



The Causes of Parental Biasness Regarding Investment in Female Education in Chamkani, Peshawar, Khayber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Each year of schooling increases an individual's output by 4-7 percent (Basic Education Coalition, 2004). There exist a large number of studies establishing that gender differentials exist in intra-household investment in developing countries (Orazem and King, 2007). This study investigates into the parental biasness regarding investment in boys' education as compared to their female children. This study is cross-sectional and qualitative in nature. The study has been conducted in Chamkani, Peshwar, Khayber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Sampling for the study has been done purposively whereby a total of 13 parents were interviewed through an interview guide. The collected information has been transcribed, linked with literature and discussed in order to extract findings. Findings reveal that:

- a. Parents prefer to invest in boys' education as compared to their female children.
- b. Parents send their male children to better educational institutions and take better care of their educational needs.
- c. There are many reasons for preferring boys' education including greater expectation of economic returns, job market, lack of female role models and certain cultural practices.

KEY WORDS: Parents, Investment, education, economic etc.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that education is an effective developmental aspect e.g. education is a hallmark for socio-economic development (Basic Education Coalition, 2004). Therefore, an adequate portion of GNP and GDP must be invested in education which will facilitate the achievements and developmental goals where education can play its part (see USAID, 2008).

A project carried out by Basic Education Coalition (2004) concluded that each year of schooling increases an individual's output by 4-7 percent. Further, the study also concluded that improvement in literacy rates by 20-30 percent leads to an increase in GDP by 8-16 percent. The mechanism for such an improvement is improvements in nutrition and hygiene, average age or life expectancy, health, and socio-political stability. Besides, findings of the project indicated that when girls go to school, they tend to delay marriage, have fewer but healthier children, and contribute more to family income and national productivity. In fact,

"Educating girls quite possibly yields a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world" (quoted in Summers, 1992).

An extensive attention has been given to improve access to and the quality at the primary level; however, there are some indications that secondary level education may provide higher returns, in particular for girls. For instance, Lloyd (2005) asserts that:

"The economic returns to schooling at the secondary and tertiary levels are consistently high (and differentially high for young women). The gap between the returns to higher and lower levels of schooling is widening, thus putting an increasing premium on secondary and tertiary schooling for later success in the labor market".

Rates of return to education are important contributing factor in household decisions regarding schooling. Girls' schooling is constrained or limited when the real or perceived rates of returns to female education are limited or less than for males. Not only are the costs of schooling girls greater but the private returns (to the household) are often less, or perceived to be less. Poor households sometimes see investing in girls' education as not valuable as they anticipate daughters to leave the household upon marriage. Where tradition favors female seclusion, or women

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remaining within the home, the future economic returns to girls' schooling are considered as less as compared to boys. The current earning capability of women also influences expectations of how much a girl in education can expect to earn in later life. Parents see the benefits of educating boys as more practical, profitable and tangible (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2004).

Differences in returns among the boys and girls are significantly linked with educational inequality across gender. In this regard, market distortions and capital market failures are important to be considered. Market distortion and failure is linked with absence of cash earning, and decrease in cash earning affects female enrolment in education. There is a mechanism for it, for instance, absence of cash earnings in many societies limits the capacity of women to realize and remit market returns from their education. Concomitantly, the desirability of girls' education among parents and community decreases. Besides, capital market failure leads to limited opportunities for small enterprises which is a barrier to the market opportunities for women as well as it indulges misperception that only sons can be successful in the market. As a result, a significant decrease in investment in girls' education is observed (Alderman and King, 1998). Further, role models are important for developing girls' aspiration and desire for education, and understanding the benefits of girls' educational outcomes. Girls' ambitions are often more circumscribed than boys' by socio-economic background and rural locations.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Inherent parental bias is associated with children's education and health, the association is different for boys and girls. Compared to unbiased parents, boy-biased parents are more likely to enroll their sons in school and to spend more on their sons' education, but are slightly less likely to enroll daughters and spend less on daughters' education. The finding that inherent parental bias favoring boys is associated with outcomes favoring boys and/or against girls, but that inherent parental bias favoring girls is not associated with outcomes favoring girls and/or against boys, implies that market-generated or other socio-cultural factors that cause differential returns for boys and girls act more powerfully in ultimate parental decisions. Those factors reinforce parental attitudes favoring boys and counteract parental attitudes favoring girls (Begum, Grossman and Islam, 2014). The current study is therefore conducted to investigate various factors which make the parents biased in investing in female education as compare to male education.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

- To know that whether parents prefer male education as compared to female education
- To identify the sphere where parents prefer and invest more in male education as compared to female education
- To explore the reasons for preferring boys education as compared female education

1.4. METHODOLOGY

Nature of the Study: This study is cross-sectional is framed under qualitative research design.

Study Area: this study is conducted in Chamkani, Peshawar, Pakistan

Sampling: Sampling for the study has been done purposively whereby a total of 13 parents were sampled. The selection criteria for sampling were parents who send their male children to private schools and pay high cost for their education while their female children were studying in government schools which are known for poor educational standards in Pakistan.

Tool for Data Collection: an interview guide has been utilized for collection of information from respondents.

Data Analysis: the collected information has been transcribed, linked with relevant literature and discussed in order to extract findings.

1.5. Data Analysis

1.5.1. Socio-Demographic Information of the Respondents

Age of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
20-30	03	23.07
31-40	08	61.53
41 and above	02	15.40
Gender of the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	11	84.60
Female	02	15.40
Income level (in PKR)	Frequency	Percentage
1000-10,000	01	7.69
10,001-20,000	03	23.07
20,001-30,000	05	38.46
30,001 and above	04	30.76
Profession of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Farmer	00	00
Business	07	53.86
Government job	03	23.07
Private job	03	23.07
Educational level of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	00	00
Metric	06	46.14
College level	05	38.46
University level	02	15.40

The above table is an illustration of the socio-demographic information of the sampled respondents for the current study. In this regard, first, age of the respondents is mentioned whereby 03 (23.07 %) respondents were aging 20-30; 08 (61.53 %) respondents were aging 31-40; and, 02 (15.40 %) respondents were aging 41 and above. Second, gender wise distribution of the respondents is mentioned whereby 11 (84.60 %) respondents were male while 02 (15.40 %) respondents were female. Third, income level of the respondents is given whereby 01 (7.69 %) respondent was earning 1000-10,000 PKR; 03 (23.07 %) respondents were earning 10,001-20,000 PKR; 05 (38.46 %) respondents were earning 20,001-30,000 PKR; and, 04 (30.76 %) respondents were earning 30,001 and above PKR. Fourth, profession of the respondents have been mentioned whereby 07 (53.86 %) respondents were businessman; 03 (23.07 %) respondents were doing government job; and, 03 (23.07 %) respondents were doing private job. Fifth, none of the respondents were illiterate; 06 (46.14 %) respondents were educated up to metric; 05 (38.46 %) respondents were educated up to college level; and, 02 (15.40 %) respondents were educated up to university level.

1.5.2. Qualitative Analysis

This portion includes information obtained through interview guide. The statements of respondents are narrated and transcribed.

There is growing evidence that parents prefer boy schooling then their female children. Specifically this pattern is observable in developing countries e.g. African, Arab and GULF and South Asian states. Pakistan being a developing nation also suffer from this situation, for instance, parents prefer to invest more boys education as compared to girls education. Field information as obtained through interviews indicates that parents invest more in their son education when compared to their daughter's education.

"...yes, definitely I prefer my son's schooling as compared to my daughter's schooling..."

"...not very much, but yes I prefer Azhar's (his son) education and invest more in his schooling".

"...I have to accept that I take better care of my son as compared to my daughter. I provide my son with appropriate health care, schooling, gaming facilities etc...."

There are many educational spheres where female are discriminated. For example, admitting boys in better educational institutions and even in institutions with high costs whereas girls' are often ignored. This investment (e.g. paying high cost for boys' education) is considered as more fruitful for the families and parents. Besides, taking well care of boys' in providing pocket money and other education expenses i.e. books, uniform, and transport as compared to girls is another sphere of more investment in boys' education.

"....it is a common practice in this area that parents send their sons to private which provide better education. So yes, in this sense boys are preferred to get better schooling...."

“....Yes, I have two sons and two daughters. Three of them go to school while one of my daughters is infant. My daughter goes to government school while both sons go to private school....”
Regarding the fee of private schools, he argued that “I pay 3800 (PKR) for both sons per month”
“....boys needs more pocket money as they play with boys in schools as well as outside home....”
“....boys have friends, and are more demanding. Therefore, I give more pocket money to my son while going to school....”
“....I provide my sons’ with better transport, and take care of their books and uniform requirements...”
“....Yes, there is no doubt that boys can take better care of us then girls. They can work outside home in job sector, and have far better chances to earn money and to support us. Girls are not capable of doing every job and there is less probability to earn money and support the family....”
“....boys are the future of the family while in majority of cases girls get married and have to take care of husband and his family....”
“....it is evident in this area that boys can contribute more to family whereas there are only few cases where girls are supporting their families...” with regard to reason for it, he argued that “there are cultural constraints, for instance, girls are not allowed to work outside home as it can damage the identity and honor of the family...”

A respondent stated that he expects more economic returns from his son, and regarding its reason he stated that:

“....it is obvious that my daughters will get marry, and no matter how much education she get, she will have to manage the household responsibilities. Besides, even if she get employed she will contribute it to her own family (e.g. her husband and children)....”

There is also evidence that market can generate gender related differences in educational sector. Many of the states have market whereby there is difference in demand with reference to gender. This study reveals that parental perception regarding male and female education is influenced by market e.g. there is higher demand for boys in employment sector due to which parents tends to invest in boys education. For validation few extracts from interviews are:

“....there is no doubt in arguing that there is more demand for boys in job market. Whenever I read local newspaper for job there are plenty of jobs for boys while very few for girls....”
“....I prefer my son’s education as he can earn more for the family. Boys salaries are quite high as compared to girls....”
“....specifically there is more demand for boys in industrial and agriculture sector. Girls are considered weak, less enthusiastic along with cultural constraints, and therefore they are neglected....”

Socio-cultural factors significantly influence parental perception while educating their male and female children. Boys are socialized to provide economic support to their family while girls are socialized to take care of household responsibilities. Further, there constraints to female education, for example, female mobility is limited by Purdah system in the study area therefore parents are reluctant to educate their female children as they may not be able to do job and will have no economic return. For further explanation, statements from interviews are:

“....boys are always considered as earners for the family. They spend their life with parents whilst girls are to be married....”
“....this is our cultural pattern that boys must take care of the family, and must provide an economic support to the family. They are internalized with the thinking that they should study or learn a skill which will help them to earn and support their families in future....” The respondent further argued that “....even boys are stigmatized if they are unable to support their families while girls are not. Therefore, we focus in boys education as compared to female education....”
“....it is a common belief that female is weak and less able to do economic participation...”
“....girls must take care of children at home; cook food, and must learn to honor the elders and parents. It’s the job of boys to get education, get employed and serve the family....”
“....I prefer my son’s education because he can work outside home. I do not want my daughter to get education and work outside home as it will damage the familial identity and honor by damaging the Purdah of the women....”

Lack of aspiration and role models also contributes to lack of investment in girls’ education in the study area. For instance, there is lack of education girls’ or women in the study area which can inspire the parents to provide better education to their daughters as well. For example, an extract from an interview is:

“...I don't know any female in this area with higher qualification and good job. Even there are few girls with good qualification but they don't have respectable job....”

1.6. DISCUSSION

Findings show that parents prefer to invest in boys' education as compared to their female children. Parents invest more and take better care of their male children. These findings are in line with the study of Orazem & King (2007) who argues that gender differentials exist in intra-household investment in developing countries.

There are many educational spheres where parents invest more in boys' education and where female are discriminated. For example, admitting boys in better educational institutions or schools and even in institutions with high costs whereas girls' are often ignored. Parents perceive that this investment, for instance, paying high cost for boys' education is more fruitful for the families and parents. In addition to it, higher investment in boys' education is also observable in providing them with better transport facilities, taking care of their uniform, books etc. These findings are similar to the findings of the study conducted by Begum, Grossman and Islam (2014). The mentioned study enumerates that in developing and third world countries female lag behind in educational sector. The major reason for it is the lack of investment in female education both from government and parents. Parents are interested in the education of their male children and invest higher amount of money by admitting them in better schools.

The current study investigates into the market related and socio-cultural reasons responsible for lack of investment in girls' education. In this connection, it is evident that parents expect more economic returns from their sons. Qian (2008) also argues that sons' are preferred when parents perceive that they will contribute more to the family. The economic returns are further influenced by many factors. First, job market is an important factor which influences the parental perception regarding economic return. Parents in the study area perceive that there is more demand for boys in the job market than girls leading to an increased investment in boys' education. In this context, Emerson and Souza (2007) and Pande and Astone (2007) are of the opinion that labor and job market are important determinant of parental investment in their children's education. Second, there is socio-cultural explanation for higher parental investment in boys' education in the study area, for instance, boys' are socialized to take economic care of the family while girls' are socialized to take care of household responsibilities. It makes the parents to perceive that boys' must be prepared to get good job, and therefore parents invest more in boys' education. Further, gender discriminatory practices and Purdah system (for example, Purdah limits women mobility), and girls' marriage (when girls' move to husband's house) are the important factors due to which parents invest more their male children education. Kishor (1993) and Glaeser and Ma (2013) asserts that girls' marriage and limited women mobility are the responsible factors for lack of investment in female education. Lack of aspiration also contributes to parental perception that girls' education is a wastage and therefore they do tend to invest in girls' education, for instance, Bhalotra and Attfield (1998) argues that role models are important for developing girls' aspiration and desire for education, and understanding the benefits of girls' educational outcomes. Girls' ambitions are often more circumscribed than boys' by socio-economic background and rural locations.

1.7. Conclusion

Formal education is one the hallmarks of modern developed societies. Education enhances human skills and capabilities, and is source of livelihood for many in the developed and developing world. Investment in education determines the level of education which in turn is responsible for economic returns which is important for sustainable development. There is evidence that in developing world the investment in education is often gender biased.

The current study reveals that parents are biased while investing in education of their male and female children. Parents tends to invest more in male children education by sending them high quality and high cost schools while send their daughters low quality governmental schools. There are many reasons behind this discriminatory practice whereby parents expect more economic returns from their male children; parents are influenced by job market where boys are more demanded; parents perceive that girls' are made for taking care of household responsibilities while boys' will provide an economic support to their families; girls' are going to be married; lack of aspiration; and, the prevailing discriminatory practices in the study area as well as Purdah system.

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