



Major Factors of Female Dropouts at Different Educational Levels in Mardan

Uzma Gul¹ & Sobia Gul²

¹ (Corresponding Author), CT, Directorate of Elementary & Secondary Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Email: uzmagulmrd@hotmail.com

² AIU, Islamabad Email: sobiagul.aiou2010@gmail.com

Abstract

Education is the fundamental right of every human being. There is imposed no restriction on the basis of gender in any civilized society. Unfortunately, female gender is encountered with countless hurdles and shackles in making their ways to quality education. Female education is considered as a stigma in Asian societies. There are involved numberless factors which are blocking the ways to quality education of females. There has been reported immeasurable dropout of female in different stages of education. In this research study the centre of attention is the female gender and their dropout at different levels in Mardan. As there is a wide literature available with the concern of the student dropout, so by reviewing the literature the research has been done. While going forward in the research, after the literature review, the phenomenological research method, which is actually the one form of qualitative research was adopted in order to enrich the research and to make it more valid and reliable. The researcher has conducted interviews of different male and female educationalists available in Mardan. These interviews helped to get the information about both kinds of people of Mardan, i.e. the original habitants of Mardan and the immigrants who are living in city. The information has been collected on the bases of the experience of the educationalists and their wide observations. All the hypotheses have been tested and accepted. Moving forward the questionnaire has been designed from the qualitative data. With the help of that questionnaire the data have been collected from females of different regions in Mardan. This data has also again been collected from both original habitants of Mardan as well as the immigrants. By the help of collected data the quantitative research has been done. Frequency of every element has been detected separately by using descriptive analysis through SPSS. Finally, conclusions have been made on the basis of the data analysis, which are supporting the hypotheses made for the research study.

Keywords

Education in Pakistan, Female Education, Female Dropouts, Gender Discrimination

Introduction:

The world has been changed into a global village but unfortunately, in this progressive world still, there are some dark factors that still provide the astonishing facts which highlight the closed doors to some basic and fundamental necessities such as health and education. The progress of the developed societies disclose the fact that equal and judicious chances have been furnished to both male and female keeping in mind that single gender progress is impossible in the world of science and technology. Men and women are playing their active roles in progressing activities of the society equally. This can be said without any doubt that education plays a vital role in the betterment of any nation, and more specifically, the requirement of women education cannot be neglected, due to the role of women in the society especially while being a mother, the capability of a mother to change the society is unquestionable (Fatima, 2011). By means of education, splendid social development can be seen, especially considering mothers' education. It is very well said by Napoleon that give me

educated mothers and I shall give you a strong nation. Educated mothers can enhance their lives in both cases whether it is about their social life or their reproductive experiences. All this happens through the expansion of the vision towards life through education. In underdeveloped countries, almost everywhere mothers' education leaves a profound mark on a child's health and other activities; the health of the children of the educated mother seems to be better even in situations where medical facilities are scarce (Khan, Soomro & Hafeez, 1994).

Education is defined as the process of desired changes in human behavior. Education is an element that has the power to enhance the person pursuing it as well as the people around the person. The expansion of vision through experiences can be done easily and quickly through education, instead of experiencing it physically. This happens due to the limited possibilities of contact of the human with reality (Nayak & Nair, 2005). Education has the potential to inculcate evolutionary and revolutionary changes in the lives of females. They prove themselves as helping hands to home and society in the fields of economy, morality, social and cultural. Such as when an educated girl moves towards the phase of being a mother in her life, multi-dimensional benefits can be seen which do not only affect one life but also the life of her children. Education has been applied as a tool to tackle with grooming and self-realization of females all around the world. It plays a key role in minimizing the barriers in women's lives (Mishra, 2005). Education is there making the minds more analytical and logical towards the home management as well as the social and economic aspect of life as well (Goel, 2004).

The pages of research studies have disclosed the phenomenal fact that provision of quality education to females has been made mandatory all around the globe. In the whole world, there are many countries practically promoting education among them Chile is on the top giving free education for 15 years i.e. from 6 to 21 years. Moreover, Germany, Belgium and Italy providing whole school education for free to females. Wherever in some countries like Britain and New Zealand, 11-years education is free and must for all females. 19 more developed and developing nations are there providing free education from 5-15 years or 6-16 years to all females without any discrimination of gender. A list of 34 countries is also there comprising the names of nations like Japan, Finland, Russia, and Sweden making 9 years of education compulsory. But there are also some countries including Sri-Lanka and Pakistan which still do not have any specific laws regarding education for females (The Hindu, 2010). Educational policies and plans regarding the number of dropout of female students especially in South Asian states is ignored area. Almost everywhere around the world student enrolment in school is increasing but still, the dropout ratio is huge (Sabates, Akyeampong & Hunt, 2010). Although, Pakistan has come up with several policies regarding education but still the practical implementation of those policies cannot be seen. While going through the educational policies of Pakistan, it is evident that from the first policy to date every policy has some elements regarding women's education. Some common points presented in all the policies include (a) Primary education for girls should be widespread. (b) Frequent opportunities for girls' access to education should be provided. (c) As a qualified female can serve as a teacher primary level teaching will be assigned to them. (d) Women literacy programs will be funded additionally. (e) Out of school educational programs will be held especially for girls. But even after such factors presented in almost every policy, proper majors cannot be taken. Pakistan's overall literacy rate remains static at 58% with a literacy rate of males' 70% and 48% of females, as due to the Population and Housing Census, the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement was not carried out for 2017-18. Besides that, Pakistan stands in the list of countries having high dropout ratios in School. The factor of financial issues is extremely influential, and the alarming point is that Pakistan is still not in a state of stability to fight and overcome poverty. Recognizing the reasons for students leaving their education is enormously complicated. As other factors such as test results are affected by so many other aspects, similarly the dropout is also somehow the reflection of student's individual and family life and the social scenarios the student is living in (Rumberger, 2001). The noticeable point is that the ratio of girl dropout is always higher than that of the ratio of boys' dropout ratio. There is a number of research studies performed in this regard and more or less the most common element present in all of the researches which are triggering dropouts in society is their social status mainly influenced by the economic and financial factor (Rumberger, 1987).

Objectives of the Study:

- To investigate the major causes of female dropout in Mardan.
- To investigate the major effects of dropouts in Mardan.

Research Questions:

- 1- What are the major causes of female dropout in Mardan?
- 2- What are the major effects of female dropout in Mardan?

Literature Review:

A progressive society is always the one where both community members i.e. male and female are awarded equal weightage. The improvement of a society can be assessed by considering the concerns that develop instructive discrepancy prevalent within society. The predominance of inequitable dissemination of instruction in male and female understudies prevents the advancement of a country World Conference on Instruction (2001).

Female dropout at different levels of education has caused alarming situations. It has captured the attention of prominent researchers to investigate and dig out relevant factors. Several studies with in the last few years have shown that family practices and its untwisted rules and attitudes, physical and moral experiences in schools, treatment in social life, and personal interests and attributes are all the factors influencing profoundly on the dropout ratio especially in females. Low income family background usually is the most common factor in all of the cases which are observed in this regard. Among low income status, joint families, patriarchal setup and likeness for male instead of females are also the crucial factors for dropout. There are further categories such as several family members, low parental interests towards their child's education, etc. all these affect the dropout ratio in different variations (Janosz, LeBlanc & Tremblay, 1997).

Pakistan has witnessed a bulk of education policies in which all fundamental rights have been granted to both male and females but on paper. The application of all those rights is merely dreams. Although the government has seemed to announce so many policies regarding women's education, still this is an observation done in so many research works that still dropout ratio of females is higher than that of boys at all levels of education. Now, this is the alarming part that even after so many policies announced by the government still, female education is not up to the satisfactory level. Hence, the government should take some proper measures in order to control the dropout ratio of females if they are desirous to achieve pragmatic social development and economic stability (Melese & Fenta, 2009).

In most of the developing countries, the female literacy rate is lower than the male literacy rate. The situation is shameful in Pakistan and with special reference to Mardan and its rural areas. Education can play a significant role in the removal of this gap between females of the society and availing good life opportunities by getting quality education (Khan, 2013).

The rate of female dropout is comparatively high in many developing countries because of several factors and Pakistan is also among those countries where females are deprived of access to quality education (Greaff-Martins, Comassetto, Kieling & Goncalves, 2006).

Government and several private bodies have had tried to curb the issue of female dropout, but none of them till now is able to accomplish the desired objective as the ratio of dropout is soaring day by day. The core reason for the failure of such attempts is the peoples' negative attitude and reactions towards the positive actions in this regard, as it is clearly observable that male community share the pseudo approach that what can a society achieve by female education?, Gender discrimination is profoundly flowing in the social structure and blocking the ways of development of females in society. They resist female education and keep women deprived so that there is no such understanding of the female rights in society (Zia, 1987).

Pakistani society incorporates an inclination for children, hence loaning a hand to male mastery. Since Pakistan's public is concentrated in country regions, where 65% of the people are illiterate, biased interpretations of Islam has instigated the wrath of people to stop provision of education to their females. Devout researchers, lawmakers, and medieval masters tend to make use of Islam for their purposes to force limitations, control, and persecution, mostly on individuals in provincial zones. Young students and ladies are the casualties of this frame of patriarchy (Latif, 2009).

Methodology:

The nature of the present research study is the exploratory sequential mixed method research design. According to Creswell, Klassen & Plano Clark, 2011; this research method consists of two phases. First, Qualitative phase and then Quantitative phase. The research proceeds in a way that qualitative phase provides more general and wider picture of the research, followed by the quantitative phase where the general frame of the research is explained and refined.

Qualitative phase is the first phase in this study. The approach of Phenomenological research has been applied. Phenomenology is a method of Qualitative research method, which emphasizes on the cohesion of an experience of a certain group. The basic aim of this method is to describe the understanding the approach, nature, and characteristics of a relative occurrences. Usually, interviews are conducted with the people with first-hand knowledge of the event or have the subtle observations regarding the considered issue. Other than the interviews the relevant documents and texts are also been considered in order to gain more relative information about the considered problem or issue.

After gathering data through qualitative research, the research enters into the second phase i.e. quantitative phase. Data has been collected through questionnaires and then it has been analysed through SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a software to analyse and evaluate the concerned data.

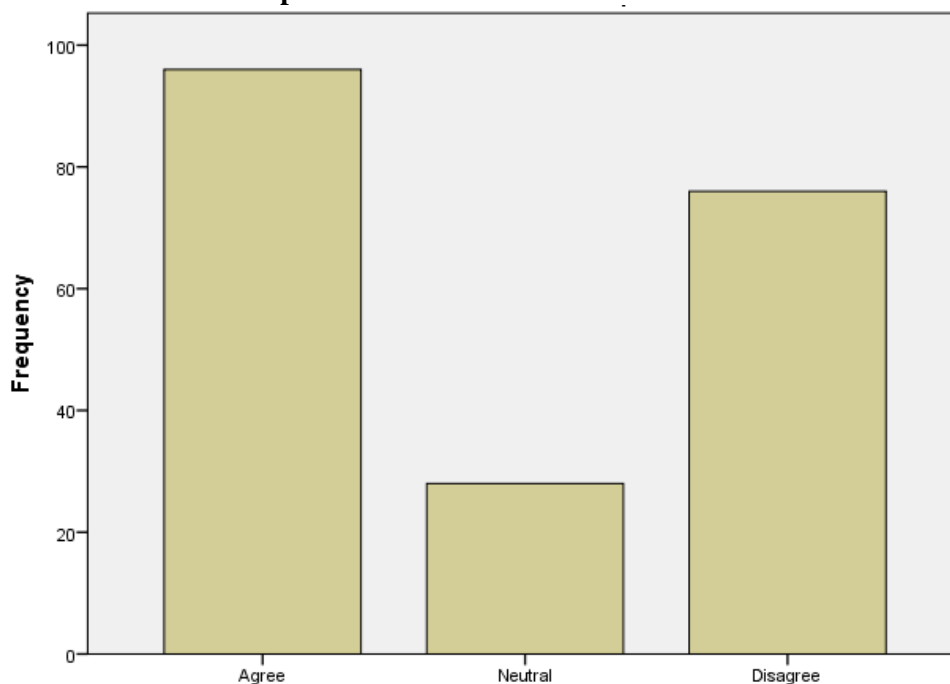
Results:

It has been observed empirically that the result of the qualitative study leads towards formulation of quantitative questions. As the results of the qualitative research showed how the evidently effected patriarchal society is depriving females from getting education. As mentioned in literature review the girl’s opportunities of availing the rights depends on from which family she belongs, even if she manages to take stands for herself then comes her marriage which plays a vital role as barrier for availing opportunities. Thus, questions for quantitative research has been formed on the factors extracted from qualitative research and literature review.

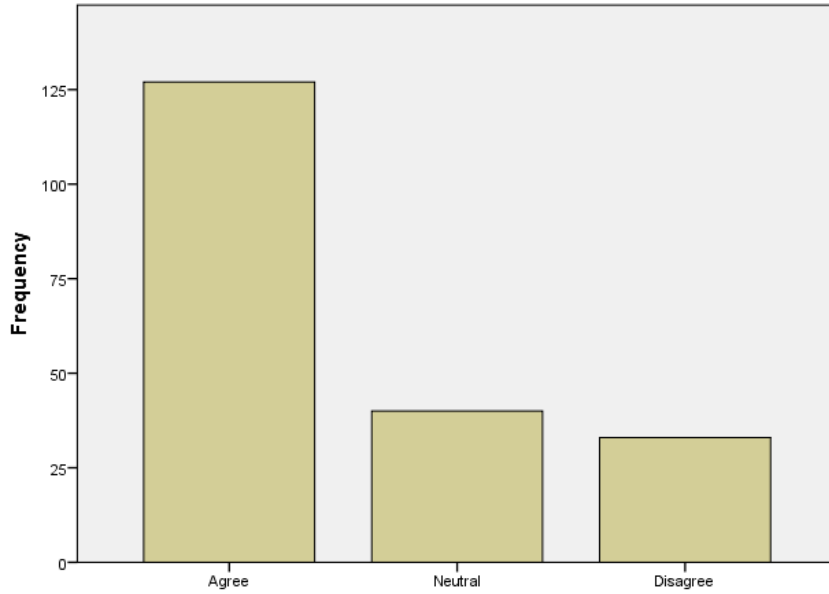
For checking the reliability of the questionnaire developed for quantitative research, the Coefficient of Cronbach’s Alpha has been applied and the reliability status comes out to be good, as the value of Cronbach’s Alpha is .827.

The quantitative research has been done on the bases of quota sampling. Among which quotas were defined on the basis of direct habitant of Mardan and migrant families from rural areas living in Mardan. In this study descriptive analysis has been done by using SPSS. In SPSS frequencies have been presented via Bar charts, for every question separately.

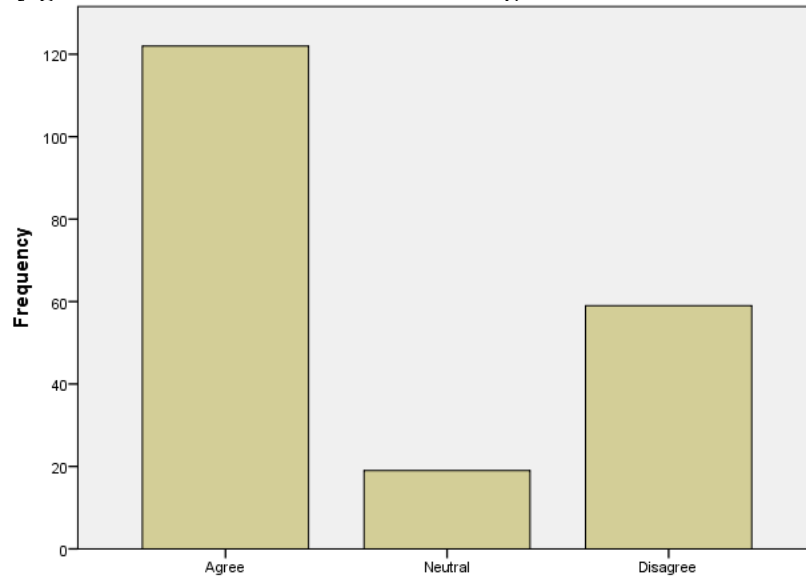
Male child education is more important than that of a female child:



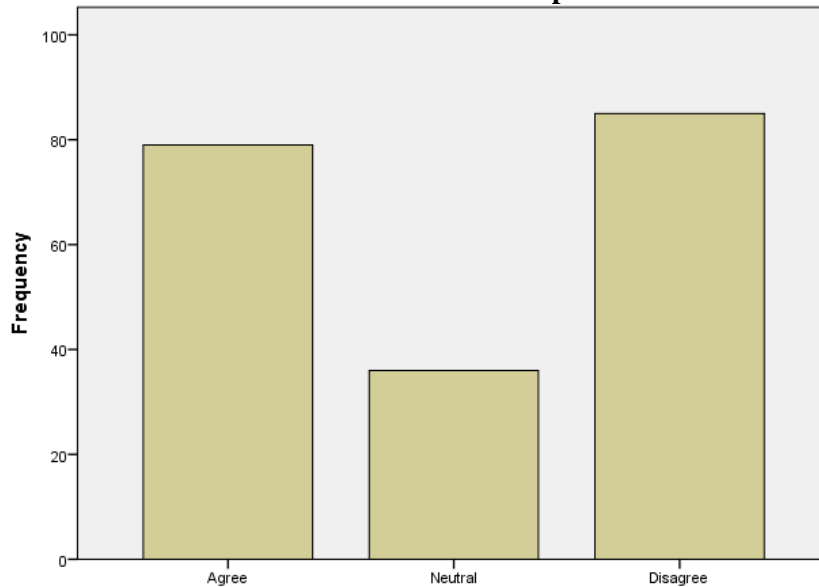
Economic instability affects girls' education more than that of boys:



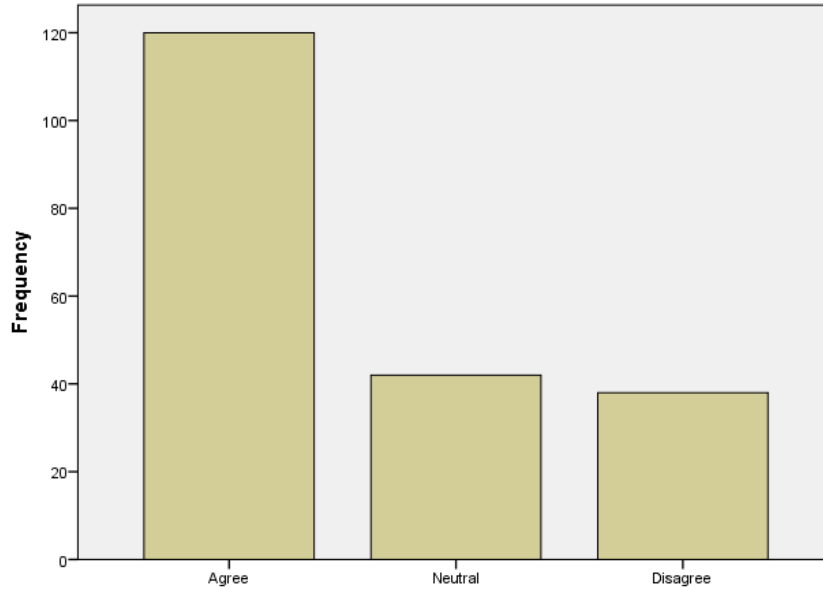
Free education by government can increase the ratio of girls' education:



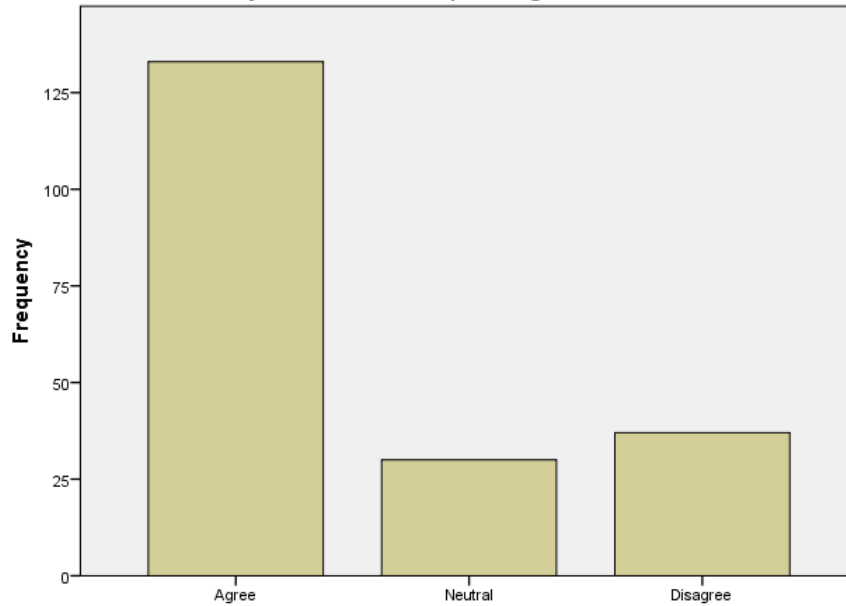
Lack of good educational institutes causes more female dropouts:



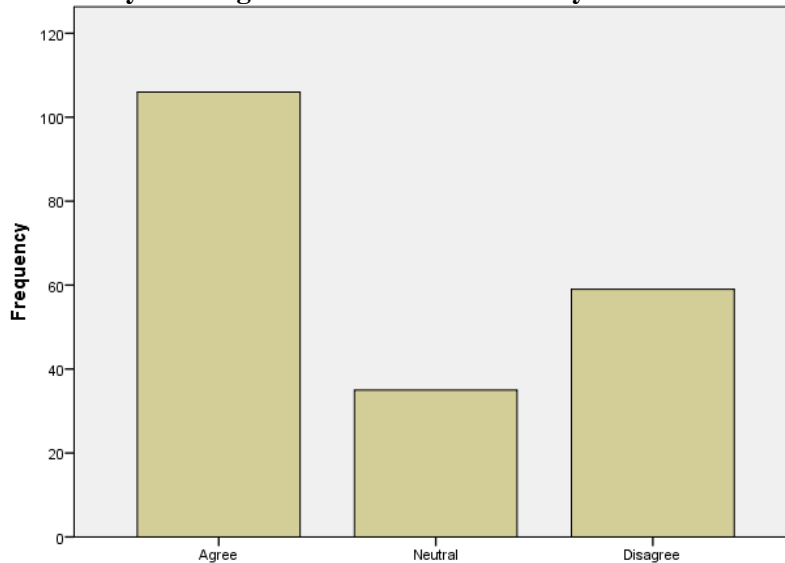
Lack of security makes females education deprived:



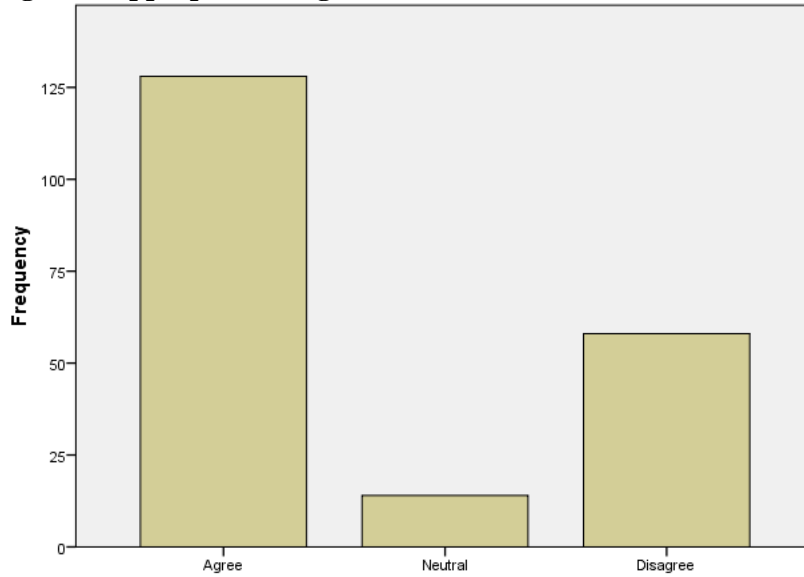
Good security measures will help in raising the female education:



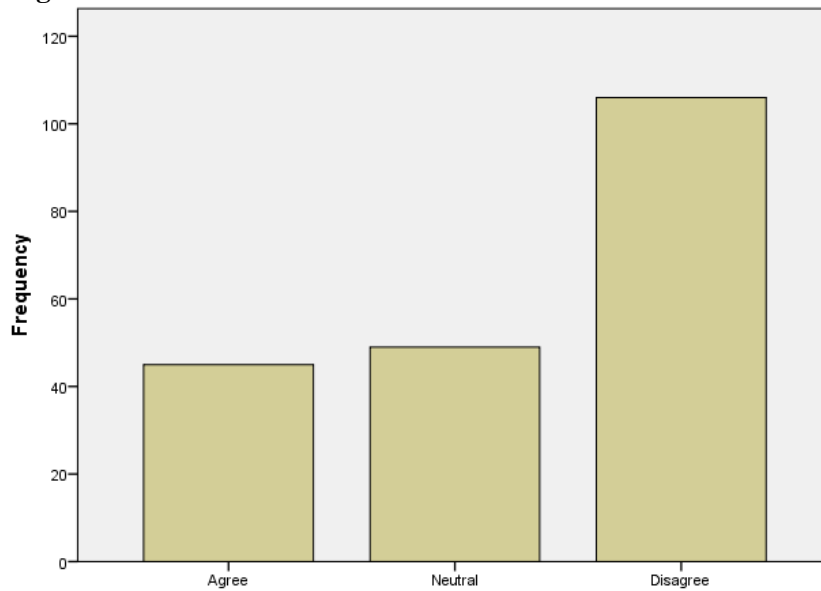
Last two decades lack early marriage trend which causes many issues:



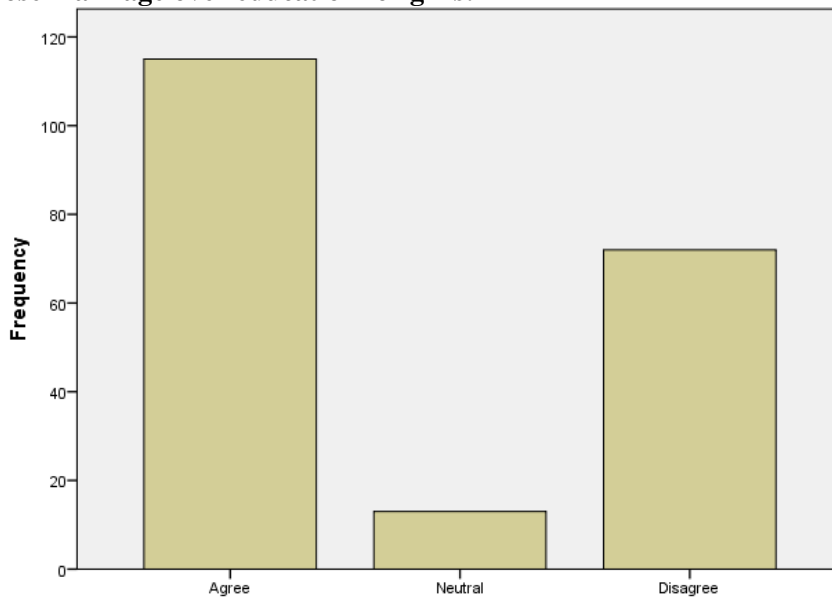
Early age marriages are appropriate for girls:



Girls are not being motivated for education due to current circumstances:



It is OK to choose marriage over education for girls:



Discussion:

Qualitative Phase:

Culture:

Several studies presented the observations that in many countries specially in developing regions including Pakistan, the wide range of norms and social values are part of the cultural believes that tends the people of those localities to still be very distant from the advanced and modern world. Though, cultural values can be distinctive from area to area and in this regard, UNESCO (2010) demonstrate that cultural values are sharper at countryside compared to urban ranges and individuals frequently do not permit young females to take off homes indeed for schools (Shahidul & Karim, 2015). Among some major reasons for parents avoiding investing their money in female child education is due to the social consideration of almost no return from female child education. Thus, the culture and social norms are usually preferred in case of female child education (Alderman, 1989). Similarly, in Pakistan also there are several parts in the country still trapped in some issues that might took some time to get rid of it. While in Mardan the situation is no doubt far better than the remote areas of Pakistan that even the migrated people are sending their girls to school but still the male dominance is evident in both the original habitants of Mardan as well as the migrants. While being among the mega cities of the country the city still has some cultural impacts due to which boy education is way more vital than girl education. Even after improvements in enrolments the dropout ratio of girls is still alarming. According to the respondents these circumstances of secondary school dropouts of female in Mardan is the reflection of male dominance in society which is still somehow affecting the female education. The outcomes of several surveys and examinations have shown that some societies are deliberately flowing into that patriarchal culture where the society is even ready to pay the price for their culture, which could be there in forms of having a weak family structure, or to make daughters compromise their lives to extreme extents and many more other factors, which not only effect the social foundations of society but also the economic structure (Dollar & Gatti, 1999).

Poverty:

According to UNICEF child fund international in 2013, poverty weakens a child's availability for school since it leads to insolvent physical wellbeing and other physical and cognitive skills, lessens a child's capacity to concentrate and memorizing things, and decreases mindfulness, interest, and inspiration. Children from poor families tend to perform in weaker way than the students from wealthier family-backgrounds. Mostly, this has been observed that after high-school or even in the middle of the high-school the students tend to leave their education due to several issues caused due to poor family background. In Mardan as the poverty rate hits harder with the high population ratio, there is a vital need of government attention, in which scholarships and other funds related to education can be given to the youth especially to the girls. As in this society, particularly in families hitting poverty line or even close to it female child usually suffers more specially regarding education even if the male child is not so interested in studies and the female child wants to study. Female child belonging to poor families usually in rural areas of the country are mostly kept education deprived. However, families belonging to the urban areas or well-settled families can be considered in a good position than that of girls belonging to the rural area families (Farooq, 2013). So is the case with most of the migrated families in Mardan.

Still the priority in majority of the cases is the male child for education. So, if government will come up with better opportunities for girls especially for secondary school females students, there are more chances that parents will be more willing to educate their daughters. As in this critical age of secondary schooling, other than the family pressures the student itself starts to feel the status discrimination behavior form society, which tends to raise the lack of confidence and inferiority complexes due to their low financial status at the age of secondary schooling. These complexes have severe impacts like generating hopelessness and worthlessness and anxious and furious behavior towards society as they start to get the feeling of society's helpless attitude towards their issues and struggles (Child fund international, 2013).

Child Labor:

As it has been discussed above that poverty is highly affected on female dropout rate, the further factor which can be easily observe in society is child labor has been discussed in several forms, through different dimensions, including the proportional relationship between poverty and child labor, number of working hours and its impact on education of the child, family structure and child labor,

the gendered and locality based surveys regarding child labor etc. But this has been found that even after looking through different aspects, still some findings stand to be common, among which the most prominent one was finding the direct relation between child labor and dropout ratio (Hunt, 2008). Hence, this is observable that female members are earning the living by working most commonly in homes as maids. There's significant writings with respect to how a child's work impacts on education in any case of the gender of the children. It has widely been observed that young females in some cases start working at younger age than boys particularly in provincial regions and young females moreover tend to do more work within the family than boys. Various research show that female students tend to drop out of school to look after their family and so household chores (Shahidul & Karim, 2015). Thus, in these circumstances, girls are easily engaged in working either as a day-night maid or otherwise going to different houses the whole day. However, in both conditions they are left with no time and money for education. But if by chance, they manage to go to school or any educational institute, dropout the female child is the first measure taken by the family in any sort of serious scenarios.

Security:

Security is yet another issue which has a great impact on female education even in the city like Mardan. There is shortage of female schools in Mardan and if there are female schools, these are situated at a long distances. It is evident that when school is at a distance from school parents are uneasy to send their daughters to school, due to the high possibilities of sexual harassment issues (Nekatibeb, 2002). This has been observed that if the nearby school is not providing good education, still parents will prefer to send their daughters to that school, despite preferring good educational institutes at a long distance. In this scenario, there still exists the chance of raising awareness by providing guidance for girls regarding management and self-defense skills so that instead of being education deprived, they should become capable of handling such situations like sexual harassment or any other security hazard. Parents awareness programs play an important role in such cases as their daughter should not be kept inside the four walls but the people who are doing such inhuman acts should be punished Government and other educational authorities could work in both directions i.e. establishing more and more good schools specially in those localities where it is needed the most. Secondly, they can work for better security measures for girls and can be kept safe from harassment cases by intruders.

Early Marriage & Early Pregnancies:

The major cause to alarming dropout is early marriages of the females. With respect to the impact of early marriage on young female students observed that in provincial regions girls' dropout rate got to be higher since parents consider girls' studies as of no advantage when they have to leave their family after getting married and being the part of another family (Shahidul & Karim, 2015). As in most cases the researchers have found that in remote areas parents do not tend to wait long enough for the completion of girls' education. In fact, it's just as soon as they hit their puberty age they are out of school and are considered ready for marriage. Now while talking about Mardan, although the big ratios of original habitants of Mardan do not support this idea of marriage soon after puberty, but still the early marriage norm is still there. In fact, in the last two decades, the trend of late marriage was there i.e. girls were getting married after entering their twenties. But now due to several issues, the early marriage norm is again back, and girls are even engaged before they have completed their secondary school education. The immigrant community residing in Mardan still resist the education of their daughter specially at secondary level. Authorities of the universities convince the parents that if they are interested in marrying their daughter before completion of the course so the time and resources of the university will be wasted according to the observable outcomes. Although the changes can be seen very rarely, or it can be said that changes can be seen more frequently in well-off families and truly little cases in normal classes. Thus, it can be said that changes have been started, but still there is an exceedingly long way to go to achieve the remarkable change for betterment of female especially in the field of education. The observed outcome of the child marriage is that it minimized the chances of girls' completing their secondary education.

Early marriages of female lead to another devastating factor of female dropout in different levels of education. The community and family members' desires for baby birth on the completion of first year of marriage so females have early pregnancies and delivery of babies which cut the continuity of their education. So, here comes teen age pregnancy the other cause for female dropout.

Money makes the mare go is fully applicable on the dropout of females at different levels of education. In undeveloped society, education of the girl is considered as wastage of money as people see the need of preparation for a life of caring for a husband and children after marriage. Son preference is so much evident as a girl keep giving births until she gives birth to at least one son in a family no matter how many daughters are already born, as son is the one who keeps the family name and remains the part of the family and the girl is considered as a guest since birth. She is considered as guest as she will depart to the house another family after marriage. Hence it is accepted to consider girl as a temporary family member by the society (Saeed, 2012). The studies have found that the dropout ratio of girls is higher than that of boys, and the leading factor observed is teenage pregnancy (Shahidul & Karim, 2015). As in the society first of all boys are not married at so young age, even they have to get settled or at least start to earn before they get married, and if the boys is still in the middle of education and gets married he is usually able to complete his education irrespectively to his marital status. But in case of girl when she is married other than all the responsibilities the vital part is her pregnancy where the girl herself starts to think that this is the point where she should stop. This thinking is already there in her mind due to her upbringing in the society where a girl should live that way, so certainly this becomes quite easy for her to leave her education.

Quantitative Phase:

Gender equality is still prevailing in Pakistan. The issue of gender inequality is supported by respondents of the study. They responded in yes to the view that male education is considered superior to female education. Economic instability and poverty are also accepted as the factors responsible for female dropout at different level of education.

Provision of free education to females and poor security conditions are also accepted as the factors for female dropout.

Early marriages practices in disguise of Islamic prospects are also declared an accepted factor by the respondents for female dropout. Early marriages always lead to early pregnancies and early children which stops the process of female education in the middle.

Conclusion:

In Pakistan, socio-cultural values and norms strongly influence women’s position in society. Economic priorities favour son and females are always kept on second choice specifically in lower class and lower-middle-class families. The stereotype that women have limited reproductive and domestic roles perpetuates the notion that there is no real need for educating females. The perceived opportunity cost of educating girls, then, sways families from doing so, particularly in cases where resources are limited. Education can give women their confidence; also raise their status in society. They can regain their self-esteem, enhancing their efficiency and intelligence levels, making them independent, better concepts and thoughts for child’s upbringing. They can get ease in mobility, and also open several opportunities in their careers (Noreen, 2011). The families having an educated mother usually have better ratio of children continuing their education in spite of facing dropouts.

Even after so many hurdles, some of the girls are still able to pursue their the possible level of education and by staying motivated they somehow manage to finish their degree in spite of going for dropout option Majority of the girls are not able to cope up with their education due to the social and cultural pressure of the society even while living in the city like Mardan. Still girls do suffer from the gender-based issues in both places i.e. either at home and society or at educational institute itself. While facing the tough circumstances the girl left with the point to choose the way from the two, one is to compromise on their basic needs to a very severe extent or to choose the option of drooping out from the course whenever the social, cultural and environmental factors push on her so hard (Melese & Fenta, 2009).

The study has disclosed the burning factors responsible for bulk of dropout of females at different levels of education. The patriarchal family structure is the leading factor as male dominancy does not allow females to get quality education. The craze and haste of early marriages for robust child production is also a burning factor to female dropout. Economic pressure and unchecked population growth are also blocking the doors to quality education on females. Religious orthodoxy and harassment cases in educational institutions are also adding fuel to the fire of female dropout at different levels of education.

Hence educational dropouts have a severe effect influencing the life of females within the society. Therefore, teachers need to work on individuals in a way that their potential can be improved

and enhanced. This though should also be kept in mind that by keeping students in educational institutes teachers are actually minimizing the rate of unemployment and low-quality life for their students. Thus, teachers are the ones working for the betterment of the society (Alspaugh, 1998).

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are suggested in light of analysis of data:

- Gender biases should be uprooted for control of female dropout.
- Early marriages should be stopped socially and officially.
- Incentives should be announced for females at different levels of education.
- Free of cost education should be assured to all female students.
- Female education and its benefits should be made part of curriculum at secondary and higher secondary level.
- Female harassment should be handled with punitive actions.

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