



RESEARCH PAPER

A Sociological Study of Contributing Factors of Educational Exclusion of Children in Southern Punjab, Pakistan

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: November 17, 2019	There are many factors such as (low economic status of the parents, children involvement in domestic and earning activities, language (English) barrier, long distance from home to school, attachment with traditions/ patriarchal thinking, disability of the children, retention of the children from the school etc.) of the educational inclusion of the school age children. South Punjab is the socially excluded region where school age children faced more educational exclusion than Upper Punjab. The researcher selected 600 households in which 5-9 years old child/children was/were available and was/were excluded from primary education. Interview schedule was used for data collection and data was analyzed by using SPSS. It was found that the most prominent factor was the economic factor that compelled the parents to exclude their children from schools because they did not afford the educational costs. It is recommended that at micro level the community development programs should be started and at macro level the government of Pakistan should have to increase the educational budget
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Introduction

It is a well-recognized fact that education is an important indicator of growth and development of society. It ensures the well-being of individuals by improving their vision to acculturate the skills and innovative ideas (Bruns et al., 2003). Education is the basic capability that plays a vital role in the betterment of the people's lives (Sen, 2000). It is bitter reality that the third world countries are facing the countless issues that exclude them from enjoying the basic necessities of

life. Education is the basic capability that plays an important role in the betterment of the society but it is very miserable condition that many children of the third world countries are still excluded from getting the primary education instead of different national (five years educational plans, Educational policies etc.) and international “Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, The Dakar Framework for Action 2000, Sustainable development goals, 2015 etc.” efforts.

It was reported by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Institute for Statistics (2018) that globally 63.4 million children were out of school in 2016 in which girls (34.3 million) were victimized more than boys (29.1 million). In South Asia 10.3 percent children were excluded from primary education in which 4.7 percent were boys and 5.6 percent were girls. Pakistan is a developing country and facing many issues among which the most prominent is the educational exclusion of the children in spite of the fact that constitution of Pakistan 1973 Article 25-A ensures that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the aged 5-16 years in such a manner as may be determined by the law but unfortunately, Pakistan is far away from fulfilling the educational targets till now. It was informed by National Education Management Information System (2017) that 23 percent children were not enrolled in the primary schools in Pakistan and the enrolment of the children also varied from province to province. Islamabad Capital Territory enrolled 96 percent children in the schools; in Punjab 86 percent children got admissions in the primary schools; in KPK 85 percent children enrolled in the schools. The children of Southern Punjab faced impoverished condition in education as was highlighted by ASER (2017) that 18.2 percent children were excluded from primary education in Multan; 40.8 percent children were excluded from primary education in Rajanpur; 5.6 percent children were excluded from primary education in Mianwali; 27.3 percent children were excluded from primary education in Dera Ghazi Khan; 17.8 percent children were excluded from primary education in Layyah; 16.7 percent children were excluded from primary education in Bhakkar; 21.6 percent children were excluded from primary education in Bahawalpur and 16.8 percent children were excluded from primary education in Lodhran. Furthermore Situational Analysis of Children in Pakistan (2017) also highlighted the educational gaps in Pakistan like it was mentioned that Net Attendance Ratio (NAR) for primary schools at the national level was very low (59.9% males and females 56.5%) and its primary school completion rate was even lower (52%).

- It could be argued that there were many exclusionary factors that created hindrance in the path of educational enrolment of children. It was found that children were socially excluded from getting education due the marginalization (social identity) from the main stream of the society; geographical residence and the most important is the economic condition of the people (UNESCO, 2010, P.135 & Hill, 2010). Additionally the gender biasness, racial discrimination, restricted labor; disability also played an

important role in the exclusion of children in education. There were also other exclusionary factors like patriarchal structure, rural-urban inequalities, traditional attachments, lack of girls' schools, teachers' non-availability in the schools, high drop-out ratio of the children, political interventions, lack of educational facilities, parents-teachers communication gap, crowded classrooms, repetition of children in the same grade, wandering with street children in school time and troubles in learning (medium of instruction) (Sattar, 2012).

Qureshi (2012) found that parent's education and especially the mother's education strongly affected on the education of the children especially girls education. Parents' education also empowered the girl and minimized gender inequalities. Furthermore Azid and Ejaz (2010) also highlighted that the poor household and the large family size negatively affected the educational inclusion of children. Baland and Robinson (2000) also found that low economic status of the household led the children towards child labor and in this way they were excluded from getting education. There was a severe condition of poverty faced by the household in which they were dependent on the child's earning and therefore they excluded their children from basic education. Pakistan is a poor country and facing the issue of unemployment and it excluded the children from basic education. It was reported by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2016) that there was 5.9 percent unemployment rate of ten years and above. The above mentioned facts were ratified by UNESCO (2010) that there was a relationship between the socially excluded children and their educational exclusion.

Methodology

Three divisions (Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan) of Southern Punjab, Pakistan were selected for conducting this research. The researcher used the multistage random sampling in which firstly three divisions were selected (Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan) then reselected the two tehsils from each district and at the end two Union Councils were randomly selected from each tehsil randomly (Punjab Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The researcher selected 975 households in which 5-9 years old children were available. The researcher conducted the household survey from the household heads because household heads were the main stakeholders of the family. The researcher made two categories, the households in which 5-9 years old children were excluded (600) from primary education and the household where 5-9 years old children were not excluded from primary education (375). In this article only those 600 households were focused. Interview schedule was used as a tool for data collection because majority of the respondents were illiterate. The data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. The researcher used the descriptive statistics which included frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics.

Table Number: 1
Exclusionary Factors Faced by School Age Children

Ranks	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Financial constraints	600	4.1600	1.14159
2	Looking after their siblings	600	3.8850	1.09869
3	They left schools and were enrolled in Madrasa	600	3.8067	1.15968
4	They were motivated by peers to leave school and start work	600	3.7917	1.33713
5	Educating girls was against the tradition	600	3.7917	1.33713
6	long distance from house to school	600	3.7400	1.08368
7	Children faced the religious/ethnic discrimination in the school	600	3.6250	1.12538
8	They Worked at home/ agriculture and non-agriculture work	600	3.4700	1.25767
9	Uncertain future	600	3.3800	1.19218
10	Lack of communication between teacher and parents	600	3.3267	1.29464
11	Difficulty in the subject of English	600	3.1967	1.20016
12	They were irregular and played with street children/ visited at relatives	600	3.0850	1.25847
13	Corporal punishment	600	3.0617	1.21532
14	Disability/ill health	600	2.9250	1.33129
15	The class fellows or school fellows bullying the children	600	2.8067	1.12757
16	Retention of the children for one or more time from school	600	2.7850	1.22117

Scale= Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly Agree=5

Results and Discussion

There were a number of contributing factors that played a vital role in the exclusion of school age children from the basic capability of education among them the researcher asked some questions that were more contributing to the educational exclusion of children in South Punjab. To know the role of economic constraints faced by the household heads the researcher asked the question if their school age children were excluded from getting the basic education due to the shortage of economic resources and they were not able to afford their educational necessities like uniform, bags, stationary, daily pocket money, school fee, tuition fee, convince etc. The majority of the respondents did "Agree" that they did not

afford their educational expenses of their children and they decided to exclude their children from basic education. According to Sen(1992, 2000) it was a passive exclusion in which the deprived people faced the difficulty in fulfilling the basic necessities of life and at the end they decided to separate themselves from having the basic right and were compelled to spend impoverished life. It was identified by ASER (2017) that the children who were studying in 5th grade in the different districts of South Punjab and did not afford tuition fee. It was mentioned that 89.9 percent children did not afford tuition fee; Zero percent children availed themselves of tuition fee in Rajanpur; 98.5 percent in children did not afford tuition fee in Dera Ghazi Khan; 90.8 percent children did not afford tuition fee in Layyah; 82.9 percent in children did not afford tuition fee in Mianwali; 92.1 percent children did not afford tuition fee in children Bhakkar; 4.8 percent children did not afford tuition fee in Bahawalpur and zero percent children attended tuition in Lodhran.

The respondents' behavior regarding the domestic duties was checked by asking the question if they assigned the duty of child care to their school age children. It was found that majority ($\mu=3.88$) did 'agree' that their school age children looked after their siblings. The results were ratified by the previous researches that the caring of siblings was the one crucial factor that excluded the school age children from getting primary education(Brock &Cammish, 1997). It was further found that the older children especially girls more performed the domestic work especially caring the little siblings and if mother was involved in the earning activities, the daughters had to look after the domestic work (Fuller and Liang, 1999).

The people of South Punjab are traditional and religious in their nature. The people of South Punjab also give priority to enroll their children in the Madrasa instead of giving them school education. It was asked to the respondents if their school age children left school and was enrolled in madrasa. The majority respondents ($\mu=3.80$) did 'agree' that their school age children left school and were enrolled in Madrasa. Nauman (2015) also found that the Pakistani people preferred to enroll their children in the religious institutions instead of schools. Annual Status of Education Report Pakistan (2011) identified that 1.2 percent children aged 6-10 years old were enrolled in Madrasa in Punjab; in the district Multan 0.6 percent children Enrolled in Madrasa; in Lodhran 1.6 percent children were enrolled in Madrasa; in the district Mianwali 1.2 percent children were studying in Madrasa; 1.8 percent children 6-10 years old children were getting education in Madrasa in the district Muzaffargarh; 2.2 percent children were enrolled in the district Rajanpur and 0.3 percent children were enrolled in the district Jhang. ASER (2017) identified that the children 6-16 years old were enrolled in the Madrasah were 3.4 percent in Multan; 0.3 percent in Rajanpur; 0.4 percent in Dera Ghazi Khan; 1.1 percent in Layyah; 0.1 percent in Mianwali; 0.9 percent in Bhakkar; 3 percent in Bahawalpur and 2.7 percent in Lodhran.

The American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley gave the concept of 'primary group' in which he explained the role of primary group members in the construction of personality. According to him the primary group played an important role in the personality development. It was asked to the respondents about the role of peer group in the exclusion of school age children. It was found that majority ($\mu=3.79$) of the respondents did 'agree' that peer group was also a vital factor that motivated their children to escape from schooling.

Pakistan is a patriarchal society in which majority of the people had gendered attitude and preferred males to females in daily routine of life. The researcher asked the question to find the role of traditions in the exclusion of school age children. It was asked to the respondents if their traditions imposed sanctions on them to exclude their daughters from basic education. Majority ($\mu=3.79$) of the respondents did 'agree' that their traditions played a negative role in the educational inclusion of girls. These findings were also endorsed by (Zulfiqar, 2019).

The previous studies showed that there was a great role of distance in the inclusion or exclusion of the children. Longer distance had more probability of educational exclusion of school age children and shorter distance from home to school had more educational inclusion of school age children. The researcher asked the question if there was longer distance (<3 kilometer) from home to school. The majority of the respondents ($\mu= 3.62$) answered that the longer distance from home to school was most important factor in the exclusion of school age children. Pakistan is a poor country in which education is not the preference of the Government that's why the educational budget was very low. UNESCO (2010, P.135) also verified the results that longer distance played a negative role in getting education of the school age children.

To know the school age children daily schedule and child work the researcher asked the question if the excluded children participated in the domestic and earning activities. The results ($\mu=3.47$) showed that majority of the respondents had 'neutral' point of view regarding the involvement of school age children in the domestic and other outdoor activities. Different researchers found that the low economic rank of the parents was the leading cause of child work and it compelled them to exclude themselves from basic education. It was also identified that children's attachment with domestic chores was also one central issue of educational exclusion of children because in this way children's attention will be diverted and instead of focusing their education they became interested in domestic work (Oxaal, 1997; Bass, 2004; Buchmann, 2000; Bourdillon et al.,2010)

The previous researches Farrah (2013) indicated that that unemployment and future uncertainty were one major stumbling block in the educational inclusion of school age children. Parents considered it irrational to send their children in the school because after getting education their children would be

unemployed. The researcher asked the question if they had future uncertainty of their children. The majority ($\mu=3.38$) of the respondents were 'neutral' that there was uncertainty if they got their children taught.

The next question was related to the communication between the teacher and the parents. According to symbolic interactionist perspective the communication gap is the real cause of dysfunctions in the society. The researcher asked the question to know the role of communication gap between the parents and the teacher on children exclusion. It was found that majority ($\mu=3.32$) of the respondents were 'neutral' that communication gap between the teacher and parents played a vital role in the exclusion of school age children.

Different researchers indicated the role of language in the exclusion of children from getting education or carrying on education. The researcher asked the question to the respondents regarding the role of English language/ English Subject in the exclusion of children from basic education. It was found that majority ($\mu=3.19$) of the respondents were 'neutral' that English language/ English subject was one of the main factors in the exclusion of school age children in Southern Punjab. English language and subject of English was problematic for the children of Pakistan. They faced the difficulty in learning English and in this way the language barrier played a vital role in the exclusion of primary school age children. The children belonged to the South Punjab faced the issue of exclusion more than the Upper Punjab. The research conducted by Annual Status of Education Report (2017) identified the facts and figures that majority of the children who reached in 5th class but knew nothing about English. ASER (2017) identified that 5.5 percent (6-16) years old children knew nothing about English in Multan; 8.0 percent (6-16) year old children knew nothing about English in Rajanpur; 3.3 percent (6-16) year old children knew nothing about English in Dera Ghazi Khan; 8.1 percent (6-16) year old children knew nothing about English in Layyah; 12.1 percent (6-16) year old children knew nothing about English in Mianwali; 30.0 percent (6-16) year old children knew nothing about English in Bhakkar; 8.1 percent (6-16) year old children knew nothing about English in Bahawalpur and in Lodhran 4.5 percent (6-16) year old children knew nothing about English. It was asked to the respondents if behind the exclusion of primary age children from the primary education were children were Irregular, they played with street children or visited at relatives. The majority of the respondents were 'neutral' in answering this question that children were Irregular and played with street children/ visited relatives ($\mu=3.08$).

The researcher probed the respondents if there was any role of corporal punishment in the exclusion of the children who ever had been enrolled but dropped. The majority of the respondents ($\mu=3.06$) were 'neutral' to the answer this question. It was found that physical punishment played a negative role in educational inclusion of school age children (Zulfiqar, 2019).

The researcher also asked health related question to the respondents if the excluded children faced the disability/ill health. Majority (2.92) of the respondents were 'Neutral' that their excluded children suffered from ill health or disability and that was one of causes of their exclusion from primary education. It was found by different researches that the disability or ill health of the school age was a barrier in the educational inclusion of school age children and further it was also mentioned that the disable children also faced the stigmatization from the society and that stigma compelled them to exclude themselves from being active participants of society (Bernard, 2000; Hill, 2010).The researcher probed the respondents regarding the children's satisfaction in the school. The researcher asked the question if bullying was the reason for children exclusion from school. Majority ($\mu=2.80$) of the respondents were 'neutral' that children faced the issue of bullying.

The majority of the respondents responded that retention of the child was the factor of the exclusion of the children from primary education ($\mu=2.78$). Alif Ailaan and Sustain Development Policy Institute (SDPI) prepared the report and allotted the rank to the different districts of Punjab. The criteria to allot the rank were the adult literacy rate, achieving average score of students in the subjects of Islamic studies, mathematics, Urdu and Science; enrollment score, learning score, retention score and gender parity score. The report showed that the rank of the South Punjab Districts was not satisfying and majority of the districts achieved the low ranks for example Mianwali is on 21st number; Bhakkar is on 24th, Multan is on 26th; Bahawalnagar is on 30th; Lodhran is on 31st; Bahawalpur is on 32nd; Rahim Yar Khan is on 33rd; Muzaffargarh is on 34th; Dera Ghazi Khan is on 35th and Rajanpur is on 36th numbers (Alif Ailaan & SDPI, 2016).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that there are a number of exclusionary factors contributing in the educational exclusion of school age children but economic constraint was the top on the list faced by the dwellers of Southern Punjab that compelled them to exclude their children from basic education. Other factors were also involved in the exclusion of school age children like children involvement in the domestic and outdoor earning activities; madrasa education, customary practices, wrong beliefs of society, communication gap between teacher and parents, language barrier, disability of the children and corporal punishment.

Recommendations:

By following these suggestions the issue of educational exclusion of children can be covered in South Punjab

- It is recommended that the government of Pakistan should have to increase the educational budget for fulfilling the legal responsibility (Constitution of Pakistan, 25-A) to enroll every school age children in the schools.
- The Government of Pakistan should focus the marginalized group of people and marginalized areas (South Punjab) and make the policies that make them the part of mainstream of the society.
- Monthly scholarships and mid-day meal should be given to all children in Southern Punjab.
- The Government of Pakistan should have to take the serious steps for including the special children in mainstream of the society through attractive educational policies.
- The Government should have to provide the basic necessities (stationary and other utilities) to all children.

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