



**EXPLORING THE BARRIERS TO FEMALE-LITERACY FROM
PARENTS AND TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE:
A REVIEW STUDY OF SCATTERED LITERATURE**

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Abstract:

The article was a review study. This is an approach which allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon in depth (Karamustafaoglu, 2009). The researchers have adopted the literature review approach to investigate the problem in depth. The structures of literature have been analyzed through the handbooks mostly in the field of teacher education on literacy terms. This was a review study about exploring barriers to literacy from parents and teachers' perspective. This was linked to the current literature in understanding about the phenomenon which was investigated. This study, therefore, relied on different kinds of literature such as published articles, theses and, books. Majority of them were obtained from research databases such as Web of Science and Google Scholar. Namamba and Rao (2017), and Manzar-Abbas and Lu (2013) followed the same method of review in conducting their review studies. In order to obtain relevant literature, search words such as "barriers to literacy" and "parents and teachers' perspective" were used. In addition, books on teacher education were also consulted. All the obtained literature was summarized according to the search words of the study. All the obtained literature was cited properly in text and in the list. This allowed the researchers to extract and incorporate key information about exploring

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barriers to literacy from parents and teachers' perspective into this article. The studies drawn in this review article reflect the learning about barriers to literacy from parents and teachers' perspective in diverse directions.

Keywords: barriers to female-literacy, parents and teachers' perspective

1. Introduction

It is extremely important to say that teaching occupation is the main reason for the development of nations and only through good teaching the nation can be built (Kamran, Abasimi & Congman, 2015). Further teachers can bring changes in society. Literacy is significant for a developed society. It is the basic agent for the transformation of a society. Unfortunately, many regions of today's age, especially in developing countries, have poor or no access to quality education especially developing countries lag behind the rest of the world. The ability of the developing countries residents to read and write is quite low. Like many conservative societies, where social and cultural norms sway decisions on the girls' education, most school-age girls in Baluchistan, Pakistan stay at home. And even those, who are the exception, have poor access to schools. They have to cover long distances to get formal learning. Quetta, the capital city of Baluchistan, is more developed than other areas of the province but still, the quality of education there is not up to the mark. Also, the city has fewer people with formal learning.

1.1 Objective of the study

The main aim of this review article was to observe the relevant literature to see what are barriers to education? Or what is the mindset of parents and teachers towards literacy? Or what barriers they produce to their daughters/ sons and/ or students?

The study was based on the available literature which was sought through various searches.

1.2 Structure of the Paper

The previous sections have introduced the problem and objectives of the study as well as the context of the study in brief. The next section is the conceptual framework which is centered on the nature of barriers to literacy. The methodology section explains in detail what kind of literature was consulted and how the reviews were carried out. The methodology section is followed by conclusion and suggestions which provides the

main theme of the review and insights for future. Based on the suggestions, various insights are provided for the purpose of improving the case.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on definitions and characteristics of teacher educators, roles, and knowledge of teacher educators as well as professional development of teacher educators. The parents' views were also taken into account as they were the major part of this review study. These concepts are explained in detail in the next sections.

2. Review of related studies

Education is a well-known phenomenon obligatory for every single human being to bring certain changes in society. In fact, education is the key to social, political and economic growth. However, when it comes to educating people, Baluchistan confronts many hindrances from poverty to feudalism and tribalism to social and cultural barricades. Education brings changes in the attitudes and behaviors of the people towards modernization and quality of life, particularly among educated women. The government of Pakistan accepts education as a fundamental right for its citizen and pledges to provide all citizens with access to education. This challenge demands the efficient use of available resources coming from the public and private sectors, civil society groups and development partners.

According to a UNESCO report published in 2010, the education sector was not given proper attention in the country during the last five decades and thus, maintaining low literacy rates. The report said that the women were illiterate; school enrolment rate was poor, and there was low expenditure on education. The government's spending on education was around 2.3 percent of GNP in 1990, which was significantly short of the minimum of four percent of GNP recommended by the UNESCO for developing countries. According to the Education Census of 2005 (Federal Bureau of Statistics and Academy of Educational Planning and Management 2005), 37.8 % of the schools exist without boundary wall, 32.3 % have no drinking water, 56.4 % do not have electric supply, 40.5 % have no latrines or restrooms, and 6.8 % are without a building. In addition to the unavailability of these necessities, the public school buildings are sparsely furnished, and some do not even have any seating arrangements. They hold classes outdoors or students sit on the ground in classrooms (Latif, 2009). In Pakistan, Pirzado (2006) studied girl's education in rural areas. The research showed that social-cultural barriers such as lack of educational facilities, poverty, and many families view

the formal education of girls as a waste of family resources and give priority to educating sons. On the other hand, some families who want to educate their daughters cannot send them to school due to the unavailability of separate schools for girls and lack of female teachers. Some social problems such as feudalism have a negative bearing on the girls' education. Acquiring education in tribal areas is very challenging for girls. Parents do not send daughters to school due to social norms and cultural tendencies. Negative parental attitudes are also to blame. Many parents consider educating sons to be an investment feeling male children will be responsible for their certain old age. They see the education of daughters as a waste of money insisting they will not benefit directly from the female children's education as the latter have to eventually live with their husbands. In addition, daughters with higher levels of education are likely to have higher dowry expenses for wanting a comparably educated husband. However, education sometimes lowers the dowry for a girl because the husband's family views it as an asset. Researchers such as Memon, Joubish and Khurram found in 2010 that literacy was low in the area due to the shortage of highly qualified teachers, financial problem, and absence of basic equipment in schools. Iqbal (2006) found out that compared with Urdu medium schools, mostly the governments and private schools which have English medium of instruction, use modern teaching methods, provide students with learning materials, have spacious classrooms, and organize more extracurricular activities, including art and science exhibitions.

Researchers such as Hussain, Salfi and Khan (2011) studied the causes of the students' dropout at primary level in Pakistan. The study revealed that education is expensive; schools are located away from the students' houses; teachers have strict attitudes; parents lack awareness; the curriculum is old and difficult, and teachers give students too much homework. Traditional teaching methodology adversely affects the students' learning ability, while stereotypical mindsets of school administration are not appealing to parents and students. These are major causes for children to avoid school. Agreeing to the argument, another study carried out by Odaga and Heneveld (1995) found out that the problem was even more severe with girls where gender bias in subject choices together with cultural factors limited their chances to get the formal education. Researcher such as Ahmad, Said, Hussain, and Khan, who did the study in 2014, pointed out the delayed enrollment of children in urban areas and stated that for girls, the age parameter was more severe regarding the enrollment reflecting gender disparity. Researcher such as Saba did a study in 2013 on low literacy levels in Faisalabad and showed the interviewees blaming the government on the government's failure to do its duty of alleviating poverty and gender discrimination. Most teachers interviewed complained about a lack of awareness of literacy among parents. At the

same time, they insisted the government was equally blameworthy for not planning and executing educational policies well. Researcher such as Atayi (2008) observed that fewer parents demand education for daughters due to cultural norms and involvement of girls in domestic chores. The situation has been worsened by the cultural perceptions of girls as child-minders, marriage material and a burden on the family. The research study, done by Farah and Bacchus (1999) showed that the socio-cultural forces in Baluchistan created the need for women to teach girls and therefore, there required women-only schools. They, however, insisted since there are no or fewer such schools; the girls' education is neglected. The researchers felt that gender plays a strong role in the decision on the children's education in rural areas. Being a girl in Baluchistan reduces the one's chances of attending school as the parents, particularly those in rural areas, see less economic returns in the girls' education than boys' and thus, influencing the decision of the children's schooling. Toor and Perveen, (2004) conducted a study on factors influencing the girls' primary school enrolment in Pakistan. They had a sample of 16,182 households. The study showed that the age of the children, the parents' schooling particularly the mothers' schooling, per capita income of the household head and distance of the school from the house were relevant variables in explaining the probability of female enrolments at the primary school levels. Azra (n.d) conducted a study on the impact of cultural-cause on girl's academic achievements. Their findings had shown that cultural causes badly influenced the girls 'educational efficiency'. The girls' involvement in domestic chores and their early marriages by parents also had negative bearing on the girls' education. The research is significant to stakeholders in education on issues of gender equity and family socio-culture.

In 2002, the UNESCO-report found that many other parts of the world inaccessibility, low participation, withdrawal and dropping out of children (girl) from schools is attributed to many factors of cultural traditions and practices of the parents towards the education of their daughters. Prominent among those factors were: socio-cultural beliefs, customs, early marriage, pregnancy, insecurity, harassment, employment in domestic markets, personal engagement, parental services and other traditions practiced by the parents, and also the female students' own decisions to drop-out of schools causes that influence girl's academic success. It was found that poverty alleviation through educational development should be one of the important strategies. Training in vocational and income-generating skills should be given priority. Poverty is the root cause of widespread illiteracy and low participation rate at primary level of education. The annual budgetary allocations for education at the national level are very low, while there is also inefficient use of public educational expenditure. The literacy campaign of the country is aimed at poverty alleviation. Creating literate environments

and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, reduction population growth, achieving gender equality, and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy. Provincial Commission for Education report (2010) mentioned that the ratio of female education in some areas of Baluchistan, which was hardly 8.40%, really deserves the attention of the people at the helm of affairs. Needless to emphasize that this underprivileged class will ultimately take upon themselves to liberate the nation from the eras of poverty. The female enrollment may be increased by creating awareness, among the rural population, of the significance of education particularly for female participation in health and education. Once it takes off then it will work as demonstration effect. Researchers such as Ara and Aziz (2013) did a study on the enrollment of girl students in public sector schools in West Pakistan. The methodology was a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to the study, girl students confronted great problems, including poverty, insecurity, adverse attitude of community and parents. Community and parents have biased approach towards education, and parents do not want to spend on their daughters' formal learning. In this light, the government has a bigger role to play by taking quick and practical steps towards the betterment of the girls' education. The government should encourage the enrolment of girls by reasonably decreasing tuition fee so that it becomes affordable. The student's segregation based on gender in schools and colleges can be one of great measures in this respect. Sava Cools conducted a study in 2011 on parental role in the child's education. Their study found that the involvement of parents in the children's achievements in the schools especially at primary level showed positive effects on children and schools when parents encourage their learning and development. Parental involvement is very important for the improvement of a child as it helps understand the children's psychology. Mother in particular plays a major role by coordinating with teachers about her child's academics.

Rao and Gupta (2006) studied low literacy factors and strategies at primary level in 2006. The study, which was conducted in Mahabubnager district of Andhra Pradesh, India, employed qualitative method. It showed that social factors were the main cause of girls' education, for example, early marriages. Children are not allowed to go outside the house because of some gender tendencies mother being engaged with caress of her children. Undertaking the household activities, lack of parental awareness were some other reasons for low literacy at primary level in India. The studies have revealed that the mothers' illiteracy and lack of schooling directly harm their young children. Children under five were more likely to survive if their mothers have some primary education than if they have no schooling, and even more so if their mothers have some secondary schooling. In fact, the schooling of the mother is almost as important as the

family's income in improving a child's nutrition. In early 1990, several surveys found that parents refused to send their daughters to school because the schools were too far away from their houses; there were not enough female teachers, and the schools had co-education. A Ministry of Education (2003) report as cited by Qureshi (2004) stated that Enrolment in government schools continues to fall due to damaged buildings, teacher's absenteeism, and old curriculum. The literacy rate has been improving though at a very slow pace, a little overdone percent per annum over the last decade with considerable urban-rural and provincial differences. The government of Pakistan reported in 2002-03 that poor families are more likely to keep girls at home to care for younger siblings or to work in family enterprises. And if a family has to choose between educating a son or a daughter because of financial restrictions, it is likely to choose the son. The UNESCO-Islamabad Report (2010) while referring to the Pakistan Standard and Living Measurement (PSLM) survey, literacy rate for girls and women in Baluchistan is consistently lower as compared to boys and men. The figure mentioned in the report indicates that literacy rates are comparatively lower in rural areas than urban ones. Gender disparity is higher in some provinces particularly in Baluchistan. A Further closer analysis of PSLM data reveals the large gender disparities in some districts, a statement *"in some areas of countries education is still inconceivable for girls"* guide us toward the two key issues related to literacy, low household wealth and gender inequality. They covered numerous factors contributing towards gender inequality in Baluchistan. The first and the foremost factor highlighted are social and cultural hindrances that forced parents, restraining their daughters by sending them to school.

Poverty and absence of free and compulsory education for all is also one of the great causes. The expenses of a house and its essentials also play an important role in low literateness. The report stated that the poverty has great effect on low education. Another factor highlighted in the way of economic factor for the low literacy was low educational budget and the report stated that Pakistan is spending low budget on education in Baluchistan. The conclusion of this report laid stress upon a heavier expenditure on education and assuring gender equality to boost up the literacy level, in addition, an improved activism will help it achieve these goals. Some researchers including Sathar & Lloyd (1993), and Sawada & Lokshin (2009) analyzed the same barriers for the areas of Baluchistan. On the supply side, the unavailability of public sector schools and teachers, poor physical infrastructure of schools, non-accessibility of schools, low social and financial status of school teachers, gender disparity in the provision of schooling facilities, regional disparity, comparatively less availability of private schools, are prominent. Latif (2007) encourages education for both women and men without discrimination. Latif further stated that the authorities should not show

gender disparity in education. However, in some parts of the country, particularly in rural and tribal areas, girls are strictly forbidden from taking advantage of educational opportunities. Husain and Qasim (2005) conducted a study on inequality in literacy levels in Pakistan. The areas that are backward in terms of economic development have low literacy particularly in Baluchistan province and therefore, they need serious attention on part of the government. Moreover, the areas with higher literacy rate have shown further improvement in education sector. However, a lot of work needs to be done bring these areas on a par with other parts of the country. Modern education should be offered to students to prepare them for actual involvement in society's development. This presents important challenges to teacher. A teacher is meant to learn the new forms of knowledge develop new teaching methods and ways of working and create new forms of professional relationships. Teaching should be enhancing with current affairs, critical thinking and skilled teaching. United Nations Children's Fund (2009) stated that the government should find ways to make the "approve a school" scheme regulated to private schools materialize in its true sense so that private schools become instrumental in raising the quality of public schools.

3. Methodology

The article was a review study. This is an approach which allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon in depth (Karamustafaoglu, 2009). The researchers have adopted the literature review approach to investigate the problem. The structures of literature have been analyzed through handbooks mostly in the field of teacher education on literacy terms. This was a review study about barriers to literacy in developing societies. This was linked to the current understanding of the barriers to literacy in developing societies. This study, therefore, relied on different kinds of literature such as published articles, theses, and books. Majority of them were obtained from research databases such as Web of Science and Google Scholar. Namamba and Rao (2017), and Manzar-Abbas and Lu (2013) also followed the same method of review in conducting their review studies. In order to obtain relevant literature, search words such as "barriers to literacy" and "parents' and teachers' perspective" were used. In addition, books on educational literacy were also consulted. All the obtained literature was summarized according to the objectives of the study. All the obtained literature was cited properly in text and in the list. This allowed the researchers to extract and incorporate key information about barriers to literacy from parents' and teachers' perspective into this article. The examples drawn in this review article reflect the learning about barriers to literacy from parents' and teachers' perspective.

4. Conclusion

It seems that the situation of literacy at primary level is not satisfactory, especially to the developing areas around the globe. There are barriers, which are the main hurdles to low literacy, especially to girls. It is necessary to not only consider the phenomenon but also find ways to address the solutions to barriers. Therefore, the present review study tried to bring the status quo of developing societies into focus to notify the readers about the barriers and challenges, especially to girls-education at primary level.

4.1 Suggestions

The current review study would be useful for government agencies, policy makers and planners to take the measure of increasing enrollment rate at primary level. This review study captured a limited literature to notify the readers and governments of under-developing countries about the low literacy. It is suggested that further quantitative and qualitative studies should be done on the same topic to enrich the current topic in more detail and to bring interested results in various directions. It is also suggested that an action research will be more suitable to capture the areas of developing countries by an interaction of the researchers with social members within the field.

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