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The Status of Female Education in Pakistan

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Abstract

The study was aimed at investigating the status of female education in Pakistan. Education is a process of socialization according to the social needs of the society. Education brings change in the behaviour of individuals and empowers them to live with dignity and freedom.

Education of women is regarded as a key element in their quest for equality. The impact of education on women themselves, their family and society cannot be overemphasized. The contribution the women can make towards economic development of families and the economic system need to be monetarily assessed to see how much is best if they are involved in productive behaviour.

The main objective of the study was to study the status of female education in Pakistan. The minimum level of education for inclusion in the sample was at least secondary school certificate. The study was limited to Punjab. The cluster random sampling technique was used for administering the instrument of this study.

The conclusions of the study were: (1) Salary of majority of the respondent's was in the range of Rs. 5,001-10,000 per month. However, a few respondents had other sources of income up to Rs. 5000; (2) Majority of the respondents claimed importance of educated female because education solves the financial problems and enhancement of personality and awareness.

Female education should be encouraged and expanded in all regions of the country. Proper arrangements for female education can secure them and make them able to earn and live full life.

Keywords: Female Education, Family, Society, Personality, Freedom of Women.

Illiteracy and the Backwardness of a Country

Ahmed (1996) describes that the backwardness of a country continues mainly because of the large percentage of illiterates. This percentage is very high among men in the world, but alarmingly higher in the case of women. Women form almost half of the population of a country. If such a large portion is denied the privilege of education, the country is found to lag behind.

There was a time when it was said that educated women are apt to neglect their domestic duties and lose their tender grace and feminine virtue. An educated woman was expected to be self-conceited, good only for novel reading, playing on the organ and disobeying her parents. But those days are gone. It is now pretty difficult to procure a good match for a girl who does not know how to read and write. The importance of education for women is now admitted on all hands (Philippines, 1994).

In spite of the overwhelming significance of their role in maintaining a social system women have struggled for centuries to win recognition of their rights.

UN Charter of Human Rights

Practically in every modern society, feminist movements are fighting against numerous built-in male prejudices. It is in view of these facts that the United Nations had made improvement in the status of women an integral part of the Charter of Human Rights. Removal of sex discrimination is one of the top priorities of UN in its agenda for national development.

Dehumanization of Women

Khalid (1990) describes that the women in general are dehumanized and they exercise little control over either themselves or on affairs affecting their well being. They are treated as possessions rather than as self-reliant and self-regulating humans. They are dispossessed and disinherited in spite of legal safe guards.

The vast majority of rural females are made to work as long as sixteen to eighteen hours a day without any payment. Their status is based mostly on local customs irrespective of Quranic precepts. Islam has given women fundamental rights in matters relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance. Her participation in society and her dignity are recognized. But, in Muslim countries, the Islamic provisions may receive lip service but the provisions of Islam may be greatly masked by country's cultural patterns.

The Qur'an does not place any economic responsibilities on women and ensures that all women are to be provided for by men related to them by blood or marriage. At the same time, women are given the right to earn and retain their personal earnings. Muslim women are free to use their financial resources in whatever way they like. They can buy and sell property or invest their money in any trade or business. They can give the mandate of their property to any person of their choice without even the consultation of their consorts. In economic matters, the juridical status of women is the same as that of men. The law allows them to make use of their material assets in whatever way they please. Despite strong family ties, Muslim women can maintain their independence in various walks of life (Sudha, K.D. 2000).

In practice, like the rest of the Muslim world, the Pakistani women are denied due social prestige and economic equality. They are mostly confined to only monotonous affairs, without opportunities for intellectual growth.

Also in practice, women were degraded in social prestige and economic equality. They were mostly confined to domestic drudgery and draped in purdah. They were completely debarred from public life (Hasan 1982).

In Arabia, the birth place of Islam, the position of woman was in no way better and elevated. Patriarchal form of social structure made women a part of men's property.

Custom and Environment – Status of Women in the Muslim World Now

Female education is a sociological investment which can result in a lot of social good. No one would question that a woman should be a good wife and a devoted mother but to confine her merely to a narrow world of domesticity is a gross miscalculation of her abilities. She should be given a chance to fight, shoulder to shoulder with men the battle of existence on various fronts, so that her aptitude and abilities can be purposefully canalized (Shah, 1989).

Statement and Objectives

The study was aimed at exploring the status of female education in Pakistan. The objectives of the study were the status of female education in Pakistan, to evaluate the role of female education as a daughter, mother and a wife and to explore the legal status and political rights.

Method and Procedure

Data collected through questionnaire were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted by applying percentages descriptive and inferential statistics in the light of the objectives of the study.

Table 1 Distribution of monthly salary of the respondents

Responses	Up to 5,000	5,001-10,000	10,001-15,000	15,001-20,000	Above 20,000	Total
Number	294	458	140	72	36	1000

Percentage	29.4	45.8	14.00	7.2	.36	100
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Table 1 reflects that per month salary of 45.08 percent respondents was found between Rs. 5,001 and Rs. 10,000, followed by 29.04 percent who claimed their salary Rs. 5,000 or below. The salary of 14.00 percent was found in the range of Rs. 10,001-15,000. Only 7.02 percent fell in the range of Rs. 15,001-20,000.

Table 2 Distribution of respondents about effects of female education

Responses	Social	Financial	Importance of Educated Females	Enhancing the personality and awareness	Total
Number	194	327	465	214	1200
Percentage	16.17	27.25	38.75	17.83	100

Table 2 depicts that 27.25 percent respondents claimed financial effect of female education, followed by 38.75 percent who claimed importance of educated female. Enhancement of personality and social effect was claimed by 17.83 percent and 16.17 percent respectively.

Table 3

Distribution of responses regarding qualification of mothers' socio-economic status

I	Qualificati	Illiterate	Prima	Middle	Matri	F.A	B.A	M.A	Total	
	on									
	Number	564	284	151	111	53	28	9	1200	
	Percentage	47.00	23.67	12.58	9.25	4.42	2.33	0.75	100	
II	Occupatio	Unemploy	Busin	Heal	Teach	Banki	Army	P.T.C.	Agricultu	Total
	n									
	Number	765	198	75	90	25	15	24	8	1200
	Percentage	63.75	16.50	6.25	7.5	2.08	1.25	2	0.67	100
III	Income	0-5,000	5,011-1,0000	10,001-15000	15,001-20,000	Above	20,000	Total		
	Numbers									
	Numbers	773	175	125	90	37	1200			
	Percentage	64.42	14.58	10.42	7.5	3.08	100			

1. Table 3 indicates that 45.5 percent of the respondent's mothers were found with qualification from primary to matric. Whereas, 47.00 percent of them were illiterate. None had higher qualification.
2. 63.75 percent of the respondent's mothers were found unemployed. However, 36.25 percent were found employed in variety of occupations.
3. 89.42 percent of the respondent's mothers were found with income up to Rs:150,000. Only 3.08 percent were earning more than Rs:20,000.

Findings

The analysis of the data revealed that financial effect of female education was claimed by 27.25 percent respondents, followed by 38.75 percent who claimed importance of education for female. Enhancement of personality and social effect was claimed by 17.83 percent and 16.17 percent respectively. So for salary analysis to concerned 7.02 percent fell in the range of Rs 15,001-20,000 per month. Mothers of 62.25 percent of the respondents were found with qualification from primary to B.A, 36.25 percent of the respondents mother were employed in a variety of occupations and 3.08 percent of the respondents were earning more than Rs.20,000.

Conclusions

In the light of the analysis of data and findings of the study it was concluded that most of the respondent's mothers were educated but only a few of them reported that their mothers earned more than Rs. 20,000 per month. Salary of majority of the respondents was in the range of Rs: 5,001-10,000 per month and majority of the respondents claimed importance of educated females because education solves the financial problems and enhances their personality and awareness. Education of women is regarded as a key element in their quest for equality. The impact of education on women themselves, their family and society cannot be overemphasized.

The contribution the women can make towards the economic development of families and the economic system need to be monetarily assessed to see how much is lost if they are not involved in productive labour. Education and training alone can narrow the difference in competency and achieving empowerment of women and their social position and placement of the talent where it can be most productive.

Recommendations

After the analysis of the data, findings and conclusions, it was observed that majority of the respondents were found doing some job to overcome the financial problems, for which education is an essential element. Further research is recommended to obtain more relevant reliable and applicable results by taking a larger sample from all the provinces and the society as a whole.

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