



The Impacts of Secondary Education on Women Decision Making of Higher Education (A Case Study of Khyber Pakhtun Khwa, Pakistan)

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Abstract

Women's decision-making about the pursuit of their higher education has been found to be significantly influenced by their schooling. In this regard, this study investigates the complex influences of education on women's decision-making processes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, while they are thinking about pursuing higher education. It has long been understood that education is essential for achieving socioeconomic advancement and self-determination, especially for women who have historically faced obstacles in receiving a high-quality education. The nature of this research study is qualitative while the primary data has been gathered with the help of an interview guide, (FGDs) focus group discussion. Female students enrolled in secondary, post-secondary, and higher education programs at Swat comprised the targeted population. The study conclusions show that women's early educations play a major influence on their decision to pursue further education. Following secondary education, women acquire the capacity to make decisions regarding their further academic pursuits. Similar to how women decide which subjects to study, which subject to pursue as a graduate program, and which mentor and supervisor to work under. Furthermore, parents have a crucial role in helping daughters make decisions about continuing their education. Moreover, women are empowered to make decisions about their education because of family support and encouragement. On the other hand, societal perception has a significant impact in women's education. While urban culture values about girls' education since it strengthens their capacity for further study, rural society forbids females from pursuing higher education due to the conservative nature of its culture. Women also face difficulties in juggling their schooling with their family responsibilities, but they manage somehow as their early education gave them management skills. Furthermore, because to social and cultural constraints, the majority of women in Pashtun society are not permitted to pursue higher education outside. The ratio of male to female literacy is not equal. The study strongly suggests that the media should play its role in raising awareness and launching campaigns regarding education for all, high-quality education, hiring more female teachers, requiring teacher training, and community involvement in education promotion in order to close the achievement gap and further raise women's literacy levels.

Keywords: Women Education, Women Decision Making, Impacts of Education, Subject Selection Decision

1. Background of the Study

Education makes people's lives better by passing on, maintaining, developing, and advancing their culture (Umezina and Chigbata, 2013). In addition, it gives people the basic information and skills they need to deal with others with confidence in their daily lives. Sterling (2001), who supports basic education, says that education is a foundation for wealth and that societies run smoothly when both men and women have the same access to education. This is linked to the growth of society's economy, government, and health.

Similarly, Nicaragua (2012) says that education is a key part of a country's social, economic, and political growth. Since education is a way to grow and one of our basic human rights, it needs a lot of attention to make sure that all sections of society can get it without any bias based on gender, class, race, or color. This will give everyone more power. In this situation, their education lowers apathy toward things like baby and maternal mortality and helps them grow as people (King & Hill, 1997).

On the other hand, educating women is important in many ways because it closes the gender gap and makes sure that everyone has the same rights and chances. The health and happiness of educated women is also good for the mental growth of men. Better cognitive skills make women's lives better and make it easier for them to make decision about their health, fertility, and political participation (Kabeer, 2005; Sen, 1999a). There is also evidence that political growth is more likely to happen in places where a lot of women have gone to school (Levine, Lloyd, Greene, & Grown, 2008). Developing countries also put a high value on women's education and see it as a key way to lower the child mortality rate (Herz & Sperling, 2004; Schultz, 2002; Watson, 2005). Researchers from different time periods have found that going to primary school makes a 40 percent difference in the lives of children, while going to secondary school makes women less fertile, lowering their birth rate from 5.3 to 3.9 children per woman (Subbarao & Raney, 1993). On the other hand, girls tend to get 10 to 20 years older when they go to school more (Psacharopoulos &

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Patrinós, 2004). Clearly, having a higher percentage of educated people (especially women) raises national output and cuts hunger by as much as 40% (Smith & Haddad, 2000).

Also, Brazilian women are 20 times more capable than men when it comes to taking care of the health of their children (Thomas, 1990), and Ugandan women with secondary education are three times less likely to get HIV (De-Walque, 2007). Also, Indian women who go to school are less likely to be abused by their partners (Sen, 1999a), while Bangladeshi women are more likely to be active in politics and meetings (Iltus, 2007).

Similarly, women's education has come a long way in Pakistan over the last few decades, which has changed the status of women in both the home and public spheres of life. In Pakistan, women's learning rates have gone up, which gives them more power in the family when it comes to making decisions in and out of the home. Women who went to school were able to make decisions, understand their property rights, choose their own partners, and negotiate well with their husbands, father-in-laws, and mothers-in-law. Today, they have a better chance of being able to teach, socialize, and plan for a bright future for their children. Additionally, they understand that her health affects the general well-being of her children, even her daughters, whom she treats the same as sons. In Pakistan, education also makes women more likely to run for office (Noureen, 2011). Also, Hussain (2003) says that the change in how women are educated in Pakistan has led to a higher life expectancy rate. Families that plan their families and treat chronic diseases at the right time have made women healthier. Their health has gotten better, and they are more aware of it. Also, traditional birth attendants have been replaced by modern maternity centers, which has had an even bigger positive effect on women's health. In this way, the discussion proves that schooling is necessary for women to gain power. The rate of literacy has gone up thanks to gender reforms and movements, as well as more women going to school. This has a good effect on women's status in many areas of public and private life. In the same way, women's schooling has gotten better over the last few decades, which has effects on their status, their role in the family, their ability to choose a mate, their ability to claim property rights, and their care for their children's social and psychological development. Also, schooling is the main way that women get jobs, which makes them independent, and it also helps their health, politics, and the economy.

On the other hand, educating women is very important in many ways to close the gender gap and make sure that men and women have the same rights and chances. Men's cognitive growth is helped by the well-being of educated women. Women can now live better and have more freedom to choose how to use their bodies, have children, and get involved in politics (Kabeer, 2005; Sen, 1999a). Also, research shows that countries with a high percentage of educated women are more likely to make progress in democracy (Levine, Lloyd, Greene, & Grown, 2008).

Same wise, Qasmi (2009) says that schooling makes people better at working in the economy and raises their social and economic status. There are different levels of education, such as primary, middle, high secondary, and tertiary. However, everyone agrees that primary and secondary education alone are not enough to boost a country's economy. In fact, higher education is now seen as the most important thing for economic growth (Isani & Virk, 2003). The economy can keep growing as long as there are people with a lot of education working for it. On the other hand, the quality of basic and secondary education has a big impact on how well people are prepared for higher education and how much they contribute to the economy. Poor quality primary and secondary education made it harder for people to succeed in college and made it harder for them to get better jobs (Khan and Jabeen, 2011). "The first grade is the most important part of a child's education." (Pakistan Education Statistics, 2010–11) It can make or break a child's school future. The importance of higher education institutions, like degree colleges and universities, in producing critical thinkers and technically skilled workers who can help a country grow is important (Pervez, 2009). The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a growing country with socioeconomic growth that can't be sustained (United Nations, 2010). Pakistan is made up of four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan. It also has Northern Areas, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and parts of Jammu and Kashmir that are controlled by Pakistan (Pakistan Education Statistics, 2010-11). Pakistan is mostly an agricultural country, and a certain percentage of its people live in rural places (Chaudhry et al., 2012). Pakistan's education system is set up to make sure that everyone can get an education, from the most basic levels to higher ones. Pre-primary, primary, middle, secondary, upper secondary, and higher education are some of the stages that make up Pakistan's education system (Annual Status of Education Report, 2013).

Similarly, women education not only gives them more power in the home, but it also helps get rid of many social problems (Bassler, 2005). Educating women is important for the social growth of a country as well as for the better socialization of the child. According to Chaudhry and Rahman (2009), the empowerment process is shown by higher levels of knowledge, self-confidence, and awareness of female equality. Women with more education tend to understand human rights better, accept different points of view, care more about social norms, and work harder to settle disagreements and make society more peaceful.

As an important tool for empowerment, education is necessary for women's sociocultural, political, economic, and religious empowerment. This is because society, politics, and the economy can only grow with more educated women

(Haq, 2000; Wolf, 2002). By getting women involved in progressive activities, schooling is one of the most important ways to close the gap between social classes (Memon, 2007; Memon, Joubish, & Khurram, 2010). Sen (2001) says this about this topic: "The changing agency of women is one of the main sources of economic and social change." It could be said that nothing is more important in the political economy of development today than recognizing women's leadership and involvement in politics, the economy, and society. In this case, educating women is important because it ensures that information is passed down from one generation to the next and is the basis for long-term gender equality, social change, and development. According to Chaudhry and Rahman (2009), the empowerment process is shown by higher levels of knowledge, self-confidence, and awareness of female equality. Women with more education tend to understand human rights better, accept different points of view, care more about social norms, and work harder to settle disagreements and make society more peaceful.

1.1. Objective of the study

To explore the impacts of secondary education on women decision making in furthering education.

2. Methods and Procedures

The current qualitative study was carried out in Swat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The unit of analysis for this study was the secondary and graduate female students in Swat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. The researcher used non-probability sampling technique in this study. In non-probability sampling, researcher employed purposive sampling technique for the selection of the respondents. The tools of data collection for the study was an interview guide. An interview guides as a tool generally used for a qualitative study. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions; this enabled the researcher to have as much as a rich data. The interview guide gives the freedom to ask probing questions from the respondents' responses (Flick 2018). This interview guide was the most appropriate tool for this study. The collected data were analyzed in the lines with thematic analysis technique. Thematic analysis is carried out with variety of approaches. However, the researcher followed six common steps of thematic analysis. These include: familiarization with data, coding data, generated themes from the data, reviewing the themes, defining and naming themes, and finally write up. The data analysis process went through the following steps: researcher repeatedly listened all the interviews and transcribed these into elaborated plain text. then familiarized with data, coded the data. Similar codes were clubbed together for generating broader themes and came up with more specific themes. titled each theme to know that what every theme is all about.

Last but not the least presented relevant respondents under each theme and supported them with similar findings from other studies where needed. Each theme is discussed and debated with the help of relevant theoretical reviews and empirical reviews.

3. Results and Discussion

The researcher trying to discuss the experiences of female student about the impact of secondary education on women decision making in furthering education at Swat. And how secondary education affect and motivated the female student to further studies. The researcher have attempted to present, compare and contrast findings with the existing body of knowledge for exploring the similarities and differences.

"Empowering progress: Expose the Transformative Role of Women's Education in Society"

Education is the key of success. Every man and women are equal in this world. Education empowers women by providing them best knowledge and skill. Education boosts the ability of confidence of women to make decision of their lives. Women education is more important for the development and progress of the next generation and society. Quality education is the dream for every student to pursue. The research findings illustrated that women education is very important for women and also for the society. In the developing and under develop countries women education is the first step to development and advancement of the society.

One of the respondents says that:

Women education is mostly important for women.it provide the skills, knowledge and be a better, daughter, sister, wife and mom. educated women work for herself and also for her family. Women education is very important for women health because it make them aware about their health in every mode of life like in pregnancy, menses. Women education aware women about there right like in Pashtun culture women are the inferior because patriarchal structure of the society. It makes them to raise voice about their property. Education able women to manage all the economic activities. And education also help in family planning. Women early education also help them to take decision for their next step in education.

One of the respondents says that:

Women education is very important for better life. My cuisine was complete her education and become a doctor so it was a great motivation for me. So, when she back to the community after completion of her education, she was always talking about equality, the importance of women education and also the environment of Pashtun society. Early education is generally considered a foundation that plays a vital role in higher education.

Summarized views of the majority of female students are given below:

Education is important for the development of women. Education help women to eradicate social norms. Education helps women to take decision in their life. It helps women to take better care of their family. Without education a nation is deaf and blind. Half of the population of our country is female. Only education can make women conscious about their rights and responsibilities. Education also gives authority to women to choose her career and support her family. Education also help women fights against gender discrimination. Similarly, the research findings of (Chaudhry et al., 2012). women education is one of the fundamental and main tools for empowering women in all sphere of life in society. Women education improves women's economic contribution and uplifts their life at the communal level and also at home at personal level (Chitrakar, 2009).

"Unlocking Potential: Identifying Secondary Education Empower Women's Decision for Higher Learning"

Secondary education equips women with knowledge, skills and that formed the base for further education. secondary education exposes women to many subjects and for divers thinking. It also helping women to explore their interests and dig out the interested areas for specialization in higher studies. Secondary education also enables women to compete with man in society at the different stages and different fields. It is also motivating and support women in their relationship with peers and teachers and also able them to go ahead for higher studies.

One of the respondents says that:

Secondary education makes female students eligible to get enrollment at higher studies.it also give him a path way for their great future and also for society. Quality of secondary education have the pivotal role in the future success like help female students in subject selection. Secondary education also boosts the confidence of female in education for competing with man. It has also a great influence on women decision towards further education.

Similarly, a female student has mentioned that:

My secondary education has a big role in my further studies.it is a step toward a bright future. it makes me able to get admission in graduation. My secondary education also able me to talk to friends, sibling, parents, teachers, and other people without any pressure and hesitation.

Summarized views of the majority of female students are given below:

It is clear from the study findings that the early education of the students has a pivotal role in their higher education. The findings have illustrated that female students who had their early education from hapless, low, or execrable institutions had bad experiences in higher education. More interestingly, those female students who had their early education from the best admirable institutions had pleasant experiences in higher studies. such students had not faced the problems of those students who had their early education from the deplorable institutions. Similarly, majority of the students views that secondary education of women is the key to success and to higher studies. secondary or early education able female students to get admit in further education and it is also breaking the cultural barriers towards female education. Similar findings have been showed by other researchers such as the findings of (AIOU, 1998) Secondary education is very important sector of the total education system. One the one hand, it acts like feeder for further studies and on the other hand it provides opportunities to women for in economic sector. The quality of secondary education expected to produce the high-quality professionals in different fields of social, economic and political life of the country, depends upon the quality of secondary education.

Extracted views of the majority of the female students who had education from deplorable institutions are:

We had an early education in deplorable institutions where the teaching methodologies of the teachers were conventional, teachers were only limited to notes, and debate and question sessions were absent. The college building was old and execrated with crowded classrooms where students had no interest in education and teachers were not interested in the lectures. In our colleges, there were no basic facilities like libraries, computer labs, transportation facilities, or internet services.

Summarized views of the majority female students who had gotten their early education from excellent institutions:

Our early education was not bad. We had completed our early education at the best schools and colleges in our communities, where we had good and qualified teachers who always had a friendly approach to us and used technological devices like multimedia and computers during the lecture. Similarly, the school and college had a good library, a computer lab, beautiful buildings, and a pleasant environment. Teachers were asking most of the students in the class questions and directed them to ask questions and keep the students engaged during the lectures. We had debate and question-and-answer sessions as well in the classroom, where teachers appreciated the students for asking questions or participating in the lecture.

"Empowering Women Through Education: Values, Decision Making and Societal Perception"

In the recent sitting and advancement of the urban society on one hand the perception of people regarding women education has been changed positively. Every individual knows about the importance and value of the female education. Women education in swat valley mostly in urban areas are very important for the society and women. Educated and professional women ratio are low in swat and every man want to treat, educate, their women from female

because of that value of female education is increasing day by day. But on the other hand in rural areas of Pashtun tradition women are expected to assume the responsibility of mother and wives. Women also expected a homemaker and caring of the children, obedient to man. So, the people perceive that there is no need of female formal education. One of the female respondents says that:

I am belonging to urban area of Swat. The perception of society about girl's education is positive because all the facilities for girl's education are available. Schools, colleges are near. There is no cultural restriction on female education, most of the people of urban area are well educated and they want to educate women.

Another respondent elaborated that:

I am from rural area of Swat the people are very conservative their women considered to require guidance, protection, and supervision from men. And it is accepted that man would make decision of women life and they will perform supportive and nurturing roles.

Majority of the respondent's views are summarized about societal perception about women education

Perception of the urban area people about women education is positive. Because in urban area the culture norms and roles are so weak and also the people are well educated and all the basic facilities for women education are available, educational institutions are near to towns, communities. But on the other hand, in rural setting perception of people regarding female education are harmful. People don't want to allow girls to formal education. Educational institutions are on distance, the required facilities in these institutions mostly are unavailable. So, women education is the catalyst for the economic growth and advocate for gender equality. Women education leads to unlock multifarious ways of benefits. Similarly, results endorsements from other studies: (Humala and Eshya, 2000) rural community people perceive that girl's education is a waste of money and time, girls will sooner or later be married off. Investment on girl's education are meaningless. People are very conservative they do not allow girls to schools, colleges. On the other hand urban societies people perception. (Latif, 2011). Education is not prohibited in Pakistan and in Islamic states but in some areas such as Tribal area of Pakistan girls are prohibited to receive formal education. When females enter teenage years, they are married before completion of secondary level. (Marmot et al. 2008) argue that: Investment on girl's education is one of the most inflated forms in expenditure. In developing countries investment on girl's education is a source of wellbeing in family in the terms of health, wealth and educational status. Women education is not only confined to socio cultural and economic development but also it is compulsory for the economic, productive and reproductive contribution.

"Exploring the Effects of Graduation on Subsequent Education Choices "

Graduation from secondary school or college opens a wide range of career opportunities. Most of the jobs and professions require a minimum level of education and graduation eligible the candidate for certain fields. This desire for better job motivates individual to take decision for further studies in the relevant field.

One of the female respondents articulate that:

Graduation enabled and motivated me to take decision for further studies. My choice by profession is lecturership at university level and the eligibility criteria for the post of lecturer is M.Phil. at university level so that's why I was take decision for further studies.

Another respondent views that:

Graduation is bases of the particular field. Graduation make me able to go ahead and explore the nature. In the Quran Allah says that see the nature how I made it and explore the things which are naturally. So, I am passionate after my graduation to make decision about my further studies and at the least I am enrolled in PHD.

One more respondent illustrated that:

I am an average student at secondary and graduation 5th semester then I feel some new things and one of the best subjects in my life was social research which inspired me encourage me and I start hard work and after my graduation I am passionate to make decision for further studies abroad and explore the world in the shape of social research and I did it. So, graduation has the main role in my decision making for further studies.

Majority of the respondent's views are summarized about the impacts of graduation on further studies

Most of the graduates have jobs and for the promotion in this job mostly required experience and more degrees so graduate degree enable us to find a job but it not gives us promotion or high ranked but further studies like M.Phil. and PhD is the solution for promotion. Most of the graduate women doing further studies for their status and promotion in professions. Graduation is giving platform to graduate by which they want to specialize in their particular field. And taking decision for next journey of education. Actually, results from other researches are: Graduates have the reason for making decision to further studies at the advanced phase of the society is the ratio of education is increasing day to day and the demand for jobs are changing from one phase to another (Hegarty, 2011). Not only do personal factors inform a student's decision to go to post graduate school, but graduation changes the behavior of the student to take decision for specialization in their own study area. (Ajzen, 2012). Every professional of the past and present struggling for status, authority and power which lead them to further studies. (Khan, 2019).

4. Conclusions

This study in nature is qualitative, interview guide was select for the collection of data, the data were analysed thematically, purposive sampling procedure were used. The objectives of this study were two which are to find out the impacts of education on women decision making in further education. To identify the impacts of graduation on women decision making in post-graduation. Female education is must in the current world. Women education is important part of female life. It provides the skills and knowledge; it helps their children in getting education. Educated women support their parents as well as their husband in time of need. Education help women to eradicate social norms. Education help women to take decision in their life. It helps women to take better care of their family. More over the study finding shows, women secondary education is the key to success and to take decision for higher studies. secondary or early education able female students to get admission in further education and it is also breaking the cultural barriers towards female education. More over their finding stat that, women are facing many challenges in getting education like financial problem, distance education and also some sort of harassment. So that impact female student's decision making for further education. After that, parental involvement in their daughter education boost confidence of women in decision making in their educational journey. Moreover, societal perception about women education are stratified. There are two types of society, rural society people perception about women education negative and urban society people perception regarding women education are positive. Similarly, graduation able women to take decision towards further education. It gives a platform in the shape of scholarships, jobs, skills to women for post-graduation. Likewise, balancing further studies with familial responsibilities is a challengeable task but open communication, management skills, nuclear family system, familial support are the strategies to balance both sides. Additionally, graduation enhance the ability of women to go abroad for further studies but cultural restriction is the barriers to word female education abroad.

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