

Barriers to Girl's Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan: A Case Study of South Waziristan, Tehsil Makeen

Marina Khan

Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water, and Marine Sciences, Uthal, Balochistan
marinalasbela@gmail.com

Dr. Gulawar Khan

Professor, Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water, and Marine Sciences, Uthal, Balochistan,
Faculty of Management and Social Sciences
Corresponding Author
khan_aw@hotmail.co.uk

Dr. Noor Muhammad

Dean of the Faculty of Education,
Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences, Uthal, Lasbela, Balochistan
noorm_noor@yahoo.com

Abstract

Girl's education has long been a topic of debate in Pakistan, with lowest enrolment rates among Pashtun populations in erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). This qualitative paper investigates the barriers to girls' education in the erstwhile South Waziristan with an emphasis on Tehsil Makeen. The perspectives of many stakeholders belonging to South Waziristan with varied backgrounds are gathered through in-depth qualitative open-ended questionnaires. The interviewees include parents of the girls, teachers / head mistresses, social workers, school-age girls, and personnel of education department. The interviewees cited Pashtunwali (Pashtun Code of Conduct), poverty, lack of educational institutions, lack of female teachers, accessibility issue, and lack of government interest and will. While conducting this research, liberal feminist theory is applied as theoretical framework. In this paper, we find out that Pashtunwali, poverty, lack of educational institutions, lack of female teachers, accessibility to schools, and lack of government interest are the major hurdles in girl's education. The paper also offers certain suggestions to the government to overcome the barriers that hinder the girls from acquiring education in South Waziristan.

Key Words: *South Waziristan, Makeen, Barriers, Girl's Education*

Introduction

Investing in girls' education has a positive impact on families, societies, countries, and even the entire planet. Therefore, the world community is trying to get the girls into schools because educated girls are less likely to marry in young age. They earn more money; have more influence in decisions that affect them and are better able to shape their own and their families' futures concerning finances. However, the situation vis-à-vis girl's education around the world is wretched. According to UNICEF (2020) 129 million girls are out of school worldwide, including 32 million

in primary school, 30 million in lower secondary school, and 67 million in higher secondary school. Girls in conflict-affected nations are more than twice as likely to drop out of school as girls in non-affected countries. Furthermore, girl's illiteracy is expected to rise in several countries, especially in Africa and Asia.

So far as Pakistan is concerned, there are 51.53 million children, between the ages of 5 and 16 out of which only 28.68 million attend school in the age from pre-primary to higher secondary, leaving 22.84 million out of school (Shah et al, 2018). Furthermore, “[t]here are currently 5.06 million children of primary school age are out of school. At the middle, high and higher secondary level, the out of school children are 6.51 million, 4.97 million and 6.29 million respectively” (ibid, 2018). In terms of gender, 49 percent of girls are not in school from primary through secondary school, compared to 40 percent of boys (ibid, 2018).

The overall condition of both the genders is pathetic wherein up to 2016-17 the total literacy rate of Pakistan was 58 %. The female literacy was 40 % and male 70 % respectively (Alvi in the News, 2018). The province wise female literacy rate in 2018-19 remained as such: in KPK 55.3%, Balochistan 55.5%, Punjab 64.7%, Sindh 62.2% respectively (Yousafzai, n.d). So far as FATA and South Waziristan are concerned the female literacy rate is 7.8% (Ali, 2017) and 4.3%, respectively (MICS, 2009). The Human Development Report (2011) classifies Pakistan as a poor human development country, with a female/girls’ literacy rate of 30%. The report ranks Pakistan at 145 numbers in the world in terms of human development.

South Waziristan is one of the largest districts in area out of the seven newly merged agencies of former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Keeping in view the literacy rate of girls in South Waziristan, which is only 4% wherein the rest of the 96% of the female cannot read and write, therefore, this research is planned to investigate the main barriers to girls’ education in South Waziristan with a focus on Tehsil Makeen. FATA including Waziristan has been ignored by the successive Governments of Pakistan since its inception. Though, after the merger of FATA into KPK a hope was evident that by now the Government of KPK would try to boost girls’ education in South Waziristan. However, not only the KPK government, but the Pakistani government, has never given education the attention it deserves.

FATA consists of seven tribal agencies and six Frontier Regions (FRs). The seven agencies and the six FRs stretched from north to south and they named as Bajuar, Mohmand, Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, North Waziristan and South Waziristan while the FRs are Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Laki Marwat, Tank, and Dera Ismail Khan respectively. Historically and strategically, FATA had remained an important region for the British India since 19th century until the division of United India into two sovereign states in 1947 (Hilali, 2013). Nor the British India and neither the successive governments in Pakistan pay any heed to the educational development of FATA including South Waziristan. They only treated this region as a strategic asset against the Russian expansionism. The whole FATA region was administered through the notorious laws of Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) introduced by the British India in 1901 (Ibid, 2013).

Before the passing of the 25th constitutional amendment 2018 in the constitution of 1973 of Pakistan, Waziristan was part of the larger Federally Administered tribal Areas (FATA). FATA was created by the British colonial master in 1893 when an agreement was signed between Amir Amanullah Khan, the then ruler of Afghanistan and the British nominee, Sir Mortimer Durand in 1893 (Omrani, 2009).

Waziristan remained under the control of Pakistan since the British left India in 1947. Out of the 07 recently merged tribal agencies in KPK, the district of South Waziristan is one of the largest districts amongst them with an area of 6620 sq. km. It ranks fourth with a population of 679,185 inhabitants as per the population census of 2017 (Khan, 2017).

Looking into the education situation of South Waziristan, it is the lowest both for male and female, but the condition of girls' education is very pathetic. Though the constitution of our country under the 18th constitutional amendment (April 8, 2010), clearly states that "the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 5 to 16 years in such manner as may be determined by law" (Article 25-A of Pakistan's constitution of 1973). Under this amendment, education has been transferred to the provinces. However, the condition of education for both the genders is still very depressing. It is because, as critics of the 8th constitutional amendment pointed out, it is difficult for provinces to deal with education due to a lack of resources, expertise, and trained educational policymakers and formulators (Pervez et al, 2021). In the case of South Waziristan, education improvement for girls will take time because residents are still hesitant to settle their area due to security reasons and a repeat of the previous warlike situation between the Taliban and armed forces.

Thus, as per the foregoing discussion, such low rate of female literacy shows that South Waziristan is far behind as compared to other parts of the country. Therefore, this research is conducted to investigate the barriers to girls' education in the erstwhile South Waziristan with special emphasis on Tehsil Makeen to identify the reasons for such low rate of literacy. It may be noted that conflicting opinions are put forward by the interviewees and pointed out that the major obstacles in girls' education are *Pashtunwali* (wherein gender discrimination is a prominent feature of this concept together with equal opportunity, sex role, and socialization of the liberal feminist theorists), poverty, lack of educational institutions, lack of female teachers, accessibility issues, and lack of government interest and will.

As mentioned earlier, the liberal feminist theory is used as the theoretical framework for this paper. It is because the liberal feminists also argue and focus on the same areas as we elicited from the interviewees during the fieldwork. The liberal feminists argue that gender discrimination, equal opportunities, sex roles and socialization hinder the girls from achieving education. Thus, if we critically analyzed the concept of *Pashtunwali*, we would conclude that all these areas, which are pointed out by the feminist, are closely linked with the *Pashtunwali*. It is the *Pashtunwali* which discriminates between male and female based on their gender, consider females inferior to men and also deny equal rights to them in the society as compared to their male's counterpart. A female, for example, cannot become a member of the *Jirga* (council of elders), nor can she be consulted in decision-making processes at the societal or family levels.

Objectives

The main objective of this research paper is to identify and categorize the barriers to girl's education in South Waziristan with a special reference to Tehsil Makeen.

Questions

What are the major barriers to girl's education in South Waziristan in general and Tehsil Makeen in Particular?

Theoretical Framework

South Waziristan is a male-dominated society, and the women are bound to their household activities. The Waziristani society frequently discriminated the female against the male. It is because of they are being female and inferior to male. In Waziristani society, preferences are given to men as compared to women. Therefore, the liberal feminist approach to gender bias and discrimination is better suited for this study as a theoretical framework. The liberal-feminist approach can better analyze the responses of the interviewees in the context of Waziristan. Furthermore, the feminist approach seeks to comprehend the underlying reasons for gender disparities in education as well as the societal consequences of such disparities. It is not only in the education sector but in many other spheres of society where women suffer unequal treatment and opportunities in South Waziristan.

Methodology

For conducting this research, we preferred to use qualitative methodological approach together with explanatory and investigative tactics. It is because this research topic (Barriers to Girl's Education in South Waziristan: A case study of Tehsil Makeen) requires a detailed explanation and analysis of the social and cultural life of the people of South Waziristan. We conducted 18 interviews with the individuals belonging to South Waziristan. The interviewees include parents, girls, schoolteachers, school headmistress/principals, social activists, community leaders, and employees of education department. The sites which we selected for interviews are South Waziristan, tehsil Makeen, District Tank, Dera Ismail Khan, and Karachi. It is because after the operation of Rah-e-Nejat, majority of the people of South Waziristan were displaced and settled in different parts of Pakistan wherein majority of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) migrated to the mentioned areas. Open ended questionnaires are used to elicit primary data from the respondents wherein Face-to-face and WhatsApp interview(s) are used as tools for collection of primary data while for secondary data various papers, reports, and newspapers articles are utilized. All the questions are asked either in Pashtu or Urdu as per the convenient of the interviewees. The interviewees are not offered any payment. As per the request of the interviewees, instead of using their real names; fictitious names are used for protecting their identities. It is because threats from the military and the Taliban still exist, and if someone disobeys their orders or draws attention to their wrongdoings, they could face the consequences.

Literature Review

Much has been written about girls' education around the world by various national and international organizations such as Human Rights Watch, 2018, UNESCO, 2018, and World Bank, 2018.

Researchers also wrote extensively on various aspects of girls' education. For instance, Tembon and Fort (2008, eds.) is of the opinion that to educate a man, you simply educate an individual but to educate a female means that you educate a whole family and a nation. Roby et al (2009) study is about Mozambique in which they uphold that it is female education through which poverty can be eradicated and therefore, the developing countries are struggling to overcome the gender inequality and achieve gender parity in primary and secondary education.

However, while talking of barriers and hurdles to girls' educations Jamal (2015) concluded that there are some major barriers to girls' education due to which the girls could not attend her school days. According to him poverty, religion, lack of female teachers, cultural norms, and lack of government political will are the main barriers to girls' education in Pashtun areas. Furthermore, Noreen and Awan (2011) in their paper, which is about higher education, finds out that gender discrimination, limited access to higher education, poverty, early marriage system, and status of women in the society are the major impediments to girl's education.

There are many more studies on girls' education and the barriers that hold back the girls from acquiring education in Pakistan (see for instance Jamal, 2015, Awan, 2013, Ullah et al, 2021, Saqib et al, 2014, and Ahmad et al, 2014). Nevertheless, we did not come across any study that shed lights on the barriers to girls' education in South Waziristan, Tehsil Makeen except Nayab Gul et al (2016) but their study is not about the barriers but just focused on one of the main tribes living in Waziristan, the Mehsud tribe. They argue that an average family is supportive of girls' education and encourages their daughters for education.

Furthermore, therefore, this study is conducted to fill the gap in the existing literature and highlight the barriers that are not allowing the Waziristani girls to achieve education form middle to high school level.

Significance of the study

Keeping in view the foregoing discussion, this study would be a unique study as none of the researchers did any relevant research on the barriers to girl's education in South Waziristan. This study is also unique because South Waziristan remained as a conflict zone after 9/11 as the defeated Taliban and Al-Qaeda members take refuge in South Waziristan and started launching attacks against United State of America (USA) forces in Afghanistan and against Pakistani security forces around Pakistan. Due to the war on terror and the subsequent armed operation by Pakistan's security forces against Al-Qaeda and its allies, the Taliban, the area was and is not accessible to the outside researchers to conduct quality research and therefore, this study would be the first of its kind. It would be an addition into the existing literature on girls' education around Pakistan. Those researchers who want to explore South Waziristan and the barriers to girls' education can be benefited from this study.

Findings and Discussion

The previous debate focused on how and why this research is conducted, but the following section explores the hurdles that affect girl's education wherein we use the primary as well as secondary data to create convincing and credible results vis-à-vis the plight of girls' education in chosen area under this paper.

Pashtunwali

(Gender Discrimination, Equal Opportunities for Both Sexes, and Socialization) *Pashtunwali* is a system of unwritten laws and a code of behavior that ruled the entire Pashtun society in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Since time immemorial, the Pashtuns have rigorously adhered to this code. Though, with time, the behavior of the Pashtun people, living in settled areas, changes to a large extent but the people of former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) are adherent strictly in following this code of conduct to this day. The people of FATA blindly obey this code of conduct without considering its benefits and drawbacks. In FATA, the female gender is always discriminated. The females are denied equal opportunities by male counterpart of the society. The society socializes the females to become obedient daughters, sisters, and housewives. This all is owing to the concept of *Pashtunwali*.

Certain aspects of *Pashtunwali*, such as honor (*Ghairat*), veil (*Pardha*), and gender inequality, prevent girls from attending school. Due to the concept of honor, the parents are hesitant to allow their daughters to attend school. In Waziristani community, girls are expected to work at home, collect firewood, fetch water, and care for family members. Their responsibilities include preparing meals, cleaning the house, washing clothes, and caring for the animals. A 50-year-old woman was asked why she not completed her education and why she does not educate her children, particularly girls. She responded:

“I was interested in going to school, but the male members of my family did not allow me. It was due to the so-called concept of honor. They were concerned that I would become immoral, and that they would be dishonored (*Baigharat*) in the society. I want to enroll my girls in school, but the male members of the family are unwilling to allow the girls to attend school. You know 90 percent people (both male and female) of my villagers are uneducated” (anonymous, personal communication, September 5, 2021).”

It demonstrates that Waziristani society is male dominated, with females viewed as second-class citizens in comparison to males. The remark of the 50-year-old lady shows that many society's men are illiterate. It is accurate because the total male literacy rate in the former FATA is barely 17%, with the remaining 83 percent unable to read or write (Khan Zeb, 2014).

Furthermore, Nasibullah Khan, General Secretary of Awami National Party (ANP) South Waziristan zone, is of the opinion that gender discrimination is widespread in the Pashtuns' area. In Waziristan the birth of a baby boy is celebrated with great enthusiasm while the birth of a baby girl receives indifferent responses (personal communication, November 20, 2021). Similarly, a school headmaster, aged 50 states that:

People in Pashtun society either credit women for having male offspring or humiliate them for being the primary cause of giving birth to female children. The rationale for such discrimination is that only a male kid is thought to be eligible to the family's heritage. Thus, parents in Waziristani society are not interested to educate their girls (anonymous, personal communication, November 10, 2021).

Moreover, Aslam Khan, a businessman pointed out that male children are regarded as permanent members of the family and parents' old-age insurance, whereas daughters are regarded as a person destined for someone else's home. Therefore, the parents focus on male not on girls vis-à-vis education (personal communication, November 9, 2021).

So, it could be said that it is concept of *Pashtunwali*, and the cultural norms of the society can be held responsible due to which the people of Waziristan lag behind in education as compared to other parts of the country. However, the war on terror and the subsequent armed operations against the extremists resulted in massive destructions and migrations of the local people. We agree that despite the severe damages which the war on terror and operations did to the people, the people, in return, got much more because they started educating their girls and boys on equal footing as of those of the host communities. So, it is a positive change and once the people returned to Waziristan, they would allow their girls to educational institutions.

Poverty of the Region

Poverty continues to be an issue in developing nations, particularly in Pakistan, wherein a large proportion of the population lives in abject poverty. So, Waziristan is not an exception wherein major chunk of the population of South Waziristan is below the poverty line. It may be noted that separate poverty statistics for South Waziristan are not available but Khan and Ahmed (2017: 75) states that FATA's whole population is poor, with 66 percent living below the poverty line. They also state that anecdotal evidence suggests that Waziristan has the highest poverty rate when compared to other regions of FATA. In addition to this, the war on terror and the subsequent armed operations against the terrorist terrorists compelled the whole population of the area, which is under this research, to migrate to safer areas around Pakistan. The people runaway barefooted and left the household items, businesses, cattle etc. behind. Therefore, it could be said that the poverty prevails in this part of the world to an unexpected level. During field work, many of the respondents highlighted poverty as one of the major hurdles in attaining education.

A father of six children – aged 50, Usman Khan (living in Karachi) during an interview said that I am a labor and working on daily wages and have six kids, 3 males and 3 females. Their ages are (roughly) 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, and 23, respectively. The two elders were girls who are married now and remaining are young and living with me. So, being a daily wage labor, it is not only difficult but impossible for me to run the kitchen. So, the younger boys are working in shop from where they get Rs. 200 each on daily basis and the rest two are at home helping her mother in household activities. I wish that I could educate my kids, but I cannot afford (personal communication, 2020, November 7). Similarly, Laila Bibi in her 40s – living in district Tank as IDP but basically, she is from Tehsil Makeen, South Waziristan during a face-to-face interview she said that:

“I have never been to any schools when we were in Waziristan though there was a primary girl school in our village. I was asked my father that I want to go to school but he did not allow me because I was the younger daughter of my father. My father was working in forests and was cutting woods for our livelihood and my mother was raising some 10 to 12 cattle and she was always busy to feed and look after them. So, I was looking after the routine activities of the household such as cooking, fetching wood and water (personal communication, 2020, December 12)”.

Now Laila Bibi has two daughters and one son. The boy is in 10th class while the girls give up education after primary level because of low income of the family. The reason she explained for not educating the girls is that the girls are working at home and sewing clothes to add to the family income. She further said that she wishes that her girls get education but it's not possible keeping in view the expenses of the household. We are paying rent, gas, water, and electricity bills. If my girls start going to school and quit sewing clothes than it would be difficult for us to pay all the utilities. Similarly, a 20-year Noor Bibi (personal communication, 2021 January 18) said that she was seven years old when the Pakistan's Army started operation Rah-e-Nejat against Taliban. They were forced to leave and settled in district Tank, but her father has left everything behind and lost all his money and business. So, despite strong desire for education, she did not get it. Furthermore, Kalsum Bibi (personal communication, 2021 January 18) -age 24- said that "we became so poor after displacement that we cannot afford to send children to school. Whatever our father earns, he only feed us with that amount."

The girl interviewees for this research study uttered again and again about their desire for education, their wish to "be someone," and how these dreams had been crushed by being unable to study. It is evident from the above discussion that major part of the population of South Waziristan is poor and cannot afford education. For them education is like a luxury. Majority of the interviewees were found saying that poverty is one of the barriers not only to girls' education but to boys as well.

Lack of Educational Institutions for Girls

Historically speaking, South Waziristan was a tribal agency created by the British for their own interests. It was run through special laws, called the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR). The British India was not interested in educating the people or any other development of the region. The Government of Pakistan also inherited the same region from the departing British India and Pakistan also did not work on the region to bring into the mainstream of Pakistan. The successive Pakistani Governments also followed the same FCR as law for FATA and so too little development took place in education. Nasibullah (personal communication, 2020, November 20) and Aslam Khan (personal communication, 2020, November 25) revealed during their interviews that besides other hurdles to girls' education, one of the alarming problems are that there is shortage of girls' educational institution. They stated that there is no college and university in the entire area of the Mahsud tribe. There is only one Degree College in Wana which is established very recently. The area has kept backward by the British India as well as by the government in Pakistan.

Looking into the available data of educational institutions of South Waziristan, the argument of Nasibullah and Aslam Khan is valid. It may be noted that due to the destruction of the war on terror and the armed operations in the area, the data from 1947 to 2004 is not available. However, the data in the given table is extracted from Directorate of Education FATA and Khan Zeb's (2014) paper "promoting Education in War Zone-Waziristan."

Table No. 1: *Educational Institutions in South Waziristan, Gender wise (2005 to 2012)*

Level of Institutions	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2009-10	2011-12
-----------------------	--------	--------	--------	---------	---------

	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Primary School	275	164	293	186	305	214	306	220	306	220
Secondary School	47	12	50	13	47	25	54	18	54	18
High School	23	3	25	3	25	3	25	5	25	5
Degree Colleges	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1
Commerce Colleges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Vocational Inst.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
University	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Directorate of Education FATA, KPK, Peshawar and Khan Zeb (2014)

Looking at the statistics of the above table, it could be said and argued that there is a lack of Girls' educational institution in Waziristan. For instance, as per the table there are only 18 secondary schools, 05 high schools, and 01 Degree college for the entire population of South Waziristan. There is no girl's high school in Tehsil Makeen. Out of the five girls' high schools, 03 are in Wana sub-division, 01 is in Tehsil Ladha, and 01 in Tehsil Sarwaikai. There is only one degree college which is in Tehsil Wana and that has been occupied by the security forces of Pakistan after completion of its building. The college has become a parade ground and compound of the armed forces instead of providing education to girls (Zeb, 2014). Interestingly, there is no university in the entire FATA region including South Waziristan. Here it may be noted that the FATA University is established in 2016 but that too is situated some 37 kilometers away from Peshawar wherein Peshawar already possesses 28 public sector universities to date (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2022).

Furthermore, due to the war on terror and the security forces' operation against the terrorists, some 449 educational institutions in the Mahsud area have been either closed or demolished completely (Zeb, 2014). According to Zeb (2014: 53) "out of the 105 government-run primary schools [in WANA sub-division of Waziristan), only 13 are functional, the remaining 92 schools are practically closed and are used as houses, male guesthouses, and cattle farms." The same is the situation in the rest of the Tehsils and sub-divisions of South Waziristan including Tehsil Makeen.

A retired primary school teacher, belonging to Tehsil Makeen, during an interview said that there is no girl's middle and high school in the entire area, Tehsil Makeen. So, after passing primary level the girls have no option but to quit their education (personal communication, 2021, November 20). Furthermore, an influential tribal elder, Malak Baki Khan states that in the entire FATA region there is no university let alone South Waziristan (personal communication, 2021, December 4).

A young girl, aged 20, who was very bold and active, presently is an Internally Displaced Person (IDP) living in the peripheral area of Karachi with her family, during an interview, she furiously said that:

"I was very fond of getting education but after passing the primary school I could not find any middle school around my village and my parents were not allowing me to enroll in boys middle school. Now I am living as an IDP in Karachi and my parents cannot afford

to send me to school owing to the destruction of our family business due to the war against terror and the operation Rah-e-Nejat”

The responses of the interviewees and the secondary data propose that South Waziristan in general and Tehsil Makeen in particular lags far behind in terms of literacy rate and other social developments owing to lack of girl’s schools, colleges, and universities. Majority of the interviewees pointed out that the lack of schools and colleges is one of the most serious problems in the way of girls’ education. Besides the lack of girl’s schools and colleges, the cultural norms, economic conditions of the people, conservative mindsets, and ignorance are other barriers to girl’s education.

Lack of Female Teachers

Keeping in view the aforementioned discussion, it becomes clear that the lack of female teachers is another hurdle regarding girls’ education in Waziristan as a whole, let alone Tehsil Makeen. There are several reasons behind the lack of female teachers, but few of them are the dominant ones. Firstly, owing to the male dominance, the females of the region are not educated to become part of the teaching field. Secondly, those who are educated are not allowed by their male counterparts to carry on a duty as teachers. Thirdly, the schools that exist have no facilities for female accommodation. So, owing to Waziristan’s rough terrain and scattered population, they play a role in causing challenges for female instructors when they are stationed in remote places that lack accommodation options for female personnel, causing them to face numerous transportation and security issues too.

According to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Education Minister Ziaullah Bangash, the tribal areas have recently been merged with KP and that his government has inclusive plans to boost female instructors working in the region. He states that the government wants to establish a special directorate for female instructors in tribal districts and will provide extra allowances and incentives to female instructors who work in remote places (Arab News, Pakistan, May 10, 2022). Similarly, Dr. Rukhsana Aziz Wazir, assistant director at the Directorate of Education (DoE) in KP, believes that there are cases of frequent absence among female teachers, but the government is working to guarantee that all resources, including residential amenities, are made available to teachers (Ibid). Furthermore, according to Arab News Pakistan, only 99 female teachers work in South Waziristan. However, there is a lack of data for Tehsil Makeen, and it can be assumed that this Tehsil would have a significantly lower number of female teachers out of these 99. Due to a shortage of female teachers in South Waziristan, most of these teachers are recruited from other districts in KP.

A retired schoolteacher during a face-to-face interview said while commenting on the lack of schoolteachers:

“I served as a primary school teacher in Tehsil Makeen, and I got my retirement from the same school. There were a very small number of girls coming to the school because it was in a small village and was owned by a Malik of that village, and the nearby villages’ girls were unable to come due to the long distance. I performed duty only for two months in the hot summer, June to July. During these two months, the weather is quite pleasant in Waziristan. I and my small family reside in one of the rooms at the school. I observed that

the girls were obsessed with education, but because of a lack of schools and teachers, their obsession remained an unfulfilled dream (personal communication, 2021 December 18)”

However, during the field visit we were told that, after the merger of ex-FATA region into KP, the government has started construction of girl’s primary schools in each village in Tehsil Makeen. The construction phase has been over a year ago and the schools are still waiting for its teachers.

Accessibility Issues

South Waziristan is a hilly and rough mountainous region, and the population is inhabited in groups in their respective tribes and Tehsils. Generally, the population is scattered in plains and mountain valleys. The total population of South Waziristan is detail Tehsil wise for the Mahsud tribes only. According to 2017 census, the population of Tehsil Ladha is 114,830, Tehsil Makeen is 58,700, Tehsil Sararogha is 98,389, Tehsil Sarwaikai is 54,278, and Tehsil Tiarza is 45,210, respectively (Census Report, 2017).

Due to the scattered and scarce population the distance to educational institution from middle to high frequently increases and it becomes difficult for girls to go to school on daily basis. The parents also do not allow their adult girls to go to schools owing to long distances. According to a lady official of education department, if a primary level school is in the vicinity, the secondary school is every so often further away, and similarly higher-level educational institutions are more far away. So, it is difficult for parents to allow their girls to walk for 6 to 7 kilometers from one side. According to her, the distance is one of the serious barriers to girls’ education (Personal communication, 2020, December 10).

A young girl, age 16, named Bakht Zarina of Tehsil Makeen left school after primary because there was no middle school in her village and the nearby villages. There was a middle school in another Tehsil, Tehsil Ladha which is some 20 to 25 kilometers away from her village. She said that in the entire Makeen Tehsil which has the population 58,700 has no middles and high school(s) for girls. Her father added that the population is shown very less in the census as the people were displaced from their native towns. The population of Makeen would be around 0.2 million (personal communication, 2020, December 28).

Likewise, according to Nasibullah (personal communication, 2020, November 20) besides the lack of educational institution from middle to higher level, the problem of long distances and lack of hostel accommodation for girls are other issues. As the people of Waziristan are living in cluster groups in their respective tribes and sub-sections in different villages. The distance from each village to another is almost 30 to 40 minutes and one must go through the uneven mountains and valleys to reach another village. According to him to overcome the issue of the distance the government need to established schools in the centers of few villages so that a girl from every village could reach to the school easily.

Keeping in view the above discussion, it is found that the long distances from one village to another and from one Tehsil to another is one the main barriers to girls’ education, not only in Makeen but in the whole Waziristan including FATA.

Lack of Government Interest and Will

A famous proverb says that where there is a will there's a way. The founding fathers saw education as the driving force behind all national goals. The primary goal of Pakistan's educational system was to shape the national character of the Pakistani generation. This national character would include a strong sense of responsibility, social integrity, selfless service to the country, and morality among the people (Ahmad, *et al* 2014) However, the condition of education in ex-FATA is still pathetic. Nor the British heed to established educational institution in the area neither the successive governments of Pakistan gave attention to it. It is argued that the various Pakistani governments have lacked the political will to provide educational opportunities to the people of Waziristan. A High School Headmaster, aged 55, responded:

“It is understandable that cultural norms are one factor that is responsible for male and female education in the area. Through government efforts, one can easily overcome the norms and can educate the people to get their kids (both male and female) enrolled in educational institutions, but during my 20 years of service, I never saw or heard about any government initiative to persuade the people towards education (personal communication on WhatsApp, 2021, December 20)”.

From 1947 until the merger of erstwhile FATA into KP, the government of Pakistan did not take serious steps to develop girls' education in Waziristan. It is evident from the fact that since the creation of Pakistan until 2012 there are only 18 middle schools, 5 high schools, and only one-degree College for girls in the entire South Waziristan region (see table 1). The school's headmaster also claims that the only girls' degree college being built in WANA sub-division is occupied by the armed forces and has yet to admit female students.

According to Nasibullah, the civil-military bureaucracy has used the entire FATA, including Waziristan, to fight for the cause of others. For example, Waziristani were used during the Kashmir war in 1948, against Russians in the 1980s, and now against the war on terror (2004-date). The government never considered educating the public (personal communication, 2020 November 4). In addition to Nasibullah's argument, the war on terror and the operation of Rah-e-Nejat displaced more than 428,000 people, called Internally Displaced People (IDPs) (Ahmad, 2010:109). These IDPs mostly belonged to the Mehsud tribe. During the operation, the people ran away barefooted and took shelter in safer areas like D. I. Khan, Tank, Peshawar, and Karachi as IDPs. The people lost everything, schools, houses, businesses, shops, cattle, agricultural land, and fruit gardens.

Though, after merger of FATA into KP the government of Pakistan seems serious to certain extent wherein it started construction various educational institutions under the supervision of Pakistan Army. For instance, two Cadet Colleges, one at Wana and the other at Spinkai Raghzai, one Vocational College, one Technical Training Centre, and two Army Public Schools are constructed. Though, these are only for boys, but it is expected that such colleges would also be established for girls too. As a lady schoolteacher, named Reema Khan – belongs to South Waziristan, Tehsil Makeen, states that it is expected from the government that it would establish such educational institutions and training centers for the female as well.

Conclusion and Recommendations

To sum up, it is found that there are many barriers to girls' education in South Waziristan, especially Tehsil Makeen but the most important and dominant ones are: 1) Pashtunwali 2) poverty 3) lack of educational institutions 4) lack of female teachers 5) accessibility issue 6) lack of Government interest and will. The government only concentrates on boys' educational institutions which to us are inequitable as it (government) is ignoring 50 percent of the population which would be a disaster in future. The attitude of government as well as the household men regarding female education is a clear picture presented by the liberal feminist. Although Article 25-A of Pakistan's constitution states that the state must provide free and compulsory education to all children aged five to sixteen years in accordance with the law. . However, the education statistics, 2016-17, reveals that the total literacy rate of Pakistan is 58 % wherein the female literacy is 40 % and when it comes to Waziristan the female literacy rate merely 4%. Now the question arises that how to overcome these barriers which hindered the girls' education from achieving education? In this regard, the KP government needs to ponder on the following suggestions.

1. The KP government needs to launch a robust campaign, taking into account the opinions of local leadership, to convince the people to educate their female for better tomorrow.
2. To assess the need for primary and middle schools, the KP government should conduct a survey of all existing primary and middle schools in Tehsil Makeen. After that, the government may decide to keep primary schools and convert the middle schools to secondary level, as well as provide transportation to less-populated villages for easy access to middle and secondary schools at other nearby villages.
3. The government should hire local female teachers at both the primary and secondary levels because they have the community's trust and would send their daughters to school. If local teachers are not available for the secondary level, teachers, particularly science subject teachers, may be hired from other nearby districts.
4. Over half of the people in FATA are poor. As a result, many families are finding it difficult to afford the direct and indirect costs of educating their children. The KP government should provide financial incentives to families who send their daughters to school in order to increase girls' enrollment.
5. Every girl's school should have a fence, a toilet, and drinking water facilities and in future, when planning for school infrastructure, keep context-based obstacles in mind.
6. All the existing schools must be provided with proper female hostel and residential houses where the female staff can reside without any fear along with her family.
7. The government of KP, with the help of armed forces, requires establishing residential colleges (cadet colleges) and training centers in each Tehsil with residential facilities.

References

- Ahmad, I., Ali, A., Khan, I., & Khan, F. A. (2014). Critical Analysis of the Problems of Education in Pakistan: Possible Solutions. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 3(2), 79-84.
- Ahmad, I., Said, H., Hussain, A., & Khan, S. (2014). Barriers to Co-education in Pakistan and its Implications on Girls Education: Critical Review of Literature. *Science International*, 26(1).
- Ali, Salman, (2017). Women Literacy in FATA, *Daily Times*, April 17, available online from: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/19882/women-literacy-in-fata/>, accessed on 20/11/2020.

- Alvi, Muhammad. (2018). Pakistan Literacy Rate stands at 58pc. In the Daily News International, 27 April. Available online from: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/309542-pakistan-s-literacy-rate-stands-at-58pc>, re-accessed on 13/5/2022.
- Arab News, Pakistan. (2022). Women teachers in tribal areas put to test due to lack of amenities, May 10. Available online from: <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/1433336/pakistan>, accessed on 10/05/2022.
- Awan, N. (2013). Education in FATA. Pakistan annual research journal, 49, 163-170.
- Census Report. (2017). Available online from: https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/PAKISTAN%20TEHSIL%20WISE%20FOR%20WEB%20CENSUS_2017.pdf, accessed on 10/02/2022.
- Constitution of Pakistan, 1973. Available online from: <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/part2.ch1.html>, accessed on 20/11/2020.
- Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Official website, available from: <https://kp.gov.pk/page/universities>, accessed on 20/04/2022.
- Gul, N., Khan, M. M., Uzair, M., Azam, K., & Hussain, A. (2016). Contextualization of Women's Right to Education in Tribal Perspective: Study of Masid Tribe. City University Research Journal, 112-119.
- Hilali, A. Z. (2013). Contemporary Geopolitics of FATA: An Analysis of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Region. The Journal of Slavic Military Studies, 26(4), 595-638.
- Jamal, A. (2015). Engaging men for gender justice: Overcoming barriers to girls' education in the Pashtun tribes of Pakistan. International Journal of Social Welfare, 24(3), 273-286.
- Khan, G., & Ahmed, M. (2017). Socioeconomic Deprivation, Fanaticism and Terrorism: A Case of Waziristan, Pakistan. Pakistan Journal of History and Culture, 38(2), 65-83.
- Khan, Zeb Mubarak, (2017). FATA population grows by 57pc: in DAWN August 30, 2017. Available from: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1354818>, accessed on 22/10/2020.
- Klugman, J. (2011). Human Development Report 2011. Sustainability and Equity: A better future for all. Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All (November 2, 2011). UNDP-HDRO Human Development Reports.
- Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), (2009), Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Pakistan, available online from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20110816015355/http://fata.gov.pk/files/MICS.pdf>, accessed on 20/11/2020.
- Nooreen, D. Ghazala., Awan, Dr, Riffat Un Nisa. (2011). "Women's Education in Pakistan: Hidden Fences on Open Frontiers.". Asian Social Sciences.
- Omrani, B. (2009). The Durand line: History and problems of the Afghan-Pakistan border. Asian Affairs, 40(2), 177-195.
- Parvez, N., Rauf, A., & Faiz, J. (2021). Theory and Practice of Federalism after 18th Amendment: A Case Study of Education Sector Governance in KP. The Discourse, 7(1), 99-112. Available online from: <https://discourse.org.pk/index.php/discourse/article/view/129>, accessed on 13/02/2023.
- Saqib, M., & Ahmad, S. M. (2014). Root causes of low female literacy in FATA Pakistan: (a case study of Jalozi camp). International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 4(3), 457.
- Shah, Dr. Dawood et al. (2018). Pakistan Education Statistics (2016 -17): National Education Management Information System (NEMIS), Academy of Educational Planning and

- Management (AEPAM) with technical and financial support from United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Pakistan.
- Tembon, M., & Fort, L. (2008). *Girls' education in the 21st century: Gender equality, empowerment, and economic growth*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Ullah, K., Jan, A., Rani, M., Ahmad, M., & Khan, I. U. (2021). Factors Affecting the Female education in the Newly Merged District Bajaur of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 18(4), 3136-3156.
- UNICEF. (2020). *Girls' education. Gender equality in education benefits every child*.
- Yousaf, F. (2019). Pakistan's colonial legacy: FCR and postcolonial governance in the Pashtun tribal frontier. *Interventions*, 21(2), 172-187.
- Yousafzai, Amin. (n.d). Latest Economic Survey Shows a Higher Literacy Rate and Education Expenditure. Available online from: <https://propakistani.pk/2019/06/10/latest-economic-survey-shows-a-higher-literacy-rate-and-educational-expenditure/>, re-accessed on 13/5/2022.
- Zeb, K. (2014). Promoting Education in War Zone - Waziristan. *Australian Journal of Biology and Environment Research*, 49-56.

