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Effect of Socio-Economic Factors on the Female Education in Rural Areas of Faisalabad (Pakistan)

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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to identify the socio-economic factors associated with the female education in the rural areas of Faisalabad. One hundred respondents were selected and the data were collected by interview method. Results revealed that income, educational level of parents and occupation of the respondents were associated with the female education. 91% of respondents had a favorable attitude towards sending their male children to school while only 63% were in favor of doing so for their daughters. It was concluded from the statistical analysis of the data that there was a close association between the income and education of the respondent families, and the highest level of education that their daughters had attained.

Key Words: Attitude; Education; Socio-economic factors

INTRODUCTION

The set targets of education could be achieved by the joint efforts of public, private and N.G.O sector (Economic Survey, 2000-01). The primary school's gross enrollment rate increased from 52% in 1987 to 73% in 1990-91, it declined to 65% in 2001-02 in Pakistan. Literacy rate is estimated at 50.5% (Male 63% & female 38%) in Pakistan. Rural and urban areas literacy rate is 30 and 70%, respectively (Economic Survey, 2001-02).

Socio-economic factors of family life directly and indirectly affect the education of its members. We cannot neglect any aspect as these are directly and strongly interrelated with each other. Lack of educational facilities is one of the main factors responsible for the unsatisfactory conditions of females. Most of our girls remain illiterate due to lack of basic education and training facilities. The reason for the depressed educational status of female also lies in age, old traditions and social values of Pakistan. Females are not encouraged by their parents to seek education. They are considered suitable only for household activities. Sex differentiated rejoicing at childbirth, schooling, inheritance of property, family lineage are the common observations in both the rural and urban areas of Pakistan (Ijaz, 1995).

Besides, there may be certain other factors affecting education of rural females. These factors may be father's educational level, income, social class, family size and occupation. Parent's can motivate and provide such an environment, which may be conducive to the achievements of particular goal (Stephen, 1993). Old customs, traditions, caste system, rural community and wrongly understood religious knowledge have denied the female education. Therefore, this study was undertaken to a) determine the socio-economic factors associated with female education with special reference to rural areas of Faisalabad district, b) explore the reasons for any resistance towards female education particularly at advanced level and c) determine the effect of socio-economic factors on the attitude towards female education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Two villages of Faisalabad (232 R.B. & 73 R.B.) were selected to collect the primary data. It was decided to check the attitude of males towards female education. The factors like time, cost and physical limitations usually play an important role in social research. A list of 100 male household heads was prepared who had at least one school or college going age female child. A comprehensive interviewing schedule was prepared for this purpose. The questions were in English language and were translated into Urdu language with full care. The data were collected for 15 days, and analyzed statistically to Steel *et al.* (1997).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Study of socio-economic factors associated with the female education in rural areas was the major focus of this study. This has proved us the basic working material to tackle massive problems in improving the educational levels for rural females.

The majority of respondents (51%) were in middle age i.e. 30 to 39 years. A simple majority of respondents 38.5% were doing Agriculture, while 29.2% were in service. Most of the respondents (64%) were illiterate while 62% of the respondent's families had total annual income ranging from Rs. 12000 to 24000 (Table I). It means that majority of the respondents belonged to medium income group.

A significant majority had medium sized families (4 to 6 children). It was observed that 91% of respondents had a favorable attitude towards sending their male children to school while 63% of respondents were in favor of school education for their daughters. Majority of the respondents

said that their daughters had no interest in education while others stated economic reasons for not sending their daughters to school (Table I).

Majority of the respondents (67.5%) suggested matriculation as the level of education for their daughters. A significant majority of respondents (74%) supported the idea that "males are given more attention in every respect as compared to females". All the respondents had electricity and electric fans, and 31.6% had radios, while 26.5% of them had T.V. sets in their homes. An overwhelming majority of the respondents 88.0% had no facilities of newspapers and/or magazine at their homes.

About 53 to 58% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statements: (a) Education make the girl's irreligious, (b) Educated girls hate the domestic work, (c) Educated girls should work to share economic responsibilities of their family members.

About 59 to 78% of the respondents strongly disagreed to the statements: (a) Female education is against our family traditions, (b) Female education is against our religion, (c) There is no difference between a son and daughter, if they are educated.

There was highly significant association between education of the respondents, income of the respondent's families and occupations of the male heads of families with the highest level of education that their daughters have achieved (Table II). Value of gamma further showed a positive relationship. This means that the hypothesis "higher the educational level of respondents, the higher will be the level of their daughter's" was upheld.

The findings of the present research are in line with those of Asghar (1988) who noted a positive relationship between father's education and daughter's aspired level of education in both rural and urban areas. The value of chi-square also showed a significant association between the total number of children of the respondents and the highest level of education that their daughters had achieved.

Table I. Socio-economic and educational characteristics of respondents

	Response category	Percentage
A	Distribution of respondents with regard to education	
	No Education	64
	Up to Middle	24
	Up to Matric	12
	Total	100
B	Distribution of respondents with regard to annual income (Rs)	
	Low (less than Rs.12000	1
	Medium (Rs. 12001 to 24000)	62
	High (above Rs. 24000)	37
	Total	100
C	Distribution of respondents with regard to favor of female education	
	No	37
	Yes	63
	Total	100
D	Reasons for not sending daughters to school	
	Due to family traditions	18.9
	Lack of interest on the part of females	35.1
	Poverty	127
	No use	18.9

Table II. Association between education of the respondents and the level of female education

Education of the Respondent	Primary	Middle	Matric/ college	Total
No Education	10 (38.5%)	10 (38.5%)	6 (23.1%)	26 (31.7%)
Primary/ Middle	15 (78.9%)	-	4 (21.1%)	19 (23.2%)
Matric / College	11 (29.7%)	12 (32.4%)	14 (37.8%)	37 (45.1%)
Total	36 (43.9%)	22 (26.8%)	24 (29.3%)	82 (100%)

Chi- Square= 15.73219 P< 0.01 (Significant) Gamma= 0.20

Suggestions

- The rural people should be made to realize the usefulness of female education through mass media.
- Females should be motivated and encouraged for higher studies. Change in the old traditional and value system is of significant importance. Different programs through radio and TV should be broadcasted to highlight the need of female education and to convince them for their possible contribution in the development of country.
- An important factor hindering the higher education of females in rural areas was lack of colleges in or near the village. Hence, steps should be taken to establish colleges in rural areas to provide educational and employment opportunities to rural females close to their residence.
- Conveyance is one of the major problems faced by the girls of rural areas for going to schools and colleges outside the village. The rural people on cooperative basis or through Union Council may arrange this facility at local level.
- Parents must be made aware of the benefits of higher education through mass media, so that they may be able to motivate their daughters for higher education.
- In view of the importance of the educational problems more future research should be conducted in this field, with more number of variable and larger sizes of samples in order to draw generalizations.
- Different technical training program like knitting and sewing, i.e., vocational teaching centers, poultry farming and kitchen gardening etc., should be started in rural areas in order to acquaint the rural females with the importance and utility of the education.

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