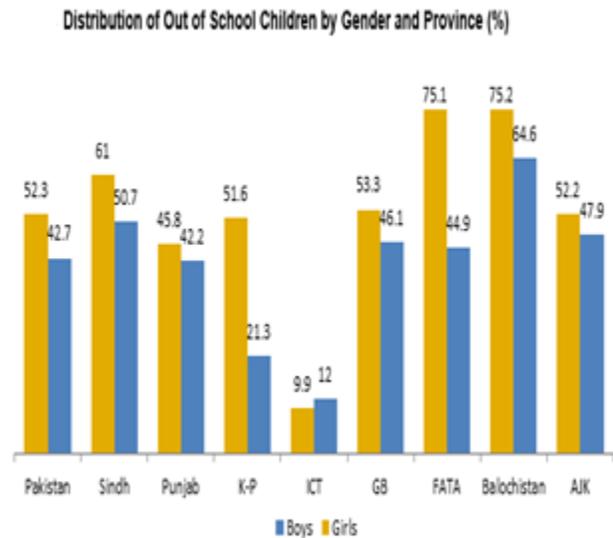
Different reports showed gender of teachers and students in educational institutions of Pakistan in 2015. It is found out that the enrollment of males in education institutions is 56% and the enrollment of females is 44% only (Pakistan Education Statistics, 2014-15, 2015). There is greater percentage of female in the population of Pakistan than the males. However, the higher enrollment ratio of males than females shows the gender discrimination that males are more preferred by their parents and the society in all the manners (Bhattacharya, 2014). The females even when have a larger role to play that they have to grow their children are still not accepted by the society to get education. The diagram also shows that 42% of the teachers working in the educational institutions of Pakistan are males whereas 58% of the teachers are females. The females are not allowed by their families to work in other type of organizations except the education providing organizations. This is because the schools and other educational institutions are thought to have better working environment for the females.

6. Causes of Female Drop outs From Schools

Pakistan is a land gifted with all types of resources including natural resources and human resources. The people of Pakistan are hardworking and courageous but the problem of their low standing in the world is the lack of education in them. The population of Pakistan constitutes of more females than the males. As discussed above, a female can built the society by nurturing her children by best moral values, attitudes, etiquettes, and jewelling them with education. However, the case in Pakistan shows that the women are not preferred for getting education and illiterate women would obviously find it difficult to build the society. There are many reasons of low education in females of Pakistan, which mainly include bad societal norms and sick mentalities. However, educating women can lead the better raising of children and contribution in educating their next generations (Kingdon, 2002)

The diagram below shows the out of school children in Pakistan by gender in 2015 and further classifying the rate into provincial basis to get a know how about the

geographical reasons that are causing low level of education in females of different provinces of the country.



(Source: Pakistan Education Statistics, 2014-15, 2015)

The diagram above shows the children percentage distribution by gender and province who are out of school. It shows that 52.3% of the females of Pakistan are not going to school while 42.7% boys are not going to school. By emphasizing only on the girls to know the clear position of girls not going to school so in Sindh 61% girls are not going to school whereas in Punjab, the percentage of girls not going to school is 45.8%. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 53.3% of girls are not going to school whereas in Baluchistan 75.2% girls are not attending the school. This shows that the illiteracy level of girls is highest in Baluchistan and Sindh. In Punjab, at least more than half of the girls are going to school, which shows that the education facilities in Punjab are better than the other provinces of Pakistan.

If we look for the reasons of girls not attending the schools so the main, reasons are the narrow thinking of society and lack of resources to fund the education expenses. However, for schooling the lack of awareness for the need of education and the narrow mindedness to educate the girls stood as the basic reasons. In Pakistan, women and men are not treated equally. Pakistan is male dominating society where the orders of the head of families which are males all the times are treated as revelations from God (Noureen and Awan, 2011) Most of the men have thinking that the girls should not be given education so that they cannot speak for their rights. In Pakistan, early marriages of girls are also an issue that restricts the parents from getting their female children enrolled in school. The tribal systems and the landlords also do not want their workers' girls to attend the school which keeps the enrollment of girls in school remains low.

In Pakistan, after the 18th amendment in the constitution the education went on the provincial authorities. All the provinces now have different educational policies. The Punjab government is working harder to increase the education in their province that results in low ratio of girls not attending the schools. The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is also working to increase the rate of literacy in their province and is working to increase the enrollment in the province. However, Sindh and Baluchistan governments are not focusing education, much which has resulted into low enrollment of students in schools of their province especially of the girls.

7. Women Empowerment

In Pakistan, the status of women in society is very poor especially in rural areas. The women are not given any respect and they are treated badly. The problem of not allowing to get education, early and forced marriages, acid attacks, domestic violence and killing for honor are very serious in the case of women of Pakistan. In Islam, men and women are required to treat equally and have equal status still when Pakistan is an Islamic country, women are not given equal rights nor treated equally, and instead they are treated as slaves.

Pakistan is divided into different provinces that are further classified into urban and rural areas. The status of women in rural areas is particularly very pitiable and is a bit better in the urban areas of Pakistan. The women of urban areas are somehow getting education and are working on good positions but the rural areas and villagers' women are living in very bad condition. In Pakistan, the literacy rate of women is also very low as women are not allowed to get education and are required to stay at house only.

The government of Pakistan is now however working to better the status of women in the society and empower them so that they can live their lives in comparatively better way than now. To avoid problems like domestic violence, forced marriages, acid attacks and honor killing, the government has also made laws and is giving punishments to the liable people but still the religious factor present in the country is not letting to empower the women. In Pakistan, many of the educated women have stand for their rights and are now not only working on good positions at different organizations but also are members of the parliament. The women of Pakistan are now also engaged in the business activities running successful businesses and contributing in revenue generation for the country.

Pakistan's GII for 2012 relative to selected countries

	GII Value	GII Rank	Maternal Mortality Ratio	Adolescent Fertility Rate	Seats in Parliament (%)	Population with at least secondary education (%)		Labour force participation rate (%)	
						Female	Male	Female	Male
Pakistan	0.567	123	260	28.1	21.1	18.3	43.1	22.7	83.3
India	0.61	132	200	74.7	10.9	26.6	50.4	29	80.7
Bangladesh	0.518	111	240	68.2	18.7	30.8	39.3	57.2	84.3
South Asia	0.568	-	203	66.9	18.5	28.3	49.7	31.3	81
Low HDI	0.578	-	405	86	19.2	18	32	56.4	79.9

(Source: Ministry of Planning and Development, 2015)

For 2012, the UNDP launched its yearly Human Development report that shows the GII of Pakistan in comparison with the selected countries. The report figures are used to analyze the status of women in Pakistan. The GII value of Pakistan in 2012 is 0.567 only, which is very low. The maternal mortality ratio of Pakistan is also very high that is 260. In Pakistan, women are given 21.1% seats in the parliament, which shows that still the women status is very low in Pakistan when more than half of the population of the country consists of women, less than one quarter of the parliament seats are hold by them. The rate of secondary education of women of Pakistan is only 18.3%, which is more than double in men recorded at 43.1%. This shows that the women of Pakistan are not allowed to study and get education to stand for their rights. The labor force participation of women in 2012 shows that only 22.7% women of Pakistan are working to generate income and the role of women in Pakistan is restricted only to stay at home, produce, and raise the children. The women of Pakistan are not yet empowered and have a very low level of contribution in economic activity and the decision-making activity. The low literacy level in women is also a problem that must need to be solved at priority so that the women of Pakistan can be empowered and can have a contribution in making Pakistan a better country.

The government of Pakistan is working to provide women a better status in society and empower them so that they can stand for their rights and have a good role in country. For this purpose, the government has planned to take many corrective actions that include the following essentials:

- In all the public and private sector institutions, gender equality training programs will be conducted as well as respecting and giving rights to women equally will be included in the code of conducts of the organizations.
- It is planned to ensure that no lobbying will be made against the women rights.
- The government will also launch media campaigns to aware the public on the rights of women and that they should be treated equally.

The government of Pakistan has also planned to allocate a particular budget for the purpose of women empowerment

at the federal and provincial level. The planned budget is as follows:

Sl. No.	Ministry/ Division	Projections					Total
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
1	Federal	79	10	5	50	100	244
2	Provincial	400	438	465	543	605	2,451
3	National	479	448	470	593	705	2,695

(Source: Ministry of Planning and Development, 2015).

The federal government will spend a total of Rs 2.7 billion in 5 years to empower women. Of which Rs 244 million will be spend by the federal government itself and Rs 2451 million by the provincial governments. In the year 2014, Rs 479 million was projected to spend for women empowerment and in 2015, Rs 448 million was estimated. In 2016, an amount of Rs 470 million, in 2017 Rs 593 million and in 2018, an amount of Rs 705 million is expected to spend at national level to empower the women and develop them economically and provide them with a better status in society. This means that the federal government is showing much interest to provide women with better rights and role in society and give them respect and solve the major problems that the women of Pakistan are facing from many decades.

8. Conclusion

The above discussion shows that the Pakistan is a country that is highly populated with most of the young population that can contribute in the growth of the country. The population of Pakistan comprises of more women than the men and women have the ability to build up the nation. It is also found that the literacy rate of Pakistan remained very low even after many efforts by the governments of different times. Education is considered as the responsibility by law in the currently implemented constitution. The responsibility however is now distributed between the federal and provincial government after the 18th amendment. The provincial government with the help of federal government is working to increase the rate of literacy in the country by providing differential incentives.

The research emphasized on the situation of education of the women of Pakistan. It is discovered that the rate of education of women is especially very low comparative to men of the country. The government is however trying to promote the education in girls as they are going to be future mothers who will raise a generation and will built a strong nation. But the situation for the girls' education is not good as the society of Pakistan which is male dominant

do not want their girls to get education. The government has allocated a budget for empowerment of women. However, it can be seen that the role of women in economy and decision making activity is still not very appreciating and the only thing that can empower. Women are by providing them education so that they can stand for their rights, differentiate between the right and wrong and can play a better role in society building.

9. Recommendations

The literature shows that the situation of women education in Pakistan is not good so here are some suggestion which are likely to increase the level of education in women. At first, the awareness in the society for the need of education must be made. There should be more awareness programs conducted to aware the society about the role of education in building the lives. The government should also take the help of religious scholars and ask them to promote the education need and change the perception of the rural society about educating girls. The government should also work on building separate more schools for girls that will employ only female teachers so that the problems in tribal areas of not educating the girl child from male teachers can be resolved. The universities should also be made separately for girls. The government should also take the help from nonprofit organizations who are working to promote education in unprivileged areas and support them through funds. The government should allocate more quotas for women in governmental organizations and should try to ensure that all the private sector organizations also work on equal employment opportunities. The girls should be educated to build a better nation.

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