

Parent Attitude towards Children Education in South Punjab: An Analytical study in the Light of Islamic Thought

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Abstract

Education is a basic, Islamic and universal right. Education is a capability that leads the society towards progress and prosperity as a whole. There are different serious issues of developing countries among them the most important is the educational exclusion of primary school age children. It is evident that millions of primary school age children are excluded from the basic education in Pakistan. Pakistan has a dynamic geography in which some areas enjoys more civic facilities whereas other are excluded from the basic facilities of life. South Punjab is also included in those areas in which people are facing active and passive exclusion. Due to the hegemony of Patriarchal structure and lack of Islamic knowledge parents prefer to son over daughter throughout their life. The present study was conducted in the three districts of South Punjab (i) Multan, (ii) Bahawalpur and (iii) Dera Ghazi Khan to examine the household head attitude towards children education. A sample of 975 household heads was selected by using the multistage random sampling. The interview schedule was used for gathering the quantitative data. The results indicated biased, non-Islamic and gendered attitude of the parents in which they preferred the son over daughter; majority of the respondents had more educational expectations from the male children; moreover they considered that girls should have to stay at home to perform the domestic chores. It was also found that the tradition and cultural values were also playing a negative role in the inclusion of girls education in South Punjab.

Keywords: Exclusion, Primary School, Patriarchy, South Punjab

Introduction:

Allāh has created the man and women and given them the rights and obligation without any discrimination of sex and gender. The stereotype and patriarchal structure is the hindrance on the path of equality. Due to the dominancy of stereotype and patriarchy discrimination the females and give them lower status in the society.¹ Equal to access of people at education is the best measurement to judge the development of a society. The developing societies compromise in the weak section of society as the poor and girls in every aspect of society.² Education is the basic capability that helps an individual to improve his socio-economic status and make them an active member of society. Parents

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¹ Jamal, Aamir. "Why He Won't Send His Daughter to School—Barriers to Girls' Education in Northwest Pakistan: A Qualitative Delphi Study of Pashtun Men." *SAGE Open* 6, no. 3 (2016): 2158244016663798.

² Gulbaz, A. K. M. A., & Shah, S. A. (2011). Causes of Primary School Drop-out Among Rural Girls in Pakistan. *Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). Islamabad, Pakistan.*

give priority to boy over girls in many aspects of life like socio-economic and education.

³ Islam is a complete code of life and ensures women rights.

In the *Qur'an* *Allāh* says:

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهَهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ۚ وَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِن سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَبِهِ أَيَسْكَنِ عَلَىٰ بُرُوجٍ أَمْ يُدْخِلُهَا فِي التُّرَابِ ۚ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ۚ⁴

When a daughter is announced to one of them his face becomes black and he is full of wrath. He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that which is announced to him. Shall he keep it with disgrace or bury it (alive) in the dust? Now surely evil is what they judge.

Before the advent of Islam, there was spread darkness in the Arabic society especially females were its soft victim. Women had the lower status and faced the active as well as passive types of exclusion in the society. The Arabs even killed the daughters at the time of their birth. It shows the misogynic attitude of Arabic society before the advent of Islam.

In the Islamic perspective it is the authority of the *Allāh* to whom He bless the son or daughter. In the *Qur'an* *Allāh* says:

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۗ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۗ يَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ اِنَاثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ الذَّكَوٰرَ ۗ اَوْ يَزْوِجُهُمْ ذُكْرًا وَاُنَاثًا ۗ⁵

Allāh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He creates what He pleases; He grants to whom He pleases daughters and grants to whom He pleases sons. He makes them of both sorts, male and female.

Allāh the Authority to whom he blessed son or daughter. So, we should have not have to do discriminate between son and daughter and ensure equality between theme. Islamic teachings emphasized the good socialization of the girls. The Prophet (PBUH) said about the girls socialization

عن انس قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: "من عال جاريتين دخلت انا وهو الجنة كهاتين⁶

"The believer who bears the responsibility of two daughters and supports them till they attain puberty, he and I will be close to one another like this on the Day of Judgment.

The Islamic teachings gives instruction to its followers that instead of that being worried about the daughter's birth they should have to thank *Allāh* and should be ensured their good socialization without discrimination of male and female child. There is a sever issue of gender discrimination throughout the world. The Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) taught us how to tackle this issue

قَالَ: فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَابِدُوا بَنِيَّ أَوْلَادِكُمْ.⁷

"Be afraid of Allāh and be just to your children"

³ Chaudhry, Imran Sharif, and Saeedur Rahman. "The impact of gender inequality in education on rural poverty in Pakistan: an empirical analysis." *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences* 15, no. 1 (2009): 174-188.

⁴ *Al-Qur'an, Al Nahal, 58-59*

⁵ *Al-Qur'an, Al-Shura, 49,50*

⁶ Trimdi Kitab al walsilah, chapter, importance of sisters and daughter *Hadīth: 1914*

⁷ Bukhari, Kitābul Hiba, chapter the witness for Alhiba, *Hadīth:2587*

No one can deny the importance of education because it is the light that helps the nation to improve its socio-economic and political status. So, knowledge should be learned for the prosperity of the society. *Allāh* says

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا⁸

“O my lord! Increase me in knowledge”.

Education guides us about the good and the bad, the right and the wrong. Islam gives emphasis on getting education and leads the people towards positivism and builds empirical thinking. *Allāh* Says:

قُلْ بَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ⁹

“Are those who know and those who do not know alike?”

This verse shows the importance of education and motivates the parents to fulfill their social and Islamic duty to educate their children without any gender discrimination. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) also motivates the parents to educate their daughters as well.

“I heard the Messenger of *Allāh*, may *Allāh* bless him and grant him peace, say, ‘*Allāh* will make the path to the Garden easy for anyone who travels a path in search of knowledge. Angels spread their wings for the seeker of knowledge out of pleasure for what he is doing. Everyone in the heavens and everyone in the earth ask forgiveness for a man of knowledge, even the fish in the water.’¹⁰

The Islamic teachings tell us the importance of education as well as guide the parents to socialize their children. Islam emphasizes on daughters’ education. The good socialization of daughters is necessary for the stability of the society because educating a girl is actually educating a family.

Pakistan is a religious as well as traditional society in which patriarchy is dominates. Before its independence there was a dream that Pakistan would be a land in which every citizen would enjoy the quality of life and fulfill basic necessities of living but unfortunately the dream had not be fulfilled after 72 years of its independence. Pakistan is a third-world country in which the people face the lack of basic necessities of life. Education is the primarily element of development that accelerates the speed of positive change in the society. It is evident that thirty two percent of the school going age children (five-nine) was out of school and 30 percent children who were enrolled in the school were dropped before completing the primary schooling in Pakistan. There is a regional disparity in the Pakistani society. The children from the urban areas had more chances of getting education as compared to those of rural areas. It was estimated that 73 percent urban children and 50 percent rural children got chance to be enrolled in the primary school in Pakistan.¹¹

It is generally stated that Punjab is the backbone of Pakistan. Its literacy rate was higher than other provinces of Pakistan, but again it is important to mention that all the districts of Punjab were not enjoying the resources equally. The districts (Mianwali, Bhakkar, Bahawalpur, Muzzafergarh, Bahawalnager, Rahimyar khan, Lodhran, RajanPur, Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan) lies in the region of South Punjab were more victim of educational exclusion. The majority of the people were engaged with the agricultural sector. The people of this area were

⁸ *Al-Qur’ān, Taha*, 114

⁹ *Al-Qur’ān, Al Zumer*, 09

¹⁰ (*Abu’daowd, kitabulilm, Chapter, motivation for seeking knowledge, Hadīth number 3641*).

¹¹ *Country Report of Pakistan Regarding: Accelerating Millennium Development Goals 2013-15*. Ministry of education & training government of Pakistan, Islamabad, (2013).

attached with the traditions and feel hesitate to bring change in their thinking. Due to the limited economic opportunities people gave preference to attach their children with their inherited occupation instead of schooling that's why the school going age children face the exclusion in the education.¹² The following table depicts the exclusionary picture of South Punjab.

Table Number 01: Percent of Excluded children by gender (6 to 16 years)¹³

District	2014		2015		2016	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Dera Ghazi Khan	-	-	10	11	13	14
Rajanpur	17	22	12	14	19	22
Mianwali	4	4	5	8	1	4
Bahawalnager	10	10	12	13	8	10
Bhakkar	9	10	9	12	6	10

There were some districts of South Punjab in which children were highly excluded from the primary schooling. In the district Rajanpur forty eight percent of the boys were excluded from primary education whereas 56 percent girls were excluded; 50 percent boys were excluded whereas 53 percent boys were excluded from primary education; 43 percent of the boys and 68 percent of the girls were excluded from the primary education in Muzaffargarh.¹⁴

It was identified that 28.8 percent going age children were out of school in Muzaffargarh; 26.6 percent in Multan and 5.1 percent children were excluded in Mianwali.¹⁵ A research was conducted in Southern Punjab identified that female did not have equal opportunities of education as compared to males due to the traditional cultural biasness, patriarchy, lack of freedom and low socio-economic position of parents in Southern Punjab¹⁶.

It was mentioned that the main issue in the exclusion from the primary school of the South Punjab children was due to the poor facilities of schools. The schools were missing the basic facilities like the pure drinking water, electricity, boundary wall, fans, light, black boards, classes and even teachers are also missing from the schools¹⁷.

Methodology:

The study was conducted in the three divisions of Southern Punjab, Pakistan namely (i) Multan (ii) Bahawalpur and (iii) Dera Ghazi Khan. At the first stage three Divisions (Multan, Bahawalpur and D.G Khan) were selected. At the second stages total number of tehsils were selected and at the third stage four union councils from two tehsils of each district were selected for the given population size (Punjab Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The data were collected from the household heads whose children were lies aged 6-9. Total numbers of 975 household heads males were selected in this study. The logic behind the household heads selection was that they

¹² Buchmann, Claudia. "Family structure, parental perceptions, and child labor in Kenya: What factors determine who is enrolled in school?." *Social forces* 78, no. 4 (2000): 1349-1378.

¹³ Annual Status of Education Report, (ASER) 2015. Lahore, (2016).

¹⁴ Pakistan social and living standards measurement survey 2004-05. Government of Pakistan statistics division federal bureau of statistics Islamabad, (2005).

¹⁵ Annual status of Education Report 2011. (2012). *South Asian Forum For Education Development, Pakistan*.

¹⁶ Sattar, Tehmina, Ghulam Yasin, and Saima Afzal. "Socio-cultural and economic impediments of inequality in provision of educational right to female: A case of Southern Punjab (Pakistan)." *International Journal of Human Resource Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012): 122.

¹⁷ Annual Status of Education Report, Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2015. ASER, Lahore, (2016).

were the main stakeholders of family in Pakistan. Interview schedule was used as a tool for data collection because majority of the respondents were illiterate. The data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. The researcher used the descriptive statistics which included frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics.

Results and Discussion:

The results and discussion of the data has key importance in the scientific research. These steps are helpful in the generalization and prediction of the data. The results and discussion of this research is given in the following lines.

Parents Attitude towards Children Education:

Sr. No	Statements	Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Both sons' and daughters' was equally necessary	Strongly Agree	18	1.8	4.2236	1.05362
		Agree	57	5.8		
		Neutral	106	10.9		
		Disagree	365	37.4		
		Strongly Disagree	429	44.0		
2	Educating the girls will be beneficiary for the household	Strongly Agree	35	3.6	4.1590	.96145
		Agree	96	9.8		
		Neutral	134	13.7		
		Disagree	358	36.7		
		Strongly Disagree	352	36.1		
3	The families give equal weight to male and female education	Strongly Agree	41	4.2	3.9169	1.10639
		Agree	89	9.1		
		Neutral	225	23.1		
		Disagree	401	41.1		
		Strongly Disagree	219	22.5		
4	Involvement of children in the labor market is more beneficial than their education	Strongly Agree	149	15.3	3.5303	1.29478
		Agree	179	18.4		
		Neutral	212	21.7		
		Disagree	284	29.1		
		Strongly Disagree	151	15.5		
5	Educated girls become deviant	Strongly Agree	96	9.8	3.1118	1.30188
		Agree	171	17.5		
		Neutral	394	40.4		
		Disagree	246	25.2		
		Strongly Disagree	68	7.0		
6	Girls should have to get religious education as well as school education	Strongly Agree	36	3.7	3.0831	.76919
		Agree	97	9.9		
		Neutral	133	13.6		
		Disagree	355	36.4		
		Strongly Disagree	354	36.3		
7	Female children should have to stay at home to look after the family	Strongly Agree	98	10.1	3.0195	1.04941
		Agree	149	15.3		
		Neutral	118	12.1		
		Disagree	358	36.7		
		Strongly Disagree	252	25.8		

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

It is mentioned in the above table that 18 (1.8) percent of the respondents 'strongly agreed'; 57 (5.8) percent of the respondents were 'agreed'; 106 (10.9) percent of the respondents were 'neutral'; 365 (37.4) percent were 'disagreed' and 429 (44.0)

percent of the respondents 'strongly disagree' that both sons' and daughters' education was equally necessary.

In Punjab eighty six percent children were enrolled in which eighty three percent girls and eighty eight percent boys

It was identified ¹⁸ that only 72 percent of the primary school age children were enters in the school and others were even excluded from the entry in the school and furthermore it was also highlighted that 86 percent of the children enrolled in Punjab in which 88 percent were boys and 83 percent girls. This shows the influence of patriarchy in the family institution. The people of South Punjab were spending the impoverished life and faced the relative deprivation from the independence of Pakistan that's why they did not have the capability to know that education was the basic element of 'cultural capital'. That's why; their response was not appreciated regarding the education of the children. Islam emphasizes the parents to educate their children and make them good citizens of society.

In the *Qur'an Allāh* says:

قُلْ بَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ¹⁹

Are those who know and those who do not know alike?

The educated person was superior to uneducated ones. Education was compulsory for male and female because education gave the consciousness of kind and make them civilized member of society. That's why Islam makes it obligation for both males and females.

The next question in the above mentioned table illustrate that 35 (3.6) percent of the respondents 'strongly agreed'; 96 (9.8) percent of the respondents 'agree'; 134 (13.7) percent of the respondents were 'neutral', 358 (36.7) percent of the respondents 'disagreed' and 352 (36.1) percent of the respondents were 'strongly disagreed' about the question that educating the girls would be beneficial for the household. The study conducted by also rectified that parents did not have more future expectation from girls as compare to male. They considered that girls should have to perform the domestic work and separate themselves from outdoor activities.²⁰

The results of this question showed the misogynous attitude of the parents. Islam emphasizes on the girl's education. Educating the girls is more beneficially for the development of the society because a girl child would be the future mother and if the mother was educated, she would play an important role for the development of the society. The next question showed that 41 (4.2) percent of the respondents 'strongly agreed'; 89 (9.1) percent agreed; 225 (23.1) percent were 'neutral'; 401 (41.1) percent 'disagreed' and 219 (22.5) percent of the respondents 'strongly disagreed' that families gave equal weight to both male and female education. The results depicted that majority of the respondents disagreed that the families gave equal weight to both male and female education. It was also endorsed by that gender inequality is the responsible factor of

¹⁸ National Education Management Information System (NEMIS).(2017). *Pakistan Education Statistics 2015–16*, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

¹⁹ *Al-Qur'an, Al Zumer*, 09

²⁰ Oxaal, Zoë. *Education and poverty: A gender analysis*. Vol. 53. Sussex: Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, (1997).

educational exclusion of primary school age children.²¹ The next question asked by the researcher that involvement of children in the labor market was more beneficial than their education. The statistics showed that 149 (15.3) percent of the respondents 'strongly agreed'; 179 (18.4) percent were 'agreed'; 212 (18.4) were neutral; 284 (29.1) percent were 'disagreed'; and 151 (15.5) percent of the respondents 'strongly disagreed'. The results showed that there was a tendency of parents towards child labor. The results of different researches²² show that low economic status of the family lead the children towards child labor. But in the Islamic perspective child labor was restricted. Islam teaches us that it's the duty of the parents to give the necessary education and should have to fulfill the necessary needs of children. It was generally stated that the parents' less education and no vision led towards child labor. In this way the children were excluded from the main stream of the society. Children were the weaker part of the society and parents should not have to involve their children in economic activities. Islam also explains this phenomenon in this way

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا²³

Allāh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability.
Hazrat Usman (R.A) once said in his speech prohibited the child labor²⁴

So, it could be summarized that child labor was against the teachings and the parents who involved their children in the labor force actually were deviating from the basic principles of Islam.

The next question was asked to the respondents educated girls became deviant from social norms. 96 (9.8) percent of the respondents was 'strongly agreed'; 171 (17.5) percent 'agreed'; 394 (40.4) percent were 'neutral'; 246 (25.2) percent 'disagreed' and 68 (7.0) percent of the respondents 'strongly disagreed' that education made the children deviant from social norms. The results showed that majority of the respondents were 'neutral/no opinion' to answer this question. Education was the universal right and enabled the children to recognize their rights and obligation. 36 (3.7) percent of the respondents were 'strongly agreed'; 97 (9.9) percent 'agreed'; 133 (13.6) percent were 'neutral'; 355 (36.4) percent 'disagreed' and 354 (36.3) percent of the respondents 'strongly disagreed' that girls should have to get religious education as well as school education. To examine the gender stereotypes the researcher asked the question if female children should have to stay at home to look after the family. 98 (10.1) percent of the respondents 'strongly agreed'; 149 (15.3) percent 'agreed'; 118 (12.1) percent were 'neutral'; 358 (36.7) percent 'disagreed' and 252 (25.8) percent of the respondents 'strongly disagree'. It was found that majority of the girls were excluded from basic schooling due to their engagement in the domestic activities.²⁵

²¹ Sperling, Gene B., and Barbara Herz. "What works in girls' education: Evidence and policies from the developing world." *Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations* (2004).

²² Jensen, Peter, and Helena Skyt Nielsen. "Child labour or school attendance? Evidence from Zambia." *Journal of population economics* 10, no. 4 (1997): 407-424..

Buchmann, Claudia. "Family structure, parental perceptions, and child labor in Kenya: What factors determine who is enrolled in school?." *Social forces* 78, no. 4 (2000): 1349-1378..

²³ Al-*Qur'ān*, Al-Baqarah:286).

²⁴ (Imam Malik, Al mota, kitab al istezan, *Hadīth* 812).

²⁵ Bourdillon, Michael FC, Deborah Levison, Ben White, and William E. Myers. *Rights and wrongs of children's work*. Rutgers university press, (2010).

Conclusion:

It could be concluded that gendered attitude of the parents was the stumbling block of the exclusion of school age children. Traditional attachment and dogmatic beliefs, low economic and social status of the household head and lack of Islamic knowledge of the respondents were played a negative role in the educational inclusion of children in South Punjab. It was also found that involvement of children in the domestic and labor market was also the important exclusionary factor of children exclusion. It is suggested that the government should have start to awareness campaigns at union council level for ensuring the enrolment of children in the school without discrimination. Parents should have to keep away their school going age children from domestic as well as earning activities and should have to provide education without the discrimination of son and daughter. In this way the society will move towards development.